

Fiscal Court hears update on broadband project

By Tom Marshall
Senior Advocate
writer

Ben U'Sellis with Charter/Spectrum provided the Montgomery County Fiscal Court and the citizens in attendance with an update on the ongoing countywide broadband project at its regular meeting April 15.

U'Sellis said Charter/Spectrum is currently in the process of bringing high speed internet service to about 100,000 homes not currently served throughout the state.

About 25 to 30 percent of those have already been activated with the remainder yet to be served, he said.

In Montgomery County, U'Sellis said about 900 to 1,200 customers have not been activated with service. An exact figure is not available, he said, because some of the work overlaps with projects under way in Clark and Bath counties and some of the addresses may be covered as part of those efforts.

U'Sellis presented the court with a color-coded map that shows where certain areas of the county are as far as progress.

Green meant the homes had already been activated, yellow indicated Charter/Spectrum is working to provide service and orange showed where the company is trying to get access to utility poles to serve the area.

"It is a major infrastructure undertaking," U'Sellis reminded the gathering, some of whom had questions about the status of their homes.

U'Sellis said the process would likely only take three to six months to complete if the company didn't have to go through the permitting process for access to the utility poles.

He asked for patience as the permitting process is ongoing.

U'Sellis promised to provide the county map updated for the public to see where progress stands in their area.

The county had not yet received the map, Judge-Executive Chris Haddix said this week.

U'Sellis said the project should be complete in Montgomery County by the end of 2026, which is the deadline for funding through the American Rescue Plan Act.

The county is contributing \$854,722 for the broadband project, Haddix said.

U'Sellis was asked about progress on homes on Chiles Highway, Myers-Cemetery Road in Jeffersonville, Van Thompson Road, Paris Pike, Kiddville and Calk Lake.

U'Sellis said the homes are included as part of the project, but said he would check on their individual status.

He did say there is an area in the northeast quadrant of the county that is included as part of a contract with Windstream and not Charter/Spectrum and he did not know the status of that project.

U'Sellis asked anyone with information on that project to update him with details.

He said there are isolated areas where it is not feasible to lay fiber, mainly individual homes lying several miles from the road, but satellite service may be available to them.

U'Sellis said there is also a followup project called BEAD (Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program), where the goal is for internet companies to provide service to these isolated areas.

In other action, the court:

- Authorized Haddix to submit an application for Community Project Funding through Congress for up to \$4 million in funds for infrastruc-

ture improvements for the proposed new industrial park project on Owingsville Road.

It will be located next to the existing Woodlands Industrial Park.

The grant funds would be used to provide utilities and other infrastructure needs associated with developing the park, Haddix said.

- Authorized Haddix to submit an application for up to \$1 million for a Community Development Grant for an industrial project.

This is a loan to Rip Technologies awarded through the state. The money would pass through the Fiscal Court and the Industrial Authority to Rip Technologies needed for equipment, Haddix said.

Rip Technologies will have to employ a certain percentage of low-income employees to maintain this loan. Once Rip Technologies starts to pay back the money, it will pay it back to the Industrial Authority for infrastructure improvements, he said.

Jocelyn Gross of the Gateway Area Development District told the court that with the industry technologies they have in mind they likely wouldn't need that much money, but \$400,000 to \$500,000 instead.

Haddix said he will work with Congressman Andy Barr's office in an effort to secure the grant.

- Agreed to a resolution entering into a contract with the state Transportation Cabinet for the County Road Aid Cooperative Program effective July 1.

The County Road Aid Cooperative Program is an agreement between the state and counties, which states that each county will receive a percentage of the motor fuel tax collected by the state, Haddix explained.

The money received by each county shall be used for construction,

reconstruction and maintenance of county roads and bridges, he said.

Montgomery County is slated to receive \$938,508, Haddix announced.

- Voted to retain the Rural Secondary Program Flex Funds for county roads, rather than the state proposed project of completing the remainder of Van Thompson that was not included as part of an earlier project to resurface most of Van Thompson.

The county will be able to use the money for other projects.

- Haddix concluded the meeting by signing a proclamation along with Commissioners Daniel Carmichael, Shayne Parker and Ralph Charles, declaring the week of April 13-19 National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week in Montgomery County.

Haddix applauded the work of the county's dispatchers for their service to the community.

- Haddix also used the opportunity to announce that a sign noting it as a Kentucky Veterans Hall of Fame County would be erected at the courthouse.

