MORRIS COUNTY, TEXAS

Technology Action Plan Summary
September 2021

CONNECTED
NATION℠

Texas

OVERVIEW

Today, technology plays a pivotal role in how businesses operate, how institutions provide services, and where consumers choose to live, work, and play. The success of a community has become dependent on how broadly and deeply the community adopts technology resources, which includes access to reliable, high-speed networks; the digital literacy of residents; and the use of online resources locally for business, government, and leisure.

The Connected Nation Texas (CN Texas) Connected Program partnered with the Morris County Broadband Team to conduct a study to determine the availability of broadband infrastructure; how its residents are adopting and using broadband services; and what steps would have the greatest impact toward improving broadband access, adoption, and use across every sector locally.

Pursuant of this goal, between July 2020 and May 2021, Morris County conducted a comprehensive survey of broadband technology access and adoption across the community that collected responses from 481 households. CN Texas staff also met with community officials to determine community needs and to gather qualitative data for consideration in the study. Overall, the assessment was designed to identify issues and opportunities to close the local Digital Divide.

Morris County – Quick Facts	
Population	12,373
Number of Households	6,040
Median Household Income	$41,359
Poverty Rate	17.8%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	14.3%
Homeownership Rate	73%
Hispanic or Latino Population	9.9%
Households Served with Broadband[1]	77.77%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 American Community Survey 5–Year Estimate
https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?g=0500000US48343

It will be imperative that Morris County leverages community partnerships, federal funding, and infrastructure improvement projects to increase broadband availability in the community. With Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) money (once approved), Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, and a long-standing partnership with the Hogg Foundation, the future looks bright for Morris County. Understanding how to partner and work with local providers and keeping up with grant expenditures is imperative to long-term success. Many recommendations in this action plan are inexpensive or cost nothing at all but will contribute greatly to community development, including continued advancements in digital literacy, economic development, and workforce solutions. Increasing broadband adoption and use throughout the county will contribute to greater quality of life.

The following provides a summary of the technology assessment performed by CN Texas as well as recommendations for improving broadband and technology access, adoption, and use. Many recommended actions are of low-cost to the county and should be engaged in immediately to help the community accelerate deployment opportunities.

---

[1] The current FCC definition of broadband is a minimum of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload. This data is derived from Connected Nation Texas, July 2021. https://connectednation.org/texas/planning/

KEY FINDINGS

- More than **one-third** of households either use non-fixed internet connections[2] such as dial-up, satellite, and mobile-only services, or do not subscribe to the internet at all.

- The average internet download speed reported by households in Morris County (**25.69 Mbps**) is lower than connections in other Connected communities (**33.82 Mbps**). However, the reported average speed meets the current FCC definition of broadband (minimum speed of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload).

- For households that said they do not subscribe to home internet service, **the top barrier is the cost of internet service** followed by **the lack of available service.**

- Morris County households reported a **higher average reported monthly cost of service ($81.61)** among households in the community compared to those in other Connected communities ($71.05).

- **Slow speeds** and **unreliable connections** were the top reasons given for dissatisfaction by households that reported dissatisfaction with their internet service.

- **Most households (89.6%)** said they would like to have improved or additional options for home internet service.

- Only **59.47%** of households in Morris County have access to internet service at speeds needed to run many modern applications (100 Mbps downstream and 10 Mbps upstream). Statewide, 88.5% of households have internet access at this speed.

1,228
Households in Morris County Unserved by Broadband Speeds of at Least 25 Mbps Download/3 Mbps Upload

---

[2] Non-fixed internet connections include dial-up, satellite, and mobile-only services. These non-fixed types of internet services, while providing basic access, can often be plagued by connection latency, have costly monthly data plans, or can be impacted by weather, terrain, large expanses of open water, and other environmental factors.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The first step in understanding the state of broadband infrastructure in Morris County and the rest of Texas is having accurate maps. Accordingly, CN Texas works with providers to develop a variety of broadband maps at a state and county level. Data shown on these maps are derived from a combination of direct provider outreach and data collection, FCC Form 477 broadband deployment filings, and independent research conducted by CN Texas. If a provider were unable or unwilling to supply granular data and a detailed service area could not be developed, the provider's service is represented by Form 477 data, a format that tends to overstate the service territory.

| Broadband – Quick Facts	
Number of Unserved Households	1,228
Households served (10/1 Mbps)	99.01%
Households served (25/3 Mbps)	77.77%
Households served (50/5 Mbps)	71.61%
Households served (100/10 Mbps)	66.16%

Broadband data collected by CN Texas in July 2021
https://connectednation.org/texas/mapping-analysis/

According to CN Texas broadband data collected in July 2021 — with public feedback, field validation, and provider input — nearly one in four households do not have access to broadband at least 25/3 Mbps, the current definition of broadband as set forth by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Internet Service Providers in Morris County

PROVIDER	TECHNOLOGY	MAXIMUM DOWNLOAD SPEED (Mbps)	MAXIMUM UPLOAD SPEED (Mbps)
Etex Telephone Coop.	Fixed Wireless	10	1
	DSL	10	1
	Fiber	250	25
Peoples Telephone Cooperative, INC.	DSL	20	2
	Fiber	10	1
AT&T	DSL	25	3
	Fixed Wireless	10	1
Suddenlink Communications	Cable	150	150
Valor Telecommunications of Texas (Windstream)	DSL	100	100
	Fiber	200	1.5

