

Results of Klickitat County High-Speed Internet Survey Announced

By Brian Wanless

Is it important to have high-speed broadband Internet service available to all residents of Klickitat County?

The Horizons Telecom Committee recently distributed a survey to county residents, with the help of Klickitat PUD.

The committee is made up of members from Klickitat County.

The survey asked basic questions to get a feel for the current Internet status in Klickitat County.

The survey was compiled by a team interested in having high-speed Internet service available to all residents at an affordable price. The services available to most residents are dial-up, DSL (digital subscriber line), satellite, wireless and cable.

About 9,600 homes were surveyed, with about 1,200 responding.

The responses were varied as to the quality of service and its reliability. Of the 1,200 responses, 960 had service from one of the above types, and 240 did not have service.

If this is a reliable sample, about 20 percent of Klickitat County residents do not have Internet service.

Rural areas seem to be the last areas to receive complete coverage. There are a lot of reasons for this. One reason is because there is a lot of forested land in the rural county, making it expensive to traverse and get lines through. The county has rough topography. Affordability becomes the biggest issue when it comes to getting high-speed Internet service to all residents.

The greatest concern with Internet service is the speed in which we can receive information from the Web. E-mail is the most popular



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use, and it does not need as much speed to receive as other files. However, when photos or other large files are attached, speed is more of a concern.

The second greatest use of the Internet noted in the survey is educational material. That usually comes with photos and/or video. To receive video requires even faster accessibility. This is a major concern.

Developing an Internet business is becoming an important avenue for

many residents in rural areas such as Klickitat County. The need for high-speed broadband service is crucial to their growth.

The survey results are a good indicator that this service would be welcome at an affordable cost.

The team will continue to search for ways to make it feasible and affordable to all residents and businesses in Klickitat County.

Survey committee members are:

- Monica Babine, Washington State University Energy Department.
- Robert Sandoval, CTED regional representative.
- Linda Williams, Horizons co-coach.
- Ava Vanvelsor, Horizons co-coach.
- Susan Kerr, Washington State University Klickitat Extension director.
- Tim Shatraw, Washington State University Learning Center.
- Brian Wanless, Goldendale Horizons support team.
- Jay McLaughlin, Mount Adams Resource Stewards.
- Jimmy Smith, Glenwood High School student.
- Nadine Huxley, Klickitat PUD.
- Doreen Hauser-Lindstrom, Washington State University Horizons.
- Mary Gumm, Embarq public affairs manager.
- Brian Adams, SAUNET.
- Michael Canon, Klickitat County Economic Development.
- Jim Bowery, Columbia Wizards Technology Support.
- Denny Newell, Klickitat County Economic Development.
- Philip Gallegos, Gorge Networks. ■