

FUTURE TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN THE NEW RIVER VALLEY

Clearly, the New River Valley needs telecommunication capacities that are currently unavailable and/or unaffordable. The NRV survey revealed:

- 82% of responses said that Internet technology is “Very Important” to their organization/business in the next 5 years; another 16% said “Somewhat Important.”
- 76% said Yes, their organization/business would benefit from an affordable broadband Internet connection.
- Of 15 largest employers (employing 11,646) many reported already needing to do functions which require broadband (see Table 8).

Though many potential uses of a regional broadband cannot yet be imagined, many “future uses” are already in high demand in the New River Valley (Table 8).

TABLE 8

"Future Uses" for Broadband Needed by Top 15 Employers *		
	Yes	%
Voice over IP	7	46.7%
Teleworking	6	40.0%
Making payments	6	40.0%
Receiving orders/payments	6	40.0%
Education/training	6	40.0%
Videoconferencing	7	46.7%
Large file transfer	4	26.7%
Network storage/backup	2	13.3%
Communications with remote sites	6	40.0%
Monitor and control for security, health, etc.	9	60.0%
Disaster recovery/avoidance	4	26.7%
<i>*Currently employ 11,646 people.</i>		

While some “next generation” uses are already in demand in the New River Valley as seen above, others are only vague wishes at the moment, like improved healthcare access, security monitoring, family care models, and improving community connectedness and cohesiveness (*see sidebar and Appendix C for details from visioning session.*)

Benefits of Broadband

- Increased productivity (acquisition, use and distribution of information) and economic activity (including enterprise and job creation), higher incomes
- Instant, virtually unlimited access to businesses, universities and other entities worldwide, driving economic generation
- Improved access to healthcare
- Improved access to education and information
- Expanded communication and entertainment options

New River Valley Vision:

Greater bandwidth and services will be provided to meet current demands and future needs, enabling affordable access to 100-megabit service for everyone in the New River Valley.

New River Valley Goal:

An open-access service network with three levels will be established--inter-county, intra-county and local access—through regional coordination and collaboration.