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### **Surf Internet Leads Whitley County Event to Boost Broadband Access with Indiana Connectivity Program**

COLUMBIA CITY, Ind. (September 13, 2024) - Residents of Whitley County gathered recently at a community outreach event hosted by Surf Internet®, in partnership with the Whitley County Economic Development Corporation, Whitley County Commissioner’s Office, and the Community Foundation of Whitley County. The event, held at the South Whitley Community Library in Columbia City, provided attendees with essential information on how to secure high-speed internet services through the Indiana Connectivity Program (ICP).

The statewide ICP aims to connect residents and businesses lacking broadband access with service providers and assist in the expense of extending broadband to these locations. Residents must apply individually to allow the ICP to verify eligibility and assess each address on a case-by-case basis.

Indiana residents and businesses without access to internet services, or those with service speeds less than 100 megabits per second (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.

The August 20 event was part of Surf Internet’s ongoing commitment to advocate for improved broadband access in underserved areas. Surf has already made significant strides, securing a \$2.6 million grant through the ICP’s Round 10, announced in July—the highest award in the program’s two-year history. Combined with a \$12.9 million company match, Surf plans to connect over 8,000 homes and agribusinesses across 13 counties.

#### **Still Time to Apply**

ICP address enrollment is ongoing. Surf Internet has made the ICP application process accessible through an online guide available on their website at <https://surfineternet.com/icp>.

Gene Crusie, CEO of Surf Internet, emphasized the power of community action in the pursuit of better connectivity: “Community involvement is crucial to bringing high-speed internet to underserved areas. By applying to the ICP, residents are not only voicing their needs but also paving the way for transformative connectivity in their communities. We’re committed to supporting this process and helping Whitley County harness the full potential of fiber-optic technology.”

#### **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 250-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, Naperville, and Rock Falls, Ill. Learn more at <https://surfineternet.com>.

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**PHOTO CAPTION:** Whitley County residents gathered at the South Whitley Community Library in Columbia City, Ind., on August 20 for a Surf Internet information session to learn more about the Indiana Connectivity Program and application process.