CONNECTED
NATION™
Texas

Below is Morris County's (25/3 Mbps) map. This and other maps are available here. Other portions of the county are served by internet service providers (ISPs) offering slower advertised speeds.
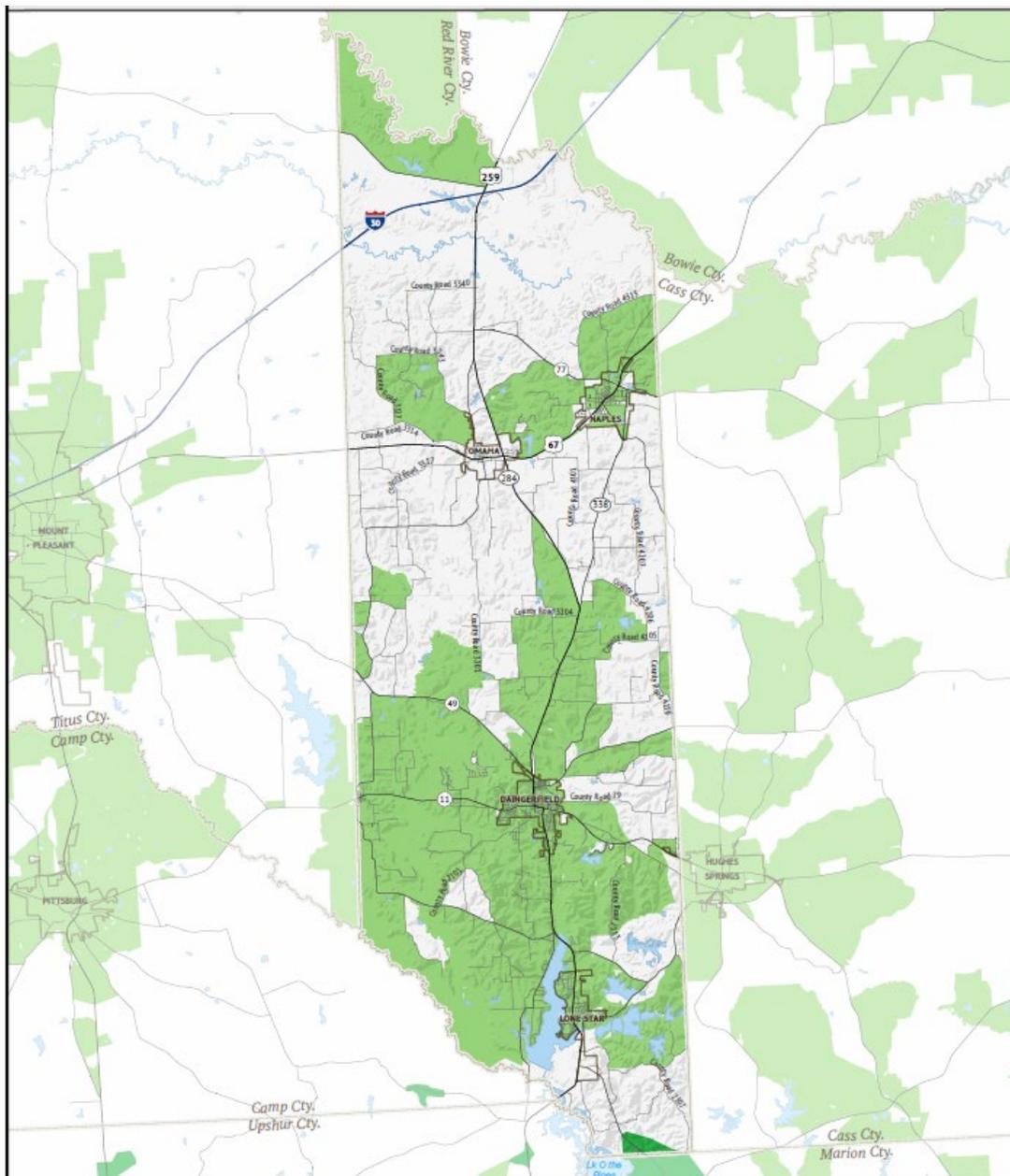
Published December 18, 2020

Connected Nation Texas is a statewide initiative funded through the Texas Rural Fund to support all Texans in leveraging broadband.

