

Gigabit speed Internet helps attract more business

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Image by: KERA WILLIAMS/ Special to the St

Kory Presnall, an installer for WebNX, runs cable to set up service for Rotor Bikes in Ogden on Friday, May 29, 2015.

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OGDEN — Whether it is transmitting a cancer patient’s medical history or getting in a few rounds of Call of Duty, ability to communicate quickly online is a growing part of Utah’s future.

Major internet service providers have announced expansion of gigabit speed Internet in Northern Utah. At the same time, the Utah Broadband Outreach Center released an interactive economic development map.

State and local officials say the services help make the area attractive to businesses looking to move to the state.

“Utah is prepared for business and we have the capacity for tech businesses that have high bandwidth needs,” said Kelleigh Cole, project manager for the Utah Broadband Project.

Utah’s commitment to providing the tools necessary to have a positive business environment attracted internet service provider WebNX.

The company, which got its start in Los Angeles, is primarily focused on data center, bandwidth and dedicated server products.

Co-founder Dario Perovich said he came out to Utah because of the region’s willingness to support high speed Internet.

“Utah as a whole is actually pretty good,” Perovich said, explaining his reasons for creating an expanded operation in Business Depot Ogden.

The area has a good start compared to other places in the country.

“They’re doing a really good job in regards to getting cities connected,” Perovich said.

“The cities really care about getting the cities connected.”



He said many localities in the Los Angeles area put up too many roadblocks.

He found the opposite with Ogden City IT Operations Manager Andy Lefgren and Ogden City Business Development Division Manager Terrence Bride.

“That’s one of the reasons we decided to come out here,” Perovich said. “We sat down with Terrence and Andy and they genuinely seemed to be excited for what’s coming. It’s refreshing.”

Among the Internet service improvements to the area include an announcement by CenturyLink Inc. offering 1 gigabit per second internet speeds to more business locations along the Wasatch Front.

The communications company formally made the announcement during a luncheon at Roosters Brewing in Ogden on Tuesday.

Through the move, CenturyLink said it makes the quicker fiber speeds available to an additional 5,500 business locations in Ogden, Orem and other nearby communities.

Jeremy Ferkin, vice president of Utah operations for CenturyLink, said the move helps take away all of the barriers to technology in Ogden.

“Now it’s a community that is attractive on a technology basis,” Ferkin said.

With the announcement, CenturyLink officials said there are now more than 19,700 gigabit-enabled business locations across the state.

According to the company, the deployment is part of a national fiber network upgrade that expanded availability of CenturyLink's gigabit broadband services across 17 states to service almost 490,000 business locations.



Having gigabit speed Internet would help create an app development community, Ferkin said, and distinguishes Ogden from other communities regarding future tech proofing. Without it, Ogden is at a technological disadvantage. Other areas in Utah, such as Provo, and soon Salt Lake City, already have high speed Internet through Google Fiber. "Technology is a limiter," Ogden Mayor Mike Caldwell said, "something to worry about." Along with future web application development, existing companies such as Northrop Grumman benefit from the investment.

After several years of investment, the company is prepared for future improvements as well.

"We believe in what's happening in Utah and we believe in the technology sector that is happening in Utah and we are happy to be a part of the giga economy," Ferkin said

In addition to Ogden and Orem, the 1 gigabit per second service is also now available to businesses in new areas of Bountiful, Centerville, Pleasant Grove, Salt Lake City, South Jordan and West Jordan.

Businesses are not the only ones to get faster service. Comcast announced it is rolling out Gigabit Pro, a 2 Gigabit-per-second fiber service.

Additionally, Comcast launched Extreme 250, a new 250 Mbps Internet speed tier for Utah customers, which went affect May 19 and will continue throughout the year.

Comcast spokesman Ray Child said it was the company's 15th speed increase in the past 13 years.

To help businesses find the right infrastructure for their needs, especially proper Internet service, the Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development created locate.utah.gov.

The website helps businesses explore the state's broadband availability, utility information, transportation, workforce and lifestyle features. State officials said it also allows developers to evaluate potential locations and print customized reports with detailed summaries of available infrastructure.

For those looking for an Internet service provider, Perovich recommends taking into account the cost of installing the infrastructure, as well as the monthly service fee.

Some installations can range into thousands of dollars.

He also recommended taking into account latency, the measure of time delay from one networked point to another. One service he had in Los Angeles ran about 51 milliseconds, while here it was 17 milliseconds.

"They may not seem like much, but if you are a gamer, that's the difference between 'I can play competitively and I cannot play competitively.'"

It is about time Comcast and CenturyLink offer these speed rates to the area, Perovich said.

His company would like to think that more competition including UTOPIA, Google Fiber and himself is coaxing the large telecommunication companies.

WebNX now provides the wifi for city down at the Ogden Amphitheater

“There is a good chance with Google down in Salt Lake and us making deals with the city that we’re partly responsible for that,” Perovich said.

Perovich said the growing competition will benefit consumers allowing for better and better Internet service.

“As far as local service providers, I think they can do a better job and people like Digis are pushing Comcast to be better and people like us are pushing Digis to be better.”

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