

#24... July 9, 2021

Hello! We sent newsletter #23 on June 25. In the past 2 weeks, we have accomplished the following:

1. We have prepared the survey to mail to the entire Town. With Elizabeth and Gayle's help, we have printed mailing labels from the Town's files. The survey will go to all the owners of properties that have buildings on them, except for about 40 of you who have already sent in a survey. Here are some interesting statistics about the mailout:

728 total surveys will be mailed out

232 will go to out-of-state addresses

377 to in-town (Brooksville or Harborside) addresses

119 to Maine addresses that are neither out of state, nor in-town

About 63 of the addressees (from any of the above categories) are going to a trust, or a club or church, or some other entity that is not an individual owner. We still hope they will respond, as some day they may want to have an internet connection.

We also gathered some other facts from the tax commitment book:

There are about 1371 parcels in Brooksville

919 of them have buildings on them

There are about 217 owners who have registered for the Homestead Exemption

The difference between the 919 buildings and the 728 surveys we are mailing out is partly because some of you have already sent in a survey, but mostly because one owner may own several parcels that have buildings on them. We are asking those owners to fill out the survey multiple times, if they feel it is appropriate because more than one of their buildings may have, or want, internet.

2. We also finalized the RFP that we mentioned in newsletter #23. It went out to a list of qualified proposers last night. On Monday we expect a press release to go out to our local papers (Ellsworth American and Penobscot Bay Press). Below is what we sent out. It will be interesting to see what ends up getting printed! You may notice that the press release contains a link to a website where you can read the RFP in its entirety, should you choose to do so.

Always happy to receive your feedback! Happy weekend!

Peninsula Broadband Committees Issue RFP

Blue Hill, Brooksville, Deer Isle and Penobscot seek improved broadband access

(July XX, 2021) – Broadband committee representatives and officials from four towns have united for the common purpose of improving broadband (high speed internet) access through the construction of a Fiber to the Premises (FTTP) network.

The RFP announcement is a significant milestone in an effort to make fast, affordable and reliable internet available to every household and business in the affiliated towns.

“While the effort to bring true broadband internet access to the entire Peninsula has been underway for more than three years, the recent pandemic has driven home the need for reliable, accessible internet for our students, medical professionals and their patients, the business community, those who work from home and many others. The poor or non-existent access, coupled with increased state and federal focus on supporting rural broadband efforts makes it clear that the time to act is now,” said Scott Miller, Selectman of Blue Hill.

The Town representatives selected Bangor-based consulting firm [Mission Broadband](#) to advise on the RFP and assist with evaluating proposals received. “We are happy to have this very experienced, national firm lending a hand as we embark on this important step”, said Abbie McMillen, co-chair of the Brooksville Broadband Committee. “We have determined that Mission is one of only two consulting firms in the state that works solely on behalf of communities, so there is no conflict of interest with any of the potential proposers.”

Surveys have shown that internet speeds are nearly universally substandard within the four towns, and a great deal of frustration has been expressed by residents about the speed and quality of service. It is anticipated that the responses to the RFP will clarify the range of potential opportunities to greatly improve the situation, as well as the associated costs.

Recently there has been encouragement of public/private broadband partnerships through funding opportunities at both at the state and national level. Once the best qualified firm is selected through the RFP process, the resulting partnership will be applying for any and all available grants to help defray the costs to the Towns.

“It is important to recognize that no agreements that involve any significant Town expenditures will be finalized until there is appropriate Town approval”, said James Fisher, Town Manager of Deer Isle. “We hope that our RFP will lead our towns to adopt the most cost effective, reliable solution for improving this critical and now essential infrastructure.”

According to Joel Katz, Chairman of the Penobscot Broadband Committee, “The future of Maine towns like Penobscot depends on fiber everywhere to draw the families, entrepreneurs, and others to the beautiful coast. Fast, affordable and “future proof” is not too much to ask.” The RFP is available at <https://www.peninsulautility4broadband.org/rfp.html>.

About Mission Broadband

For more information, visit www.missionbroadband.com.