

About time for broadband movement

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We are excited to see that progress is being made on the broadband front. Earlier this week, Montrose voters approved a ballot measure that allows the city to take control of broadband utilities and our own Rep. Don Coram has a bill that is making headway at the Legislature. His bill would redirect funding to expand access to broadband connectivity in rural areas of the state.

We see both items as vital to the future of rural Colorado. Broadband service in some rural parts of the state may be enough to browse the Internet, but is very slow when compared to our urban compatriots' service.

More and more businesses need access to high-speed Internet that just isn't available in many rural areas, not just in Colorado, but across the nation. According to broadbandmap.gov, the difference in availability of Internet at speeds of 1.5 mbps or less between rural and urban areas in the United States is minimal. But at speeds of greater than 25 mbps, rural areas have about 19 percent availability while urban areas see closer to 60 percent.

Although Colorado isn't as worse off as states such as California or Idaho where the difference in speed availability between rural and urban areas is more than 31 percent, we still see as much as a 6 percent difference — enough to send some businesses packing. When fast access isn't available businesses take their service and in some cases many jobs with them to greener pastures — often the Front Range.

We hope Coram's bill finds the same success that Measure A did. Rural areas need a broadband revolution soon or urban areas will continue to win over companies that could provide jobs Montrose County desperately needs.

The Montrose Daily Press editorial board includes Publisher Francis Wick, Managing Editor Justin Joiner and Senior Reporter Katharhynn Heidelberg, with community input from Jim Branscome, Nancy Fishing and Dennis Bailey.