



BARRY GLASSMAN

HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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ThinkBig Networks Connects First Customers to High-Speed Internet in Rural Harford County in Partnership with County Government

BEL AIR, Md., (Dec. 20, 2021) - ThinkBig Networks has connected its first customers to high-speed internet service in northern Harford County, under a public-private partnership with county government to reach unserved and underserved homes and businesses.

Beginning in mid-December, dozens of customers began receiving fast, reliable internet service as ThinkBig, KCI and subcontractors continue to install fiber in the area, based in part on customer demand.

Brett and Pasha Friedel of White Hall were among ThinkBig's first customers.

"All I can say is 'wow'! Prior to this we had a very unreliable DSL system that barely gave us internet," Brett Friedel said. "Downloads often took hours. Video calls like Microsoft Teams or Zoom were all but impossible."

After the Friedel's granted a utility easement for ThinkBig to bring fiber to their home, Pasha Friedel went door to door encouraging her neighbors to do the same.

When the fiber was lit, Brett says it was a game-changer:

"We immediately had blazing fast internet which is huge for me and my family," he said. "We are loving the new technology in our house for the ability to work, but even the fun stuff like watching a streaming movie without it freezing and buffering! It was certainly worth the wait. It's a game changing, life altering and welcomed addition to our home!"

In March, Harford County government first announced its partnership with ThinkBig, a private sector internet service provider, to reach the estimated 2,500 customers without any internet service in the county's rural north. The project is expected to take several years with timing dependent on construction and grant funding, which both parties are actively pursuing.


Under the agreement, Harford County government's contribution is the use of its Harford Metro Area Network (HMAN), a fiber optic network that provides broadband access to county agencies, schools, libraries, recreation centers, and public safety sites. The county is concurrently extending HMAN to additional areas and facilities.

Harford County is providing to ThinkBig a portion of HMAN's unused fiber capacity to deliver internet service quickly and cost-effectively to homes and businesses that choose to receive it. The agreement obligates ThinkBig to charge customers reasonable market rates, comparable to those in more densely populated areas of Harford County.

"We are very excited for the families getting gig-speed internet for the first time," County Executive Barry Glassman said. "It's a necessity they've done without for too long and I am proud that my administration has brought years of planning to reality. I would like to thank my Chief Advisor Billy Boniface, Director of Information and Communication Technology Nick Kuba, and Christen Sullivan for their dedication to this project."

Residents in northern Harford County who are interested in service should contact ThinkBig at 888-318-1372 option 1, or fiber4harfordcounty@thinkbignets.com or their website, <http://www.thinkbignets.com>.

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