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Do you have access?

Online map shows who's connected

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Madison Countians can now see for themselves the areas with high-speed Internet (or "broadband") by using the Madison County or statewide Broadband Inventory Map recently introduced by ConnectKentucky, an organization dedicated to making Internet access available to all parts of the state.

The map, which can be found at www.connectkentucky.org/Meetings, is color-coded to show the number of homes with broadband access.

The announcement of the new service came last week and was given by ConnectKentucky's Central Kentucky Manager Sage Cutler.

"This tool enables users to see who the broadband providers are anywhere in the commonwealth," Cutler said. "The community has a good online presence currently, which is a valuable asset that can be used for improved citizen services in the future."

ConnectKentucky and Kentucky's "Prescription for Innovation" program received the U.S. Economic Development Administration's 2006 Excellence in Innovation Award which recognizes national leaders in innovative strategies for economic development.

Three years ago, Fletcher announced the "Prescription for Innovation" program intended to provide high-speed Internet access to all Kentuckians by 2007.

According to information from connectkentucky.org, high-speed Internet availability has increased approximately 45 percent since the program began.

It is now available in an estimated 352,000 homes and computer ownership has grown by 17 percent. Moreover, the rate of Kentucky's high-tech job growth is outpacing the national average.

"We now must increase demand for broadband and technology use through awareness, applications and adoption," said Rene' True, executive director of ConnectKentucky. "Technology can dramatically improve people's quality of life. With available broadband, Kentuckians everywhere will soon have access to better health care, education and career opportunities."

Kentucky leads the nation in its rate of high-speed Internet adoption over the past two years, according to the Federal Communications Commission.

Another goal for ConnectKentucky was to begin implementing the "No Child Left Offline" program that has helped deliver nearly 2,000 computers and printers to middle school students who were living without computers.

The next meeting for Madison County's eCommunity Leadership Team will be at 10:30 a.m. Feb. 20 at the Business and Technology Center at Eastern Kentucky University.

The goals of the eCommunity Leadership Teams, which have been formed in all of Kentucky's 120 counties, are to build a shared understanding of the links between the Prescription for Innovation program and the county's economic development and determining how the new services can make a difference in education, business, government and community-based organizations.

ConnectKentucky is located at 311 West Main St., Frankfort, KY 40601. Call 1-866-923-7501 or send an e-mail to info@connectkentucky.org.

Other features of the Web site include contact information for local technology providers such as Chapel Communications, Wind-stream, the City of Berea, ECU and an online discussion forum.

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