



Space introduces Connect the Nation

Legislation designed to help bring broadband to Appalachia, other areas

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Continuing his drive to bring broadband to rural Appalachia, Congressman Zack Space (OH-18) has introduced the Connect the Nation Act, which replicates the successful Connect Kentucky program throughout the United States.

This program will provide grants to public-private partnerships that are working with states to make broadband service universal.

Monday morning, Space unveiled the legislation at the Annual Ohio Telecom Association Convention in Cleveland. Space addressed the conference of more than 100 industry professionals along with Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland.

"Innumerable American families and businesses are being left stranded on the side of the information superhighway," Space said. "If industries and companies are to have the ability to compete in the modern economy online, they must first have the access necessary to get there."

"The Commonwealth of Kentucky has had some amazing success in creating the conditions necessary to achieve a nearly 100 percent broadband coverage level. This legislation will allow other states - including Ohio - to replicate their successes," Space continued.

This program would create public-private partnerships that would:

- Benchmark current access.
- Map broadband resources.
- Build demand through grassroots, community outreach and education efforts.

Connect Kentucky was able to determine broadband availability and penetration to a very detailed degree by working with Internet providers. With this information, they were able to spot gaps in coverage and worked to fill those gaps.

In 2004, Kentucky had a 62 percent broadband coverage rate. By 2007, that has jumped to 92 percent, and they are expecting to reach 100 percent of the state by the end of the year. With only a \$7 million public-private investment, they were able to leverage \$700 million in private investment to bring nearly universal broadband coverage.

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