

## **EPB Broadband Solutions summit helps communities develop future-ready broadband networks**

*Shared knowledge, resources and strategies give BEAD-eligible communities an advantage*

**CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (October 3, 2024)**—As many communities prepare to invest Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) funding to expand high-speed internet access, EPB Broadband Solutions hosted 15 community-based service providers from across the country at a summit to help foster innovative approaches to broadband deployment.

Through its agreement with EPB Broadband Solutions, Buzz Broadband, powered by Covington Electric Cooperative in Alabama, has used EPB technical support services to address customer issues since 2021. "EPB applies their experience to make it easier for our company and our customers to get answers quickly," said Andy Willis, Director of Telecom Services, Buzz Broadband, who attended the summit. "Broadband can be complicated, and it's important to seek people who've already been through the transition. It isn't always easy, but working with the right partners makes things run more smoothly, like our experience with EPB. We trust them to operate high quality services and stay on top of the latest trends and best practices."

Based on its experience launching Chattanooga and Hamilton County, Tennessee's, only 100% fiber optic community-wide network in 2009, EPB launched EPB Broadband Solutions in 2012 to help other communities succeed in planning, rolling out and operating their high-speed internet services. Today, EPB Broadband Solutions works with 30 out-of-market fiber optic providers with more than 160,000 subscribers and the potential to serve as many as 985,000 homes and businesses in communities nationwide.

"Launching a community-wide fiber optic network has, no doubt, been the most impactful way we fulfill our mission to enhance quality of life in our community," said Katie Espeseth, vice president of New Products, EPB. "It can be a complex and sometimes challenging process, so we want to help other providers succeed so their customers can experience the benefits of having access to high-speed internet."

EPB presented programs on several opportunities and challenges broadband providers experience, including workforce development, customer service, cybersecurity, technology updates, staying ahead of trends and energy.

"EPB has earned the reputation of being a market disruptor, and our experience can help many providers cut through obstacles to help their communities stay on the cutting edge as we've done here," Espeseth said.

Applying 10+ years of broadband experience, EPB Broadband Services provides comprehensive services from development to launch to help other providers succeed with lower costs and shorter time to market. Service providers can select services á la carte based on their needs:

- Marketing and Product Development
- Award-Winning Customer Support
- Network Monitoring
- Direct Internet Access
- Video Services Consulting
- Business Energy Services
- Smart Grid Consulting

Providing across-the-board service to other communities also benefits EPB's home service area. Through Broadband Solutions, EPB has created new jobs to support these customers remotely and economic development locally.

As an example of the value of community-based broadband deployments, EPB's fiber optic network generated [a \\$2.7 billion community benefit](#) in the first 10 years of operations:

- Created and retained nearly 10,000 jobs, about 40% of all jobs created in Hamilton County during the study period.
- Led to an annual decrease of 55% in outage minutes, providing EPB customers with an average of \$26.6 million in savings each year by helping them avoid spoilage, lost productivity and other negative impacts.
- Helped bridge the Digital Divide through HCS EdConnect powered by EPB, which provides internet at no charge to qualifying Hamilton County Schools students and their families; the program serves more than 16,000 students who with their families represent nearly 28,000 Hamilton County residents.
- Attracted \$110 million in Smart City research and earned designation as a Living Laboratory by the U.S. Department of Energy.

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## **About EPB**

EPB is a customer-focused technology company that delivers innovative power and telecommunications solutions to the Chattanooga area in pursuit of its mission to enhance the quality of life for the community it serves. In 2010, EPB completed a 100% fiber optic network accessible to all its customers as the basis for launching America's first community-wide Gig speed internet. The company still operates the world's fastest community-wide internet service today at speeds up to 25 Gig. EPB also utilizes Chattanooga's fiber optic network as the communications backbone for the most advanced and highly automated power distribution system in the United States. In 2022, EPB continued its commitment to keeping Chattanooga on the cutting edge by establishing our nation's first commercially available quantum network—EPB Quantum Network<sup>SM</sup> powered by Qubitekk. This effort aligns local job creation efforts with the national priority to accelerate the commercialization of quantum technology.

Since switching the lights on for its first electric customer in 1939, EPB has grown to serve nearly a half a million people across a 600-square-mile service area with cutting-edge infrastructure that integrates power distribution and

telecommunications. At the same time, EPB keeps customer benefit at the center of all its efforts, earning recognition from J.D. Power as the #1 Mid-Sized Utility in the South for the last eight consecutive years based on customer satisfaction ratings. Learn more at [epb.com](http://epb.com).