



Broadband Communications

Other telecommunications capabilities, such as fiber optics, are fast becoming basic infrastructure requirements for major corporations and industry. DeSoto County currently has sparse fiber optic network coverage. However, MDOT has plans to include fiber optic lines in all of its future road projects, including the un-built portion of I-269, I-55/69 north of I-269 and US 78. When complete, the corridor could be connected both to Memphis and Blue Springs, where the new Toyota manufacturing plant is located. Approximately half of the corridor is currently covered by digital subscriber line (DSL) service, which runs on twisted-pair copper wires and can carry both voice and data signals. Cable service, which is delivered through coaxial cable, is currently available in the corridor only in Southaven and in areas to the east along MS 304¹.

In an effort to identify, map and expand service to undeserved areas in the broadband coverage network, the DeSoto County Board of Commissioners established a Broadband Internet Access Committee in 2012 and launched the Broadband Initiative. An open broadband network can increase the productivity of businesses, and can serve as a platform for growth by increasing access to educational resources and health care services, by efficiently delivering County services and by stimulating creative solutions to traffic congestion. Broadband is available through local telephone companies, cable providers, and some wireless networks.

¹ Source: <https://msbb.broadmap.com/StateMap>

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage and support the advancement of affordable broadband or high speed Internet access to all areas of the corridor.
- Encourage cooperative efforts between the public and private sectors so that infrastructure costs are shared between the public safety and commercial networks. For example, identify and articulate rights-of-way construction and maintenance practices to reduce overall capital and maintenance costs for both government and users, which will help to avoid unnecessary delays, actions, costs and inefficiencies related to the construction and maintenance of broadband facilities along public rights-of-way.
- Coordinate with local broadband service providers and the FCC to put in place pro-deployment policies such as joint trenching, conduit construction and placement of broadband facilities on public property.
- The cost of deploying a broadband network depends significantly on the costs that service providers incur to access conduits, ducts, poles and rights-of-way on public and private lands. These costs can be reduced directly by cutting fees. Almost 20% of the cost of fiber optic deployment is spent on companies obtaining permits and leasing pole attachments and rights-of-way. Thus, costs can also be lowered indirectly by expediting processes and decreasing the risks and complexities that companies face as they deploy broadband network infrastructure.
- Establish and implement standards and guidelines for new building projects that would ease and help expand Internet access.
- Require that all new residential and commercial buildings and developments have the appropriate infrastructure to support broadband Internet access. For example, require the provision of conduit space within joint utility trenches for future high-speed data equipment and flexibility in conduit placement to allow for easy retrofit for high speed data systems.

