

Door County Economic Development Corporation: Completes broadband infrastructure engineering assessment, results explore feasibility and steps to bring a high-speed fiber network to the entire county

Posted on Thursday, Nov 18, 2021

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Sturgeon Bay, WI – After more than 6 months of work researching, surveying and talking to local residents and businesses, broadband infrastructure engineering assessment consultants Finley Engineering and CCG Consulting in collaboration with the Door County Economic Development Corporation's broadband steering committee have completed their work on the Door Peninsula. A summary of the report can be viewed here: <https://livedoorcounty.org/wp--/uploads/2021/11/Broadband-Infrastructure-Engineering-Assessment-Report-Executive-Summary-11-5-21-1.pdf>

Door County Economic Development Corporation's Executive Director, Steve Jenkins, who's lead the broadband infrastructure engineering assessment project states that *"The issue of Broadband quality and accessibility has long been an issue in Door County. The business community and residents have clearly indicated that it is a priority for DCEDC to address and the Broadband Infrastructure Engineering Assessment was the first step in moving forward to a solution. This is an economic development issue and one of the new infrastructures of economic development which DCEDC places at the highest priority."*

The results of months of work evaluating the current broadband structure, quality, reliability and assessing the feasibility and cost to bring a high-speed fiber network to the entire county have been compiled into a 215 page report. At a high level, the report clearly shows that the overall quality of broadband service currently available in Door County falls below the FCC's (Federal Communications Commission) definition of broadband of 25 Mbps upload / 3 Mbps download speeds, with the exception of one ISP (internet service provider) currently serving the peninsula. The results of the study also solidified the fact that the pandemic highlighted an upload broadband crisis - trouble connecting to school, working from home, maintaining video call connection, and working with cloud software. Additionally, the consultants for the projects received feedback that for all ISP's serving the county, the networks bog down during the tourist season - often to the point of being unusable.

The highlights of a survey with 1,011 respondents executed as a part of the survey indicated that 17% of homes in Door County have no reasonable broadband option, 81% support building a fiber network, 18% indicated that they might support the idea, but need more information, 87% want faster speeds, 83% want more competition and choice when it comes to choosing a broadband service provider. 76% of respondents indicated that they want better reliability and 62% said they would buy from a new fiber network provider.

The results also included a detailed list of recommendations outlining next steps, key recommendations in the effort to bring a connected Fiber Network to Door County include:

- Build collaborative, coordinated effort
- Dedicated staff for implementation coordination
- Begin discussions with ISP's
- Get creative to seeking grants
- Consider statistically valid surveys
- Be prepared to challenge FCC maps
- Review local policies related to fiber construction
- Educate the public
- Lobby for more state broadband funding
- Tackle Broadband gaps

A special thanks to those that sponsored the Broadband Infrastructure Engineering Assessment:

Public Sector:

- County of Door
- Town of Liberty Grove
- Town of Sevastopol
- Town of Baileys Harbor
- Town of Egg Harbor
- Town of Brussels
- Town of Jacksonport
- Washington Island Electric Cooperative
- Town of Sturgeon Bay
- Town of Clay Banks
- School District of Sturgeon Bay
- Southern Door County School District

Private and Nonprofit:

- Door County Economic Development Corporation
- Renards Cheese/Rosewood Dairy
- Door County Medical Center
- Raibrook Foundation

The Door County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC) is a public/private partnership dedicated to improving the economic vitality of the county and its residents. Founded in 1989, DCEDC has been successful in helping existing businesses create and retain thousands of jobs through a myriad of programs and initiatives. Additionally, DCEDC places strong emphasis on fostering entrepreneurial instincts in county residents as well as those who vacation in Door County.