County Boundary
Municipal Boundary
Water
Local Road

0 1 2 4 6
miles

Fixed, Terrestrial Non-Mobile Broadband Service

Detailed Service Areas
FCC Service Availability

CONNECTED NATION
Texas
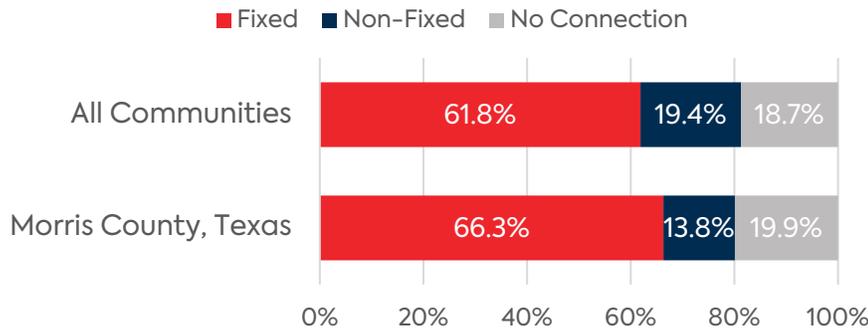
HOUSEHOLDS – DETAILED FINDINGS

The following provides an overview of results from a broadband survey conducted in Morris County between July 2020 and May 2021. Altogether, CN Texas received 481 completed surveys from households across the county, and respondents provided insights into their internet connectivity, or lack thereof. Data from Morris County are compared to data from across dozens of other rural Connected participating communities across Michigan, Ohio, Texas, and Pennsylvania to benchmark and identify areas for improvement.

Households – Quick Facts	
Fixed Home Broadband Adoption[3]	66.3%
Average Monthly Cost of Internet	$81.61
Average Download Speed	25.69 Mbps
Households Satisfied with Service	53.0 %

Source: Morris County Household Survey conducted by CN Texas
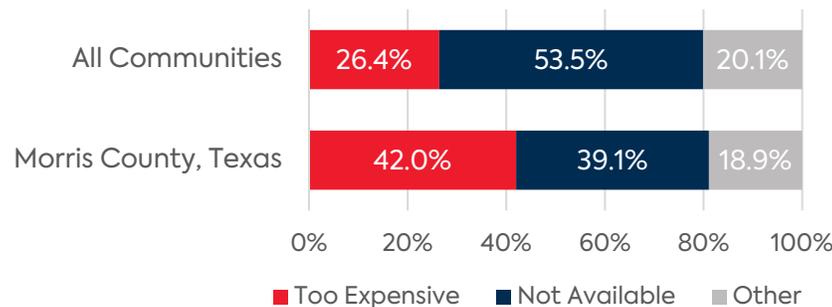
ADOPTION

Home Broadband Adoption

Legend: ■ Fixed ■ Non-Fixed ■ No Connection

	Fixed	Non-Fixed	No Connection
All Communities	61.8%	19.4%	18.7%
Morris County, Texas	66.3%	13.8%	19.9%

In Morris County, 66.3% of households that took the survey subscribe to fixed broadband service delivered via a cable, DSL, fiber, or fixed wireless technology. Also, 13.8% of respondents indicate they have internet service, but it is delivered via dial-up, satellite, or a mobile wireless service. This leaves just about one-fifth (19.9%) of survey respondents without internet access at home.

Primary Barrier to Home Broadband Adoption

	Too Expensive	Not Available	Other
All Communities	26.4%	53.5%	20.1%
Morris County, Texas	42.0%	39.1%	18.9%

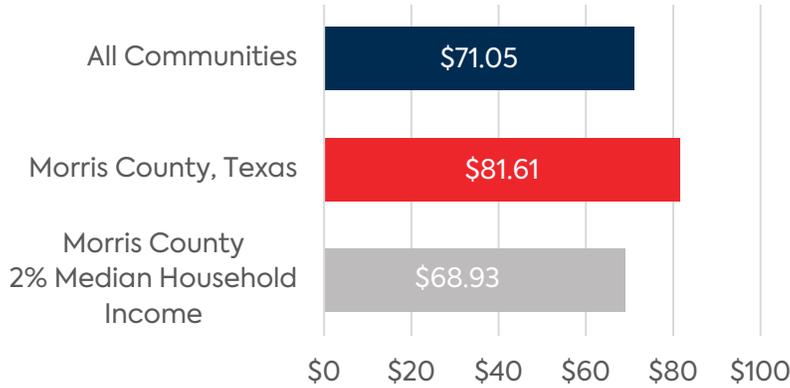Legend: ■ Too Expensive ■ Not Available ■ Other

Among those without a home internet connection, 42% indicate that it was too expensive, while 39.1% said they did not have broadband because it was not available to them. Like in many communities, cost and availability are the two primary barriers to home broadband adoption.

---

[3] Fixed home broadband connections are those provided by cable, DSL, fiber, or fixed wireless technology.

CONNECTION DETAILS

Average Monthly Cost for Home Internet Service

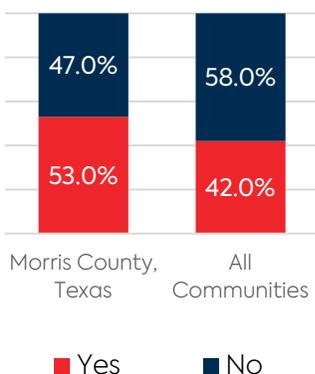| Category	Cost
All Communities	$71.05
Morris County, Texas	$81.61
Morris County 2% Median Household Income	$68.93

Respondents indicate that, on average, their internet connection costs about $81.61 per month. This is higher than monthly costs in other communities ($71.05). Additionally, as 2% of monthly income is a recognized standard for measuring the affordability of a home internet connection, 2% of the median household income in Morris County is $68.93 per month.