Two county residents, Ray Bigstaff and Daniel Martin, have previously been named to the Hall of Fame.

Haddix noted they are not only honored for service to the country, but for their contributions to the community as well.

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Manage stress for National Stress Awareness Month

April is National Stress Awareness Month, a time to reflect on the impact of stress on our mental and physical health and how to manage it effectively. Saint Joseph Health encourages people to prioritize their well-being and take proactive steps to reduce stress.

"Stress is a natural response to work and life in general, but when it becomes chronic, it can negatively impact mental and physical health," said Thomas McCormick, MD, Saint Joseph Health. "Being able to recognize the signs of stress and having the right tools to manage it can significantly improve your overall health and help prevent more serious issues from occurring."

Stress can impact almost everyone at some point and can take a toll on the mind and body. Symptoms of stress include headaches, body pains, trouble sleeping, low appetite and emotional strain. When left unmanaged, it can contribute to serious health conditions such as depression, anxiety, high blood pressure and even

heart disease.

According to The American Institute of Stress, last year, 43 percent of adults reported feeling more anxious than the previous year, up from 37 percent in 2023 and 32 percent in 2022. While some stress is situational and temporary, chronic stress can have long-term effects, making awareness and management vital.

Managing stress effectively often involves a combination of lifestyle adjustments and professional support when needed. Lifestyle changes include sleeping at least seven to nine hours each night, eating a healthy and balanced diet, staying active and connecting with loved ones for emotional support. It's also important to step away from stressful situations when possible, take breaks from cell phones and the internet and participate in fun hobbies and activities. For those experiencing chronic stress, consulting a health care provider is crucial. They can help identify other underlying causes, recommend appropriate treatments and connect



Dr. Thomas McCormick

you with more resources like therapy or support groups.

"Sometimes stress is unavoidable, but it doesn't have to control every aspect of our lives," said Dr. McCormick. "Our goal is to help individuals recognize the signs of stress and equip them with strategies to manage it effectively. By taking small, proactive steps to reduce stress, we can help patients take charge of their health before it turns into a long-term or serious issue."

If stress is interfering with your daily life, consider reaching out to your primary care provider. For more information or to find a health care provider near you, visit www.chisaintjosephhealth.org/find-a-provider.

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INSPECTION PERIOD FOR THE PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT ROLL

The Montgomery County real property tax roll will be opened for inspection Monday, May 5 through Monday May 19, 2025. Any person may inspect the tax roll, under the supervision of the Property Valuation Administrator, or one of the deputy clerks.

This inspection period is for the January 1, 2025 real property assessments on which state, county, local and school taxes will be based. The mailing and collection of tax bills will be handled by the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department and/or City of Mt. Sterling. The real property tax roll is in the office of the Property Valuation Administrator in the Montgomery County Courthouse Annex, 44 W Main Street, Ste. E and may be inspected between the hours of 8:00am to 4:00pm, Monday through Friday and Saturdays (May 10th & May 17th of 2025) 9:00am to 12:00pm.

- Any taxpayer desiring to appeal an assessment on **real property**, made by the PVA, must first request a conference with the PVA or a designated deputy. The conference may be held prior to or during the inspection period.

- Any taxpayer still aggrieved by an assessment on **real property**, after the conference with the PVA or designated deputy, may appeal to the county board of assessment appeals. The taxpayer can appeal his assessment by filing in person or sending a letter or other written petition stating the reasons for appeal, identifying the property and stating the taxpayer's opinion of the fair cash value of the property. The appeal must be filed with the County Clerk's office no later than one work day following the conclusion of the inspection period.

- Any taxpayer failing to appeal to the County Board of Assessment Appeals, or failing to appear before the board, either in person or by designated representative, will not be eligible to appeal directly to the Kentucky Board of Tax Appeals.

- Appeal of **personal property** assessments shall not be made to the County Board of Assessment Appeals. Personal property taxpayers shall be served notice under the provisions of KRS 132.450(4) and shall have the protest and appeal rights granted under the provisions of KRS 131.110.

Thank You,
Montgomery County PVA

If you will be 65 in 2025 or if you have been deemed disabled, you may be eligible for the Homestead or Disability Exemption. The Exemption amount is \$49,100 and will save you approximately \$500 on your tax bill. Please feel free to contact our office for more information at 859-498-8710.