

Dear Town of Kinnickinnic Resident:

Thank you for contacting us regarding high speed internet service in Kinnickinnic. We understand your concerns and are equally frustrated by the limited availability of high-speed internet services in our town.

Internet service has been a discussion over the last number of years. A subcommittee looked into this issue a few years ago and determined the cost of broadband<sup>(1)</sup> ("cable") would be significant (est. \$10+ million). Over the years, individuals and groups of citizens have researched this issue and confirmed the estimated cost. This cost estimate does not include the monthly fee that everyone who hooked up to it would have to pay (est. \$100 a month and up, depending on provider and service).

Since the total budget for the year for our Town is around \$640,000, an investment this size would be a financial challenge, even if we had to come up with "only" half of that amount. Our annual expenditure for roads and fire and ambulance services need to be prioritized and typically takes more than 70% of our budget.

Various grants and opportunities come up from time to time, and we have looked at them as they were made available. One of the challenges we have is that Kinnickinnic is considered "underserved" rather than "no service available", and other areas may therefore be rated as higher priorities. Awarded grants are typically in the "hundreds of thousands of dollars" range. While this is a lot of money, it would not fundamentally change the difficulty the town would have to come up with the balance.

Wireless internet services, e.g. through AT&T, Verizon, or T-Mobile and others, are available in many locations of our town. Due to the rolling topography, individual residences may not be able to connect to all or any of these providers. Speed, data limits, and cost of the various plans may be another drawback and contribute to the overall frustration with available internet service.

On a more positive note, St. Croix county is one of only six communities that were selected in October for the new Wisconsin Broadband Connectors Pilot program cohort (see Gov. Evers' announcement from 10/15/20). The joint pilot program will help provide technical assistance to help these communities apply for federal, state, and private-sector broadband expansion funds. The Town of Kinnickinnic has adopted an ordinance and applied for Broadband Forward! Community Certification to signal we have taken steps to reduce obstacles to broadband infrastructure investment.

There is no question we all would like to have better internet options, and we encourage our residents to be engaged and provide constructive input. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any further questions or ideas you may have.

Sincerely,

Town Board of Kinnickinnic

<sup>(1)</sup> The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) defines high-speed internet, or broadband, as having a minimum download speed (how fast you receive data) of 25 megabits per second (Mbps) and a minimum upload speed (how fast you send data) of 3 Mbps.