Average Download Speed (Mbps)

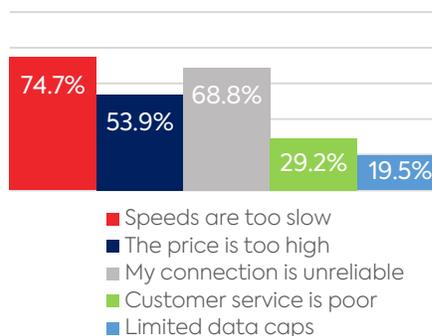| Category	Speed (Mbps)
All Communities	33.82
Morris County, Texas	25.69
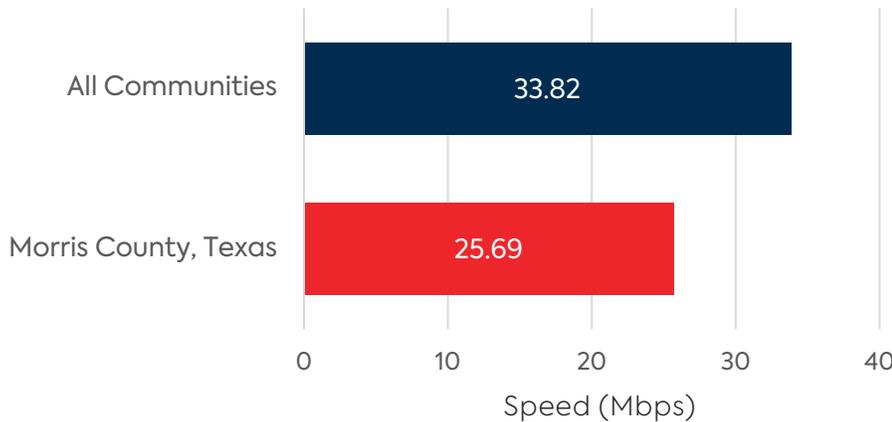
The FCC currently defines broadband as an internet connection with a download speed of at least 25 Mbps and upload speed of at least 3 Mbps. On average, respondents indicate that their connection's download speed is 25.69 Mbps, which is lower than household connections in other communities (33.82 Mbps).
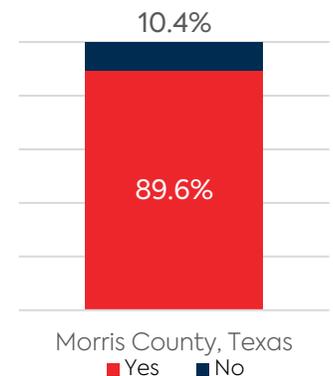
Does Your Internet Connection Meet Your Needs?

	Yes	No
Morris County, Texas	53.0%	47.0%
All Communities	42.0%	58.0%

Why Does Your Connection Not Meet Your Needs?

- Speeds are too slow: 74.7%
- The price is too high: 53.9%
- My connection is unreliable: 68.8%
- Customer service is poor: 29.2%
- Limited data caps: 19.5%

Are You Interested in Additional Internet Choices at Home?

Morris County, Texas
- Yes: 89.6%
- No: 10.4%

CONNECTED NATION℠ Texas

Competition provides residents with choices for service, allowing households the ability to switch providers if their current service does not meet their needs. More than one-half (53%) of respondents indicate that their internet connection does meet their needs, unlike all communities where less than one-half (42%) of respondents were satisfied with their internet service. For those who indicated dissatisfaction with their connection, when asked why their connection does not meet their needs, about three-quarters of households indicate that the speed is too slow. About 50% say the price is too high, and nearly 70% indicate that the connection is unreliable (respondents could choose more than one reason). Finally, nearly 90% of respondents indicate that they are interested in additional internet choices for their home.

MOBILE CONNECTIVITY

Over two-thirds of Morris County households (67.3%) report that they subscribe to mobile internet service which they access via a smartphone or similar mobile device. This is slightly lower than reported in other Connected communities (73.0%).

Additionally, 14.7% of those households report that they rely on their mobile connection at home as their primary source of internet connectivity, and 18.9% use mobile service to connect other household devices to the internet.

