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**Surf Internet Leads Multi-Year Fiber Effort in Whitley County, Indiana**

*First-to-market provider expands rural fiber-optic access without waiting on future federal programs*

**WHITLEY COUNTY, Ind.**, July 10, 2025 – [Surf Internet](#)® is building on years of momentum in Whitley County, Indiana, where it became the first fiber-to-the-home provider in 2021. With service now established in every incorporated community and expansion underway in rural areas, Surf has taken a leadership role in connecting underserved parts of the county.

Surf's network currently covers approximately 7,000 of the county's homes and businesses, with ongoing design and permitting work aimed at expanding that reach even further in 2025. Service has already been deployed in Columbia City, Churubusco, Larwill, Blue Lake, and South Whitley, with current expansion efforts targeting unincorporated communities such as Laud, Tunker, Coesse, Collins, and Tri-Lakes.

To date, Surf has secured \$960,000 in funding through the Indiana Connectivity Program (ICP), matched by \$4.6 million in private investment, to support fiber expansion throughout Whitley County. The county's designation as a certified Broadband Ready Community by the State of Indiana reflects its commitment to infrastructure investment and public-private collaboration. That commitment—reflected in the work of the Whitley County Broadband Task Force and County Commissioners—has helped make Surf's progress possible.

"Surf has been a consistent presence in our broadband efforts," said Commissioner Theresa Baysinger. "Their boots-on-the-ground approach, community involvement, and investment in rural Whitley County make them a natural partner in closing our digital divide."

In tandem with infrastructure growth, Surf continues to support community assets by providing no-cost fiber connections to organizations including the Whitley County Center for Youth, Whitley County Fairgrounds, and the Whitley County Community Foundation. Surf is also the internet and WAN provider for both Whitko Schools and Whitley County Consolidated Schools.

While Surf advances its buildout, other efforts to expand broadband—like the federal BEAD program—remain in the planning stages, with timelines stretching years into the future. Updates to the federal BEAD program, released June 6, 2025, have added new layers of uncertainty. The latest guidance from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) suggests that unlicensed fixed wireless technology may now be considered if it's the lowest-cost option for reaching rural addresses. For providers focused on long-term infrastructure like fiber, that shift raises questions about how communities will be served—and how long they may have to wait.

"We're not waiting to see how long BEAD funding might take—we're building now," said Gene Crusie, Surf CEO. "Rural communities need high-speed internet today, and we're committed to delivering it through local partnerships, strategic investment, and a clear vision for long-term connectivity."



That sense of urgency is driven by what’s at stake for families and students across rural Indiana.

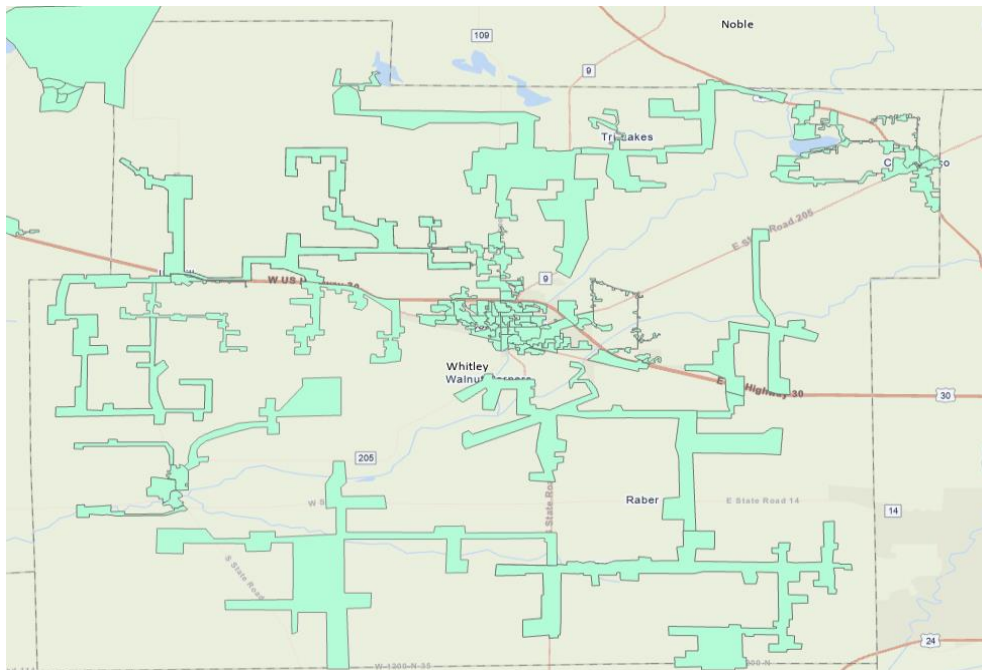
“The BEAD program was signed into law in November of 2021. For a child who was in 4th grade at the time, they could be a senior in high school before their home gets connected by BEAD,” said Steve Carender, Director of Special Funding at Surf Internet. “That kind of delay means missing out on years of educational and economic opportunity, which is why we’re committed to building now.”

As broader funding efforts continue to take shape, Surf’s work in Whitley County offers one example of how providers can move forward with infrastructure projects using the resources available now.

### 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 Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan. 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 300-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://surfinternet.com>.

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CAPTION: Map of Surf Internet’s fiber-optic network coverage in Whitley County, Indiana, including areas built through private investment and Indiana Connectivity Program (ICP) Rounds 10, 11, and 13.