

Title: 92% OF OHIO HOMES HAVE ACCESS TO BROADBAND SERVICES, STUDY FINDS

Source: Gongwer News Services

Date: June 27, 2008

An overwhelming majority of Ohio households have access to broadband services, leaving residents of about 350,000 homes unable to obtain high-speed Internet connections, according to the findings of a statewide study released Friday.

The Connect Ohio survey indicated, however, that less than half of the homes without access would subscribe to a broadband service if they could.

The organization's research (Executive Summary) found that 55% of Ohio homes subscribe to broadband services despite the fact that 92% have access.

Of those who don't subscribe, 51% said they don't need the service or don't understand the benefits, 18% said it is too expensive and 13% said they don't own a computer. Overall, 13% of Ohio households use dial-up Internet services, while 21% of homes have no Internet services at all.

And the study found that broadband is available in 96% of urban homes compared to 79% of rural homes. (Service Availability Map)

Gov. Ted Strickland welcomed the release of the information, saying in a statement it offers a milepost in efforts to expand access across the state. "These maps will be critical tools in determining where we need to begin our work," he said. "And that work is crucial because more access to broadband means more economic growth, more job opportunity and a better quality of life for our families."

Steve Edmonson, the state's Chief Information Officer, said at a COSI event that Mr. Strickland recognizes the importance of broadband development, and also noted that partners from varying sectors also are working toward achieving the shared goal.

Brent Legg, Connect Ohio's interim executive director, said his organization is working to expand access to all areas of the state. He said, however, that the lack of computer ownership is a key issue that hampers expansion statewide.

Sen. Ray Miller (D-Columbus) welcomed the report, and the organization's donation of computers to 15 east Columbus families. He urged the recipients to use the machines for education, economic and civic involvement - not just social networking and music downloading.

The report also found that businesses that don't use broadband services have revenues below companies that do use the Internet.

The findings are based on live interviews conducted with 1,200 households between March 6 and March 15. Questions posed to the full sample have a 2.82% margin of error.