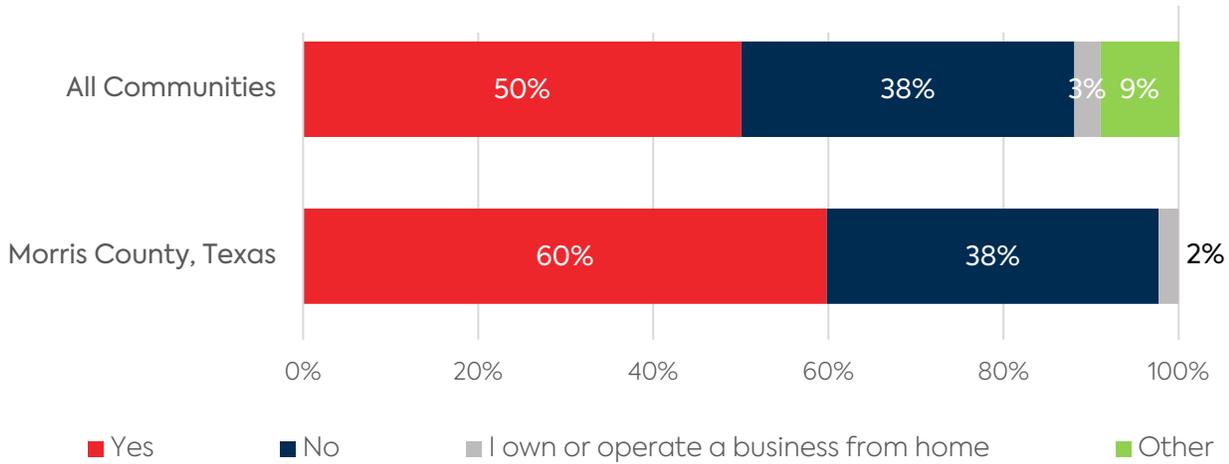**Households Subscribing to Mobile Internet Service**

	Morris County, Texas	All Communities
No	32.7%	27.0%
Yes	67.3%	73.0%

■ Yes ■ No
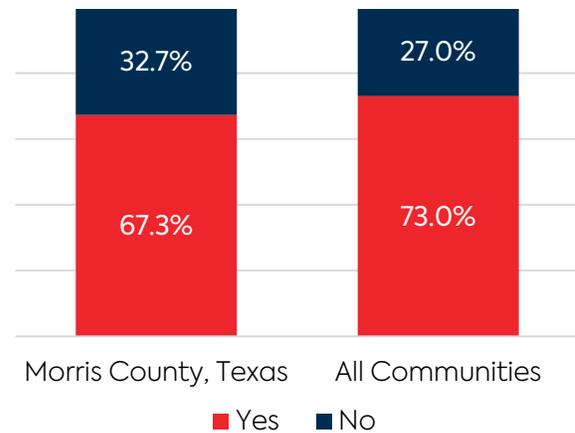
47.2%
of households that subscribe to mobile internet service rely on that service as their secondary home internet source
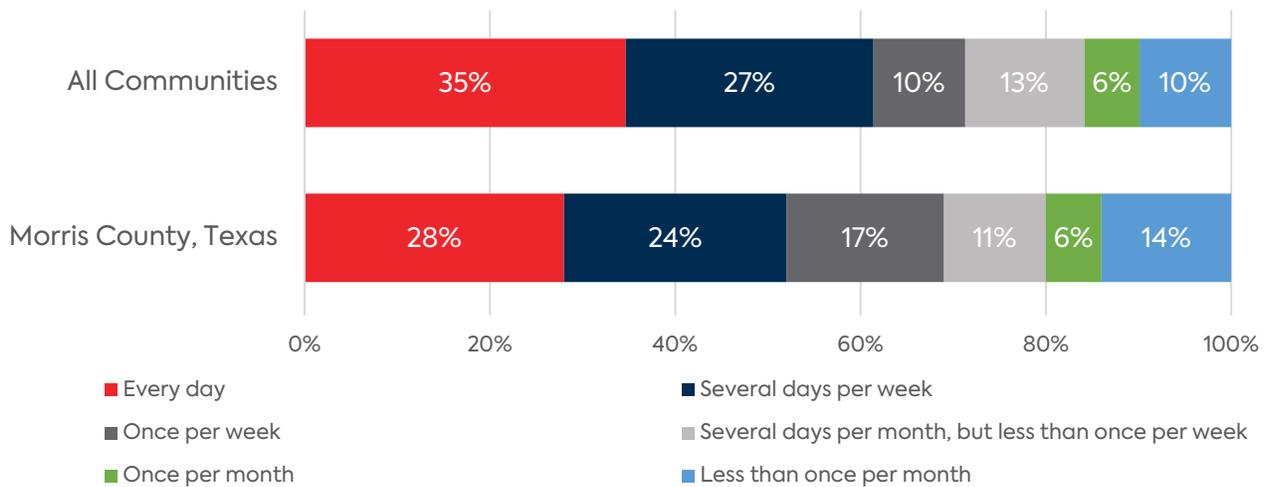
CONNECTED NATION℠
Texas

TELEWORK

Teleworking, or telecommuting, refers to working outside of the conventional workplace and communicating with it by way of telecommunications or computer-based technology. The COVID-19 pandemic forced many organizations to allow staff to telework. Teleworking is quickly becoming a critical part of growing a local economy because it represents an opportunity to attract or retain employees even though their employer may not be located within the community. The COVID- 19 lockdowns helped to accelerate adoption of teleworking temporarily — and in some instances for the long-run. However, this only works if those employees have access to advanced broadband infrastructure. Three out of five employed survey respondents (60%) in Morris County indicate that they telework at least part of the time. This is more than residents in other communities. It is important to note that COVID-19 likely had a dramatic impact on the teleworking data.

Do You Currently Telework for Your Job?

	Yes	No	I own or operate a business from home	Other
All Communities	50%	38%	3%	9%
Morris County, Texas	60%	38%	2%	

How Frequently Do You Telework?

