

Program to Provide Details on Regional Broadband Funding

The Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission is partnering with the Pennsylvania Office of Administration to present a public program that will describe the impact of a recent \$30 million grant to fund regional broadband infrastructure. The program will be presented on **Tuesday May 11 at 2:30 at the Clarion University Gemmell Student Complex**. The public is invited to attend. The presentation will be tailored to address the interests of “last-mile” Internet services and “anchor institutions” including schools, hospitals, public libraries, and other community facilities and organizations.

Officials will provide an overview of how the grant will be used to increase broadband availability in northwest Pennsylvania, and across the northern part of the state. Presenters will emphasize how the project will benefit individual citizens, communities, and other consumers of high-speed Internet services. Additionally, the program will emphasize how Internet service providers, organizations, and entrepreneurs might access the network under the required “open access and interconnectivity” provisions of the legislation that authorized the funding.

Information on other state and federal initiatives including the Federal Communications Commission National Broadband Plan, and the statewide broadband mapping project will be presented as well. A question and answer session will conclude the program.

To register visit <http://www.nwcommission.org/511event> or contact the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission at 814.677.4800.

The Northwest Commission has established and maintained programs to address broadband needs and concerns since desktop computers became essential tools for effective management of local governments. These programs have ranged from basic computer training for local government officials to extensive outreach, education, and technical assistance to expand broadband availability throughout the region. The technology and broadband initiatives of the Commission are guided by an the Technology Advisory Group, chaired by Clarion County Commission Donna Hartle. W. Randy Rice, Director of Community Development and Planning says, “Partnering with the Office of Administration to assist them in getting the word out about the impact of their broadband stimulus award represents an unprecedented opportunity for the region. If people turn out with the same passion and concern that they have demonstrated over the past two years, this will be a standing room only event!”

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Established in 1967, the Northwest Commission is a regional resource for business and economic development as well as community development and planning. The non-profit agency is composed of a team of skilled professionals dedicated to sustaining economic vitality and growth in the northwest Pennsylvania region by fostering local, state, and federal partnerships across public and private sector lines. The Northwest Commission provides programs such as business financing, government contracting, international marketing, grants, transportation, and technology assistance to eight counties in northwest Pennsylvania including: Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, and Warren.

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