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Center for Regional Development

Carroll County deploys digital inclusion plan

CARROLL COUNTY, Ind. – Carroll County is excited to announce that it has been selected by the Purdue Center for Regional Development to be awarded a \$15,000 grant that will go towards supporting the county’s “digital inclusion plans,” which will determine the needs for broadband access and implementation in the community.

The grant was funded by Indiana’s largest electric supplier, Duke Energy, and the applicant counties were chosen by the Purdue Center for Regional Development. Five counties were provided this grant, including Boone, Carroll, Dearborn, Greene, and Rush counties. Dr. Roberto Gallardo, the director for the Purdue Center for Regional Development, said that because of the support from the Duke Energy Foundation, these counties will be provided with “the technical assistance that will help the local communities develop or implement their plans to address digital inclusion today.”

According to the Carroll County Economic Development Corporation, part of Carroll County’s low digital growth issue can be related to its current lack of broadband access and digital inclusion. Due to this grant, Carroll County will be able to implement a digital inclusion plan to combat these issues and compete in today’s rapidly digitizing economy and society.

The Carroll County Economic Development Corporation has created a 5-year digital inclusion plan that will adopt broadband technologies and implement them for social and economic benefits. The corporation’s digital inclusion plan will positively influence housing, internet expansion, community collaboration, new business attraction and workforce development initiatives.

Whether it was remote work, distance learning, or telehealth, the pandemic reinforced the value of broadband access and highlighted a digital divide between those who have access to the internet and those who do not. As I visit community leaders and customers in our service area, the urgent need for improved connectivity inevitably comes up. We want to make sure that Indiana can compete in today’s rapidly digitizing economy and society. Internet access has become an essential part of everyday life. Stan Pinegar, Duke Energy Indiana State President

Currently, three possible action plans are being administered in the county. The Rural-Urban Tech Hub in Camden will provide 24/7 access to classroom space and meeting rooms, serve over 100 homes in Camden with access to high-speed internet, include a telehealth room with secure access, and supply community assets, such as the town hall and library with high-speed internet. In addition, the Upper Room Youth Center in Delphi will provide Junior and Senior High School students from Delphi School Corporation tutoring, mentoring, and after school care. Lastly, public Wi-Fi access points will be installed in Riley Park and the Riley Park Annex in Delphi, supplying visitors with high-speed fiber internet.

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