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Photos Included

Whitley County Leaders Host Community High-Speed Internet Advocacy Workshop

Columbia City, Ind. (April 2, 2024) – Residents of Whitley County did their part to bring high-speed internet home to their communities on Wednesday, March 20, by participating in a workshop held at the Community Foundation of Whitley County in Columbia City, Ind.

Hosted by the Whitley County Economic Development Corporation, Whitley County Commissioner’s Office, Community Foundation Of Whitley County, in collaboration with Surf Internet, the event aimed to educate residents about the opportunities offered by the Indiana Connectivity Program (ICP) and guide them through the application process.

County Commissioner Theresa Baysinger praised the event, saying "I want to extend my sincere thanks to Surf Internet and the Whitley County Community Foundation for their instrumental support in hosting the recent event aimed at leveraging the Indiana Connectivity Program. They share our mission to ensure every resident and business in our community has access to reliable internet."

The statewide Indiana Connectivity Program is working to connect residents and businesses that lack access to broadband internet service with service providers, and assist in the expense of extending broadband to those locations. Residents are required to apply to the program individually so that the ICP can verify eligibility and assess each address on a case-by-case basis.

"Thank you to Surf Internet for their pivotal role in hosting the event for the Indiana Connectivity Program, helping connect our community to reliable internet," added President of Whitley County EDC Dale Buuck. "This effort not only enhances connectivity but strengthens our community's commitment to growth and opportunity."

Indiana residents and businesses without access to internet services, or those with service speeds less than 100 Mbps download, 20 Mbps upload, are eligible to apply. Internet service providers, including Surf Internet, will later have the opportunity to bid on state Next Level Connections Broadband Grant funds to help provide high-speed internet to communities in need.

Gene Crusie, Surf Internet CEO, was at the event to lend his support and enthusiasm, saying "We’re dedicated to helping the people of Whitley County get access to high-speed internet in whatever way we can. Through our experience in other communities, we know that when residents come together to make their voices heard, the ICP listens. We’re confident that this will make a positive difference in attracting critical grant funds in order to pave the way for high-speed internet."

Surf Internet team members were on hand to address questions and walk attendees through the application process at computer stations located throughout the community room at the REMC.

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Surf Internet is working to help underserved residents apply to this unique opportunity. To aid in the application process, Surf has a dedicated page for Indiana residents to apply at <https://surfinternet.com/icp>.

About Surf Internet

Surf Internet is an innovative fiber-optic internet company that serves as the essential gateway to connectivity across the Great Lakes region of Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois. The company is building a bridge to the wide-open future by delivering high-speed, reliable internet to homes and businesses in underserved, rural communities. Surf's 200-plus person team is local, giving them an edge when it comes to customer care and advocacy for the region. Headquartered in Elkhart, Ind., Surf also has offices in La Porte, Ind., Byron Center and Fowlerville, Mich., and Coal City and Rock Falls, Ill. Learn more at <https://surfinternet.com>.

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Caption: Surf Internet team members, Zach Sand and Luke Conner (second and third from left) of Sand Strategies, along with an IN state representative pose for a photo alongside Surf signage at the high-speed internet advocacy workshop held in Whitley County.



Caption: Surf CEO Gene Crusie helps a local resident apply for the Indiana Connectivity Program (ICP).



Caption: Surf team member Brad Alasauskas answers questions about the ICP and helps a Whitley County resident apply for the grant program.