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Kentucky Launches Free Statewide Wi-Fi Speed Test to Better Connect People to School, Business and Government Services

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Jan. 18, 2021) – Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman announced today the launch of the Kentucky Broadband Speed Test, a crowd-sourcing project that will gather data from Kentuckians needed to expand internet home access for distance learning, telework and telehealth. Kentuckians can take the free, anonymous speed test from Jan. 19 to Feb. 18 at ewdc.ky.gov/Initiatives/Pages/KBI.aspx (http://ewdc.ky.gov/Initiatives/Pages/KBI.aspx).

To participate, the device must be connected to your home Wi-Fi service and disconnected from a virtual private network (VPN) that may be connected to a workplace or school. For the most accurate results, ensure that no one else connected to your home internet is using a substantial portion of the internet bandwidth for activities such as streaming video or gaming during the test.

Individuals without Wi-Fi access in their home can visit their local library or other locations such as stores or restaurants that offer free internet access to submit the address of a home with no available service.

“We need as many Kentuckians as possible to take this internet speed test, to get an accurate picture of who has adequate internet access across the state,” said Gov. Andy Beshear. “The more speed tests taken, the better understanding we will have of our state’s internet capabilities, and the better prepared we will be to repair and expand it.”

The Governor noted that the budget proposal he recently offered up before the General Assembly contains $50 million dedicated to the last mile of broadband to areas in need. This historic investment would be the first time state money funded an expansion of broadband, which the pandemic has shown to be crucial to schools, telehealth, business and more.

This announcement comes after the Beshear-Coleman Administration first dedicated $8 million in CARES Act funding to broadband expansion in August 2020. Since then, Kentucky has reduced the number of students without internet access from 35,000 to 13,000. The speed test marks the second step in the state’s initiative to build a better Kentucky for everyone through expanded broadband access.

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In addition to finding out their own upload and download speeds, Kentuckians who participate in the speed test will help detect slow spots around the state and where Wi-Fi access and affordability are lacking. The speed test can be done from any device connected to the Wi-Fi signal in your home.

“There is a digital divide in households across Kentucky, especially in rural areas, that has become even more apparent during the pandemic when so many people need it to attend school, go to work, get government services and conduct personal business from home,” Lt. Gov. Coleman said. “As an educator, I am especially concerned about the 13,000, or 2%, of Kentucky students who lack internet access at home so they are basically cut off from their teachers and classrooms. We have to do better by them.”

Although the Federal Communications Commission maps internet speeds, its results are sometimes based on the results of one location within a census block, which can cover several square miles in rural parts of the state. Those results are often inaccurate for residents or businesses in those locations.

Kentucky is partnering with geospatial engineering firm GEO Partners LLC, as well as The Center for Rural Development, to obtain actionable data.

To see images of the Speed Test in-progress, click here (https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/Speed-Test-Images.pdf).

For more information about the project, visit ewdc.ky.gov/Initiatives/Pages/KBI.aspx (http://ewdc.ky.gov/Initiatives/Pages/KBI.aspx).

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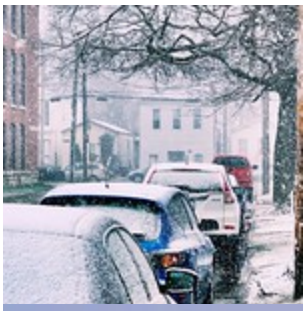
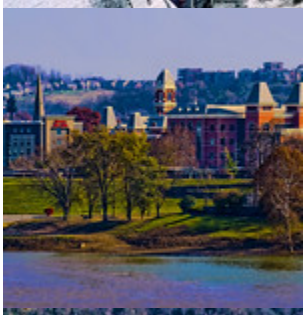
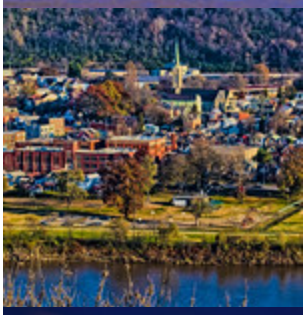
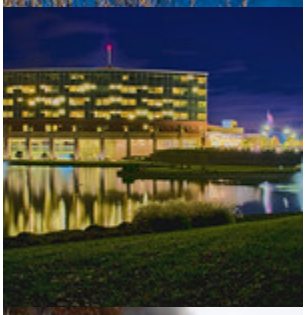
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/7372926@N06/47218320672/in/pool-773339@N20)
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/miamiboy/47184596121/in/pool-773339@N20)
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/miamiboy/47184413071/in/pool-773339@N20)
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/miamiboy/32275086277/in/pool-773339@N20)
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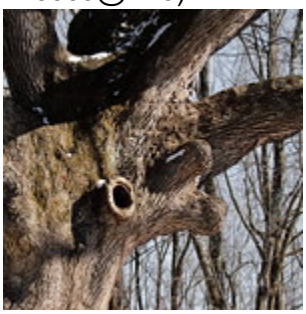
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/mcconnell_springs_photo_journal/46864760851/in/pool-773339@N20)
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