



## Press Release

### ***Westmoreland County Launches Next Phase of Broadband Expansion with Field Inventory and Speed Survey***

*Residents and Business Owners in Low Connectivity Areas Can Help by Taking the Survey*

**For Release on July 19, 2022**

**Westmoreland County, Pa** - The Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners is pleased to announce the start of a Data Collection and Feasibility Study to identify gaps in high-speed Internet coverage in the county.

Expanding and enhancing broadband capacity was identified as a goal in the Westmoreland County comprehensive plan, *Reimagining Our Westmoreland*, which starts with conducting a detailed county-wide analysis.

“We are proud to invest in this critical study that will take us on the road to ensuring our residents and business owners have access to high-speed, broadband Internet service in every part of the county,” said Sean Kertes, Chairman, Westmoreland County Commissioners. “By the end of the year, we will finally have an accurate picture of where we need to focus our future investment in broadband.”

According to data from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), 98.8% of the County has access to broadband which is not accurate due to overstated data. The accurate mapping that will result from this study will position the County to challenge the FCC data and take advantage of federal funding to expand broadband service to those in currently unserved and underserved areas.

All residents and business owners are asked to visit [westmorelandbroadband.org](http://westmorelandbroadband.org) to take the online survey from their residence or business. While taking the survey, Internet download and upload speeds will be assessed and auto populated, and users will be able to view speed results before submitting the survey.

“Your support at this survey stage of this study is critically important to accurately assess the locations without high-speed internet for our homeowners, farmers and business owners,” said Douglas W. Chew, Vice-Chairman, Westmoreland County Commissioners. “It is critical that the Internet work as well as all utilities that connect to every home in our county.”

Beginning on Monday, July 18, 2022, Michael Baker International, working with Westmoreland County Planning and Development, will be performing a field inventory of fixed and mobile broadband availability at multiple locations throughout Westmoreland County. The field inventory will determine what locations have limited fixed or mobile broadband, or are unserved. Two survey teams driving Michael Baker International vehicles will be performing this inventory throughout the county.

*More Speed. More Access. More Affordable.*

724.495.4350 | [feedback@westmorelandbroadband.org](mailto:feedback@westmorelandbroadband.org) | [www.westmorelandbroadband.org](http://www.westmorelandbroadband.org)



While performing this field inventory, Michael Baker International will not need to access any homes. The following tasks are what property owners can expect during the broadband verification effort:

- Residents and business owners in the area may communicate with the field employees if they have any questions and will be provided with a written a letter verifying their work
- Door hangers will be placed at the entryway of each residence or business being field verified advising the owner or tenant to complete a survey related to broadband access
- A utility pole review will be performed to determine what broadband infrastructure (if any) is in place at the location
- Photographs of utility poles and associated infrastructure will be taken
- The geographic location of the residence or business (latitude/longitude) will be recorded
- Mobile Internet speed tests will be performed to record upload and download speeds at the location

“Our goal is for all of our children and families to be able to do homework, work from home, access healthcare and take care of family business and social needs through a high-speed, secure Internet connection,” said Gina Cerilli Thrasher, Secretary, Westmoreland County Commissioners.

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like to request a printed copy of the survey, please call 724.495.4350 or email [feedback@westmorelandbroadband.org](mailto:feedback@westmorelandbroadband.org).

**To learn more about the program and to keep up to date on the latest progress, visit the program website at [westmorelandbroadband.org](http://westmorelandbroadband.org) and join the program mailing list.**

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#### **About the Westmoreland Broadband Program**

Westmoreland County Planning and Development is taking steps to ensure that all residents and businesses in Westmoreland County can connect to high-speed and reliable broadband. Working together with countywide and regional agencies, Westmoreland County is seeking to bridge the gap areas within the county for future infrastructure expansion. This will result in resilient and competitive communities throughout Westmoreland County to ensure both urban and rural communities are properly connected.

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#### **Board of Commissioners**

Sean Kertes, Chairman  
Douglas W. Chew, Vice-Chairman  
Gina Cerilli Thrasher, Secretary

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