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Explain the importance of high-speed broadband access to town economic and community development.

In the current global economy, access to broadband has become as essential to individuals and community economic prosperity as electricity and roads. All people, whether rural or urban, stand to benefit economically from a national high-speed Internet network.

High-speed connections improve business development by providing new opportunities across many areas. Connected communities generate wealth and opportunity by attracting businesses that want to locate in areas with an established broadband presence. High-speed Internet overcomes the barriers of distance and time, allowing residents of rural areas to participate in economic and civic life far beyond their geographic region. Communications made possible by broadband technology reduce the constraints of geographically based businesses, allowing those in hard to reach areas to compete with their easier accessible counterparts, in the bigger cities. Ultimately, the economic and social advantages enabled by the availability of high-speed Internet in rural areas benefit the entire country. When access to affordable broadband is obtainable, rural businesses that are restricted to local markets, can expand their market reach greatly. Affordable broadband enables historically urban businesses like graphic design, website design, and other creative industries to experience modern life in rural settings while competing on the same level as city-based companies.

Broadband offers the opportunity for direct access to better education. As a student in a rural community, I have personal knowledge that high-speed Internet enhances every level of

education from kindergarten through high school to college to graduate school. Advances in information and communications technology mean education is no longer confined to the classroom. Modern broadband-enabled educational resources allow for more easy collaboration among fellow students on projects, two way conferences with teachers and real-time video exploration of off site places. From my experiences, elementary and high school students with high-speed Internet at home can acquire the resources of their school libraries remotely, including digital videos and high-volume data files. Without high-speed internet access, I wouldn't have been capable of completing the research needed to support and get my point across in this essay. The advantages that come with the Internet have become crucial to students preparing to enter the workforce, and those students with limited or no access in their school years are falling behind.

Using high-speed Internet technology to help expand access to and increase the quality of healthcare in the United States has enormous potential. With the rising medical costs and gaps in insurance coverage increasing, the cost-cutting efficiencies of telemedicine, are more valuable than ever. High-speed Internet allows physicians to connect with distant specialists for real-time guidance in emergency situations, potentially saving lives by eliminating the delay of long ambulance rides when seconds are crucial like during a stroke or heart attack.

From listening to my grandmother, who has been a clerk for the Town of Springfield for 25 years, complain about the slow internet I can see how much stress it has caused her noting everything she does for the town needs to be submitted by e-file. Dependable high-speed Internet can lower the stress that comes from slow broadband and the down time it has. High-speed Internet allows citizens to partake in civic life more fully and interact with their government

agencies with greater ease. As all governments are increasingly dependant on the Internet to provide information, forms, and services for various programs, the need for affordable access grows.

In conclusion, high speed broadband is a technology that will keep the world working as it is and with further technological advancements it can continue to make life easier, safer, more exciting for everyone.

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