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P3s Driving Kentucky's Broadband Expansion.

A Kentucky county is using private expertise to determine how to use public-private partnerships to provide efficient, countywide broadband access and, then link this infrastructure to a statewide fiber optic network under development.

Under a contract issued by Warren County, Connected Nation Exchange (CNX) will develop technical and financial models that will help the county to finance and develop broadband P3s, CNX announced Jan. 6.

CNX began working with the county to improve broadband services several years ago by analyzing the level and quality of existing services and helping local companies to figure out where to position antennas and other equipment to improve connectivity, reported the Bowling Green Daily News.

Warren County plans to connect to the statewide, 3,000-mile fiber-optic network Kentucky is developing through a P3 over three years to improve broadband access throughout all of its 120 counties. The state is partnering with Macquarie Capital to build the up-to-\$350 million network, which Macquarie will manage for 30 years. Internet and cell phone providers will lease the lines to provide connections to homes and cell phone networks.

Ron Bunch, president of the Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce said the county's ability to connect to the statewide network will attract high-tech and other companies to the county and that improvements already made are helping farmers to manage and sell their crops.

"Kentucky is unlocking the power of broadband statewide by unleashing public-private partnerships at the state and local levels," said CNX CEO Brian Mefford.

By NCPPT

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