	Every day	Several days per week	Once per week	Several days per month, but less than once per week	Once per month	Less than once per month
All Communities	35%	27%	10%	13%	6%	10%
Morris County, Texas	28%	24%	17%	11%	6%	14%

9

RECOMMENDATIONS

Goal 1: Identify a single point of contact to organize and lead all broadband initiatives in Morris County.

To ensure the success of the community action plan and to equip Morris County with the necessary tools for broadband growth, the community will centralize broadband expansion and improvement efforts in one office through a broadband ambassador. Ideally this broadband ambassador will 1) promote broadband and technology access, adoption, and use; 2) serve as the go-to resource for broadband and technology for the community; 3) seek ways to educate and empower the community regarding broadband and related technology; 4) take priority action on recommendations from the community technology plan and implement other programs that are necessary and beneficial to the growth of the community; 5) monitor federal grant applications and expenditures. While the broadband ambassador serves at the pleasure of the Commissioners Court, his/her office should be located within the local Chamber of Commerce or Morris County Collaborative, given the connection these organizations have to businesses and other community institutions. The ambassador should function as the ultimate broadband leader in Morris County. The ambassador's goal should be to increase digital engagement in the community through greater broadband access, adoption, and use.

Objective:

The Morris County Commissioners Court should centralize broadband leadership through the appointment of a single broadband ambassador who will oversee and facilitate technology initiatives on behalf of the county.

Actions:

Action 1 – The Morris County Commissioners Court should appoint one person to serve as a broadband ambassador. This person can be designated or contracted by the county to serve in this capacity but should ultimately receive appointment from the Commissioners Court. It is important that this ambassador be empowered to act with autonomy on behalf of the county when addressing broadband needs. Furthermore, it is important that the local unit of government take ownership in the appointment of the ambassador as this person will be the leading voice for broadband advancement. When selecting someone to serve as the ambassador, the Court should choose someone who is knowledgeable on broadband, understands the demographics and needs of Morris County, and is prepared to work collaboratively with community organizations.

Action 2 – The community should identify an agreed-upon list of duties the broadband ambassador will be responsible for in his/her official capacity. Furthermore, the broadband ambassador should identify county stakeholders and representatives from regional organizations and broadband providers who can augment his/her work as the central authority on broadband. These partnerships should be used to further the community's broadband agenda and ensure this action plan is adopted in a timely fashion.

Responsibilities of the broadband ambassador could include:
- Serve as the go-to resource for broadband information within the immediate community
- Educate county on broadband programs, opportunities and benefits

- Monitor grant expenditures within county; report concerns to Commissioners Court
- Stay up to date on current broadband grant programs at state and local level and apply to programs as necessary (see the Internet Society and Connected Nation references below)
- Work with community organizations and internet service providers on broadband initiatives

Community stakeholders to consider:

- Chambers of Commerce: Daingerfield, Lone Star, Omaha
- County IT Director
- School IT Director
- Morris County Collaborative President
- Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas
- Ark-Tex Council of Governments
- Internet Service Providers

Action 3 – The broadband ambassador should foster working relationships with internet service providers in the county. This includes those providers who were awarded Rural Digital Opportunity Funds (RDOF). The ambassador should conduct follow-up meetings with providers who attended the Morris County Provider Meeting in May. Should Morris County be interested in further conversation with Guggenheim Partners, the ambassador should schedule a follow-up to the May meeting. Additionally, the ambassador should connect with the RDOF winners for Morris County and maintain awareness of ongoing project progress.

Provider Meeting Attendees:

- Charlie Cano – Etex Communications
- Steven Steele – Peoples Telephone Cooperative
- Mason Dufield - Peoples Telephone Cooperative
- Sohrab Shahandeh – Suddenlink/Altice Communications
- Ed Serna – Charter Communications

RDOF:
- Nextlink: 7 locations, $21,700
- CCO Holdings (Charter): 1.089 locations, $1,420,000
- Windstream: 66 locations: $106,690

Guggenheim Partner:
- Taylor Harrington

Responsible Parties:

Local units of government; Broadband providers; Community and regional organizations

Timeline:

The Commissioners Court should designate the broadband ambassador within 12 weeks of this plan.

Resources:

- Guide to Federal Broadband Funding Opportunities in the U.S. https://www.internetsociety.org/resources/doc/2021/guide-to-broadband-funding-opportunities-in-us/
- Current Broadband Funding https://connectednation.org/current-broadband-funding
- BroadbandUSA: Federal Funding Guide https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/resources/federal
- Texas Broadband Providers by County https://connectednation.org/texas/planning/
- Members of the Morris County Collaborative Board https://morriscountycollab.com/board-members-and-partnerships/

Goal 2: Increase Digital Engagement in Morris County through free and reduced cost services.

Morris County has a population of 12,373 people, and according to survey results, the community has one public computing center with five computers. This is an average of 2,474 people per device. K–12 survey results indicate the average device-per-student ratio is 0.74, indicating the supply does not meet the demand. These K–12 numbers are largely indicative of the community's device availability prior to TEA's Operation Connectivity Program. It is paramount that Daingerfield-Lone Star ISD and Pewitt CISD remain up-to-date and engaged with this important program so that all students have access to digital devices.

