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Jefferson County Needs Your Input
Please Complete the Broadband Assessment Today

Jefferson County, OR – (April 8, 2022) – The Jefferson County Broadband Assessment is now live at www.jeffco.net/jc-eCheckup. The assessment, sponsored by Jefferson County, the City of Madras, and The Bean Foundation, is a critical first step in identifying gaps in infrastructure in the rural county, gauging residents' and businesses' access to robust broadband, and to understanding how "future ready" robust broadband would benefit the region.

A slightly adapted assessment for residents and businesses located on the Warm Spring Reservation is also available at www.jeffco.net/jc-eCheckup.

"We are asking that every household in Jefferson County complete the household eCheckup from their home and that every owner or manager of a business and organization located in Jefferson County complete a business eCheckup from their business," said Lori Gleichman, the coordinator for the Jefferson County Broadband Action Team. "This is important because it will help us accurately map where infrastructure is (and isn't) and what kind of services are available."

Why is this assessment important and what is the purpose? "Oregon estimates it will receive approximately $200 million in federal funding through the American Rescue Plan Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act," said Gleichman. "Data from the detailed assessments will put Jefferson County in a good position to apply for potential funding to move forward with infrastructure design and engineering that can address our rural challenges."

For example, a survey conducted by the City of Madras found that small business owners know that technology strengthens their businesses, but that existing infrastructure is a weakness for the economy. A survey by the Jefferson County School District found that 30% of parents needed more support to use technology and/or distance learning platforms, and 20 percent of households with children didn't have WIFI or a computer.

An even longer-term view of investing in robust broadband infrastructure for Jefferson County will drive innovation and advanced services, grow a more diverse and more sustainable economy, broaden education and workforce development opportunities, improve health and well-being, and enhance quality of life.

The broadband assessment is funded by an Economic Development Agency grant awarded to Jefferson County. Staff from the City of Madras is acting as administrator of the project, and Strategic Networks Group (SNG) has been engaged to design and conduct the broadband assessment.

SNG has many success stories that show their approach to digging deep for data works. "The assessment tool documents needs and market demand, which is what funders and investors need to understand when considering grant and loan applications," said Michael Curri, president of SNG. "Using the data that we provided, Custer County Economic Development Corporation in Colorado was able to secure $2 million in federal funds to build additional infrastructure that brought new or improved broadband to an additional 40% of its residents."

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Options for Completing the Household and Business Broadband Assessments

"We understand that many of the people we need to hear from the most have the least access to digital tools and good connectivity," said Gleichman. "That's why we're working with partner groups to create options to complete the eCheckups."

The eCheckups are formatted for mobile phones and devices with cell service or connected to WIFI. You can complete the assessment using any publicly available internet or WIFI connection. For example, WIFI is available at McDonald's, the lobbies of City Hall or the County Courthouse, schools, and coffee shops and businesses.

The survey can be completed on publicly available computers at the Jefferson County Library, 241 SE 7th Street, Madras, from 10 am to 5:30 pm Mondays through Fridays, and 10 am to 3 pm on Saturdays (closed Sundays). There is an option to opt out of a speed testing if using a publicly available device.

The survey can be completed on publicly available computers at the COCC Madras Campus, 1170 E Ashwood Road. Just stop into the lobby and see the front desk attendant for help logging on and finding the survey. You do not need to be a current student or staff. There is an option to opt out of a speed testing if using a publicly available device. COCC Madras hours are:
8 a.m. - 8 p.m. Monday - Thursday
8 a.m. - 5 p.m. on Fridays
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. on Saturdays

If you prefer to read about the assessment in another language, select the Google Translate option at the upper right-hand corner of the www.jeffco.net home page. Once you click on the link to the household and/or the business eCheckup, you can select Spanish in the upper right-hand corner drop-down menu.

Warm Springs residents and business owners should complete the Warm Springs version on www.jeffco.net/jc-eCheckup. Cultural Horizons LLC, a consulting practice based in Madras, is also working to enhance outreach to more remote communities on the Warm Springs Reservation.

"We also plan to hold some community meetings to explain the process more thoroughly, answer questions and concerns, and gain deeper insights into what specific communities consider priorities and appropriate options," Gleichman said.

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