



## Internet Freedom for McHenry County

### Our Mission

We promote improved use of fiber technology to provide Internet access to business and communities within McHenry County that is sustainable, affordable, locally controlled, and provides for modernization of our common infrastructure.

True competition does not exist in the broadband space while costs to consumers rise and service delivery is diminished. This burden impedes the ability to attract businesses and support entrepreneurs while adding to already rising costs for our municipal service and government offices, students and schools, as well as families. We are all being left behind by outdated and expensive technology.

Without competition, telecom and cable companies are not being held accountable or investing in next-generation technology. This is a broken market that rewards companies like AT&T and Comcast to raise prices year after year without improving service.

By expanding fiber connectivity across the county, we can realize not only vastly improved connectivity, but harness an infrastructure improvement that far exceeds the capacity of copper cabling, while effectively breaking the current monopoly that exists today.

We will achieve this goal through collaboration of private businesses, civic leadership, and State and Federal grant money to reduce costs and improve services for everyone.

### Who We Are

Internet Freedom for McHenry County is a non-profit organization of community members joining together to drive civic action that will promote the improved use of fiber-optics that is sustainable, affordable, locally controlled, and provides for modernization of our common infrastructure to everyone within McHenry County.

Our goal is to collaborate with private business, elected officials, and community members to drive civic action that will reduce costs and provide the best solution for our county now and well into the future.



### **David Gutowsky, Founder and Public Interest Director**

David Gutowsky, our founder, serves as the Public Interest Director working to educate local civic groups and members of our community about what is possible for all of us to realize cheaper, faster Internet access for all. He is a graduate of Purdue University and a technology analyst working for private investment and business interests. As a telecommute consultant, David became aware of McHenry County's lack of adequate infrastructure while new, better fiber options were being implemented across the country in various municipalities. He soon began working with county officials and community leaders to explore viable options for improvement. This led to the formation of the Internet Freedom for McHenry County organization and mission.

For Media Inquiries, please call 815-575-8118 or email [david@imfc.co](mailto:david@imfc.co)

## **Quick Facts**

- 1) At least 39% of Americans cannot purchase the very basic levels of speed defined by the FCC as “basic broadband” (25 Mbps download, 3 Mbps upload).<sup>a,b,c,d</sup>
- 2) At least 39% of Rural areas have no service at all while 51% of all Americans have a single provider to choose from.<sup>a,b,c,d</sup>
- 3) Most of McHenry County has roughly two providers with the same speeds and costs offered using a “prevailing rate” model for higher charges over the term of the contract.<sup>e</sup>
- 4) One industry report measured consumer satisfaction for ISPs with an average score of 64 out of a possible 100 points ranking them as the worst across various industries.<sup>f</sup>
- 5) While consumer satisfaction fell, profits grew significantly for ISPs like Comcast and AT&T.<sup>g,h,i</sup>
- 6) Billions in fees, deregulations, and state and federal subsidies benefit CenturyLink, Comcast, AT&T, yet they still are not providing broadband in many areas.<sup>j</sup>
- 7) Market analysts at PricewaterhouseCoopers predict that cable and telecom giants will continue consolidation and vertical market integration efforts to balance projected losses in subscriptions, making the situation worse.<sup>k</sup>
- 8) Nearly 33% of Americans without Internet access cite the cost of service as the primary barrier.<sup>l</sup>
- 9) Community-owned fiber networks offered prices that are clear and consistent over time while Internet Service Providers typically charge initial low promotional or “teaser” rates that rise after an introductory period.<sup>e,l</sup>
- 10) The United States ranks 25<sup>th</sup> in the world for total broadband and fiber connections while American businesses pay more for median connection speeds overall, the ranking is worse for American families.<sup>m</sup>
- 11) Municipalities around the world realize greater efficiency and savings through e-government services.<sup>m</sup>
- 12) Just 4 out of every 100 subscribers in the U.S. receive 1,000 Mbps service, falling to behind sixteen countries such as France, Korea, Iceland, Belgium, Ireland, Hungary and Estonia.<sup>m</sup>

- a FCC Program Report, 2016 <https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/reports/broadband-progress-reports/2016-broadband-progress-report>
- b Slate, May 2011. Map to Nowhere. [http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/technology/2011/05/map\\_to\\_nowhere.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/technology/2011/05/map_to_nowhere.html)
- c FiveThirtyEight, Jan 2018. We Used Broadband Data We Shouldn't Have — Here's What Went Wrong. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/we-used-broadband-data-we-shouldnt-have-heres-what-went-wrong/>
- d Pew Research Center, May 2017. Digital gap between rural and nonrural America persists. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/05/19/digital-gap-between-rural-and-nonrural-america-persists/>
- e AT&T Rates and Terms, July 2018. <https://www.att.com/local/illinois/mchenry/>
- f American Customer Satisfaction Report, Satisfaction Rates by Industry, 2016. [http://www.theacsi.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=147&catid=&Itemid=212&i=Internet+Service+Providers](http://www.theacsi.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=147&catid=&Itemid=212&i=Internet+Service+Providers)
- g Comcast Earning Report, 2018. <https://www.cmcsa.com/financials/earnings>
- h Market Watch. <https://www.marketwatch.com/investing/stock/cmcsa/financials>
- i Market Watch. <https://www.marketwatch.com/investing/stock/t/financials>
- j The Book of Broken Promises: \$400 Billion Broadband Scandal & Free the Net, 2015. Bruce A Kushnick. Pg. 94-103, 119-141.
- k Farrell, Michael, MultiChannel News, "PwC: Cable Subs to Drop to 53.9M By 2018: New TV Subs Move to Satellite, IPTV," June, 2014 <https://www.multichannel.com/news/pwc-cable-subs-to-drop-to-539m-2018-374948#sthash.rnRvBiCl.dpuf>
- l Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society, Harvard University, "Community-Owned Fiber Networks: Value Leaders in America," 2018. <https://cyber.harvard.edu/publications/2018/01/communityfiber>
- m The Organisation for Economic Co-operation (OECD )Data Portal, Global Broadband Data, <http://www.oecd.org/sti/broadband/broadband-statistics/>