In a community where the poverty rate is higher than the state average and the median household income is lower than the state average, there is a unique need for free and reduced-price digital services. In Morris County, this need also includes digital literacy and digital skills training to equip residents with personal and professional digital skills. Looking long-term, digital engagement is paramount to the economic success of Morris County, its businesses and residents, and their overall wellbeing. With increased digital engagement comes greater job opportunities, economic benefits, quality of life, and community development.

Objective:

Increase access, availability, and use of public broadband services through expanded free Wi-Fi, additional public computing centers and devices, and digital literacy and skills training courses.

Actions:

Action 1 – Within one month of this action plan, Morris County should document free, public Wi-Fi availability in the community, focusing on institutions that are frequented most often by students, low-income residents, the elderly, and teleworkers. Results of the inventory should be analyzed to determine community areas and institutions most in need of public Wi-Fi expansion or creation. The aforementioned broadband ambassador should meet with community providers and stakeholders to determine if they can assist in Wi-Fi expansion efforts. Discussions can explore the possibility of advantageous partnerships for businesses, broadband

providers, and community institutions to expand Wi-Fi throughout the community. Locations to consider as Wi-Fi hubs include:

- Parks: Daingerfield State Park, Lone Star City Park, Irvin Park, White Oak Creek Wildlife Management Area, Naples City Park
- Government Buildings: Morris County Courthouse, Lone Star City Hall, Omaha City Hall, Naples City Hall
- Schools: Daingerfield-Lone Star ISD, Pewitt CISD

Action 2 – To ensure all residents have access to the internet, Morris County should increase the number of publicly available computers in frequently accessed locations. This can include increasing the number of devices in locations that currently serve the public or the addition of computers, laptops, and tablets in locations that currently have none. Locations to consider include Daingerfield Public Library, Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas (Daingerfield), chamber of commerce, schools, and government buildings. The county can use grant funds to acquire new devices or partner with community organizations and internet service providers to outfit buildings with computing devices.

Action 3 – Community institutions should publicize Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) information to residents. EBB is an FCC program that provides a temporary discount on monthly broadband bills for qualifying low-income households. This program could provide a financial break for those who would otherwise be unable to afford broadband at home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Organizations who should market the program include:

- Chambers of Commerce: (Daingerfield, Lone Star, Omaha)
- Morris County Collaborative
- Daingerfield Public Library
- Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas

Action 4 – Access to the internet is but one piece of the puzzle. Ultimately, Morris County needs to educate residents, business owners, elected officials, and community stakeholders on the importance of digital engagement and equip them with the necessary tools to navigate online platforms and devices. Not only should residents feel comfortable engaging online, but they should seek out the benefits offered by online platforms and tools. As such, the aforementioned broadband ambassador should identify regional and community partners who possess resources and expertise in producing free digital literacy and digital skills workshops. Curriculum should be developed using publicly available programs, such as AARP and Digital Learn (resources linked below), and county-sourced information and should be offered to the public. Classes should take place at local facilities, such as the library or school gym, and be promoted through local media. Workshops should address specific topics ranging from skills necessary for the workforce to how to use broadband safely in your everyday life. Workshops should utilize local stakeholders such as police officers who can speak on cybersecurity and small business owners who can share personal experiences about social media use.

Workshop topics to consider:

- Navigating Social Media
- How to use Microsoft Office Suite
- Online safety Tips and Tricks
- How-To Teleconference

Community Partners can include:

- Chambers of Commerce (Daingerfield, Lone Star, Omaha)
- Morris County Collaborative
- Daingerfield Public Library
- Schools: (Daingerfield-Lone Star IS, Pewitt CISD)
- Institutions and businesses who would directly benefit from greater digital adoption
  - Banks
  - Telehealth providers (i.e., Titus Regional Medical Center)
  - Online schools (i.e., Northeast Texas Community College)

Responsible Parties:

Community institutions: businesses, schools, libraries, organizations; local government leaders and elected officials; broadband providers; community residents

Timeline:

Public Wi-Fi is the most immediate way to connect a large group of people within a rural community. As such, Morris County should take action on expanding Wi-Fi access within one month of receiving this plan. Further digital skills and literacy training programs should be implemented by the end of Q1 2022.

Resources:

- Emergency Broadband Benefit https://connectednation.org/ebbprogram/
- Free Wi-Fi Hotspot Locator Apps https://www.lifewire.com/free-online-wifi-hotspot-locators-818276
- Texas Broadband Providers by County https://connectednation.org/texas/planning/
- The complete guide to digital skills https://www.futurelearn.com/info/blog/the-complete-guide-to-digital-skills
- AARP Joins with Nonprofit to Teach Tech to Older Adults https://www.aarp.org/about-aarp/info-2021/oats-senior-planet.html
- Digital Learn: Use a computer to do almost anything! https://www.digitallearn.org/
- US Census: Morris County, Texas https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?g=0500000US48343
- Texas Education Agency's Operation Connectivity Playbook https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/operation_connectivity_playbook.pdf
- Rural Digital Opportunity Fund: https://www.fcc.gov/auction/904

Goal 3: Improve long-term quality of life for Morris County residents through broadband internet offerings.

Through the Connected program, Morris County evaluated the community's broadband environment, analyzing internet needs and wants of residents and evaluating rates of broadband access, adoption, and use among key community sectors. The broadband assessment is intended to inform a community action plan that will help improve resident's quality of life, increase economic development, and lead to overall community development and prosperity. Broadband is an integral part of everyday life, and it is important for Morris County to ensure residents have the resources, skills, and opportunity to engage online in pursuit of social,

economic, and professional growth.

Objective:

Demonstrate the importance (personal, professional, and economic benefits) of broadband in a digitally-inclusive and evolved community.

Actions:

Action 1 – Morris County leaders should identify key advocates in each of the following areas who will work in tangent with the broadband ambassador to educate the general community about the short and long-term benefits of broadband adoption.

- Economy → Economic Development, Morris County Collaborative, Commissioners Court
- Telehealth → Titus Regional Medical Center, Family Care Center, Phynet Hughes Springs Clinic
- Telework → Chambers of Commerce, Workforce Solutions NE TX, School Superintendents (Sandra Quarles, Melissa Reid)
- Communication → Broadband Providers

Promote e-commerce as the gateway to the global economy: As businesses and community organizations expand their online presence, they expand their customer pool and ultimately increase profit. By utilizing websites and social media to market services and sell products, businesses can take part in a larger digital economy. As Morris County businesses succeed in the global market, the benefit will be sown directly in the community through increased employment, increased wages, and greater economic success.

Showcase physical health and time-saving benefits of telehealth services: The future of medicine is online. For communities who lack large hospitals, general practitioners, surgical attendees, and medical specialists, telehealth is a natural substitute. Online medical services allow communities to speak with top-of-the-line doctors, dentists, surgeons, dermatologists, veterinarians and other providers through a click of a button. These online services are not only important in times of emergency, but they allow residents flexibility when meeting with medical professionals. No longer do you have to take off work to drive to the clinic, but rather you can step outside your office building and speak to your physician through your phone and then return to your desk.

Highlight economic and practical advantages of telework: Americans have long valued flexible work schedules including work-from-home and part-time shifts. The COVID-19 pandemic further showcased just how important it is for homeowners and renters alike to be able to reliably connect to the internet to fulfill their professional obligations. By teleworking, an employee can reside in rural Morris County but be employed by a company in Dallas, Houston, Lubbock, or another state entirely. Ultimately, this can be used as a marketing tool by the community when attracting new residents: live here, enjoy a lower cost of living, but don't give up your online job! Telework expands employee and employer options which in turn can lead to greater economic success. The key to telework is adequate digital skills to engage online and a reliable internet connection.

Expand use of digital communication for personal and professional networking: Broadband is what allows a grandmother to FaceTime her grandchildren who live seven states away in the middle of a global pandemic. Broadband is what empowers communication today; it is what connects people and allows them to stay engaged, informed, and close despite time and space. As technology and society continues to evolve, broadband will continue to be the common thread in all things communication. Broadband will be how companies communicate (be it Zoom calls, Microsoft Teams Conferences) or how families stay connected.

Action 2 – The broadband ambassador should integrate discussion of quality of life into digital literacy and digital skills workshops. Information about upcoming workshops should be readily accessible and widely publicized. This includes advertising about upcoming workshops through social media, on government websites, in local newspapers, and other local outlets (i.e., advertisements in the water bill, flyers at the local park, and school announcements). General discussion about the benefits of broadband on the community's overall wellbeing and development should be added to Commissioners Court meetings, City Council meetings, and other already established countywide meetings.

Responsible Parties:

Residents; local units of government; community organizations; businesses; internet service providers

Timeline:

With greater broadband adoption and use comes greater quality of life. As such, Morris County should implement short- and long-term solutions designed to encourage digital engagement. Immediate actions, including disseminating information about the importance of broadband, should begin within one month of this action plan. Long-term solutions including infrastructure development and improvements should be contracted, scheduled, in-progress or completed no later than 2025.

Resources:

- Improving the Quality of Life in Rural America With Broadband Internet https://bonfire-ec.com/improving-the-quality-of-life-in-rural-america-with-broadband-internet/
- Implementing Productive Teleworking with Business-Quality Mobile Communications https://tango-networks.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Tango-Networks-Trend-Advisor-Productive-Teleworking-with-Mobile-Communications-v15May2020.pdf
- How Better Broadband Access Will Help Telemedicine Reach Its Full Potential https://intouchhealth.com/how-broadband-will-help-telemedicine-reach-its-full-potential/
- Texas Broadband Providers by County https://connectednation.org/texas/planning/
- The Benefit that Broadband Internet Offers for Ecommerce https://www.newsanyway.com/2020/02/26/the-benefits-that-broadband-internet-offers-for-ecommerce/

Interactive Map: https://connectednation.org/texas/morris/interactivemap

Full Survey Results: https://connectednation.org/texas/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2021/06/Morris-County_Portal-Responses_06252021.pdf