ACADIANA BROADBAND ASSESSMENT AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

SWREDA Conference August 2021

RURAL ACADIANA BROADBAND ASSESSMENT

PROJECT PURPOSE: Understanding the depth of the digital divide existing within the region.

FUNDING AND MILESTONES

1. USDA Funding Awarded in 2019
2. Assessment to be Completed July 2021
3. APC Board Approval of the Report in August
4. Assessed Rural Parishes in Acadiana

   Acadia

   Evangeline

   Iberia

   St. Landry

   St. Martin

   Vermilion

BROADBAND AND THE "DIGITAL DIVIDE"

DEFINITION: Digital divide has continued to evolve over the last 30 years. Initially, high costs of computers created a natural barrier between those who could and could not afford one. But as the cost of computers has dropped and more people are gaining basic access to technology devices, the digital divide has evolved to take on an added meaning. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this became more closely tied to broadband **ACCESS** and **AFFORDABILITY**.
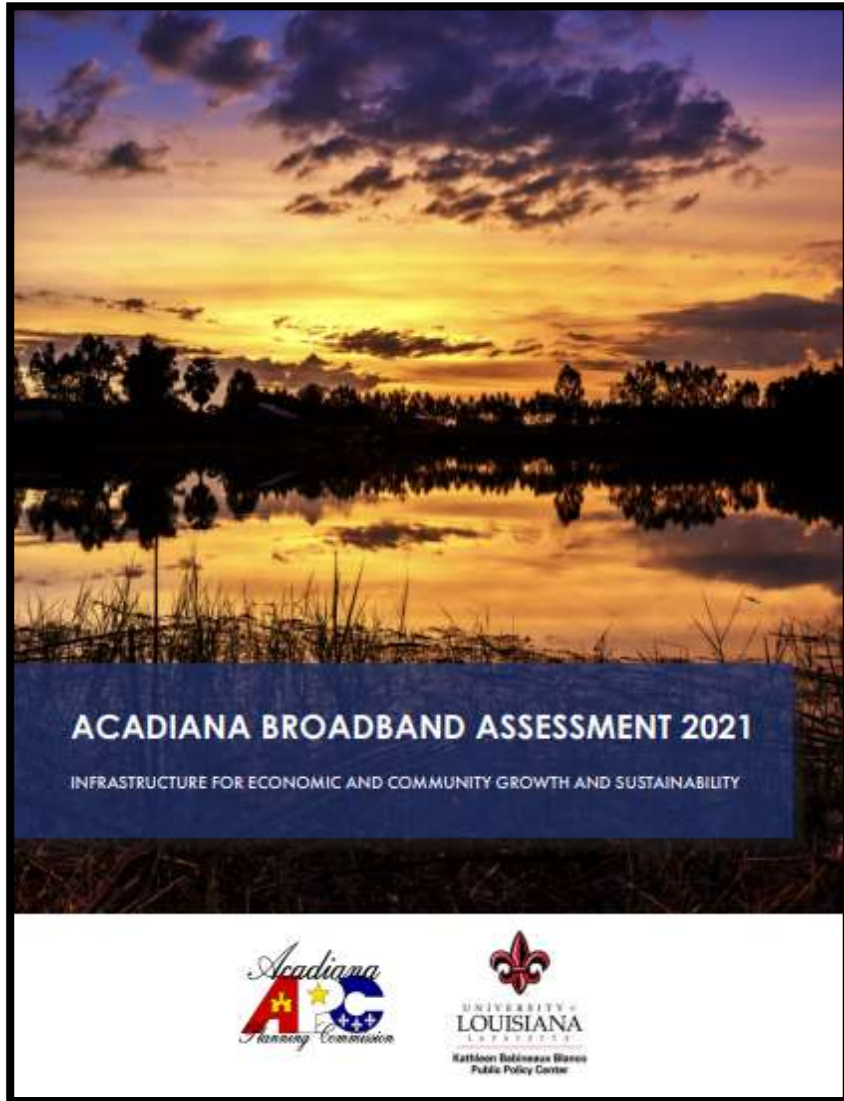
CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:
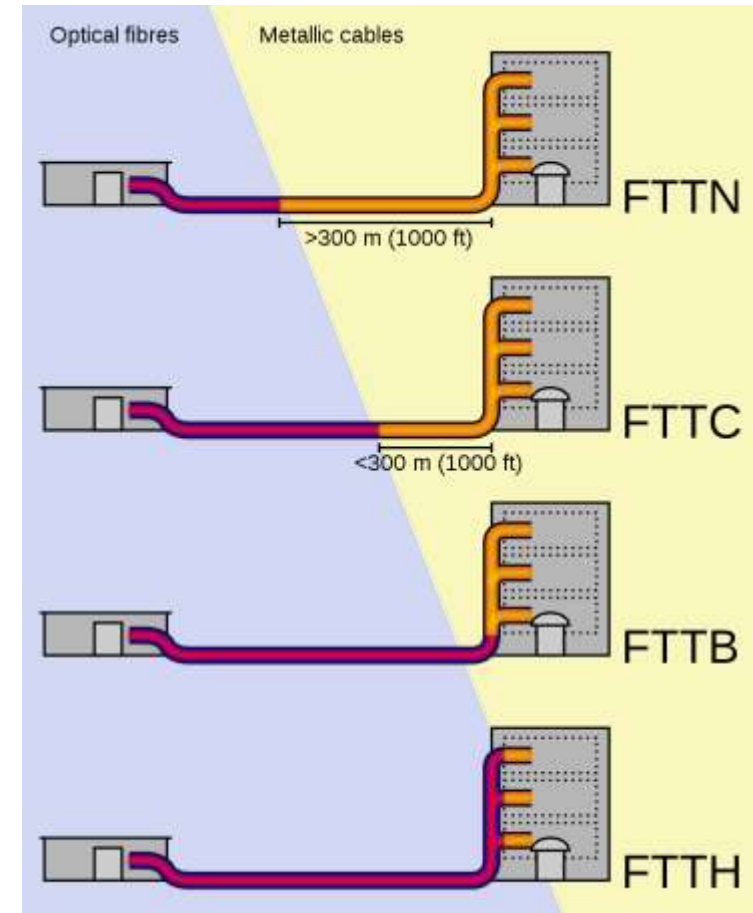   Educational Attainment
    Income
    Race

BROADBAND ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS

- Economic Impact of Broadband in Acadiana
  - Outmigration & Job Growth Trends
- Broadband Fundamentals - "The 101"
- Evolution of Broadband and Technologies
- Broadband Technology Comparison
- Federal Funding and Industry Accepted Practices
- Assessment Components & Community Profiles
  - Supporting Infrastructure
  - Business and Residential Clusters
  - Speed Test Deployment & Analysis
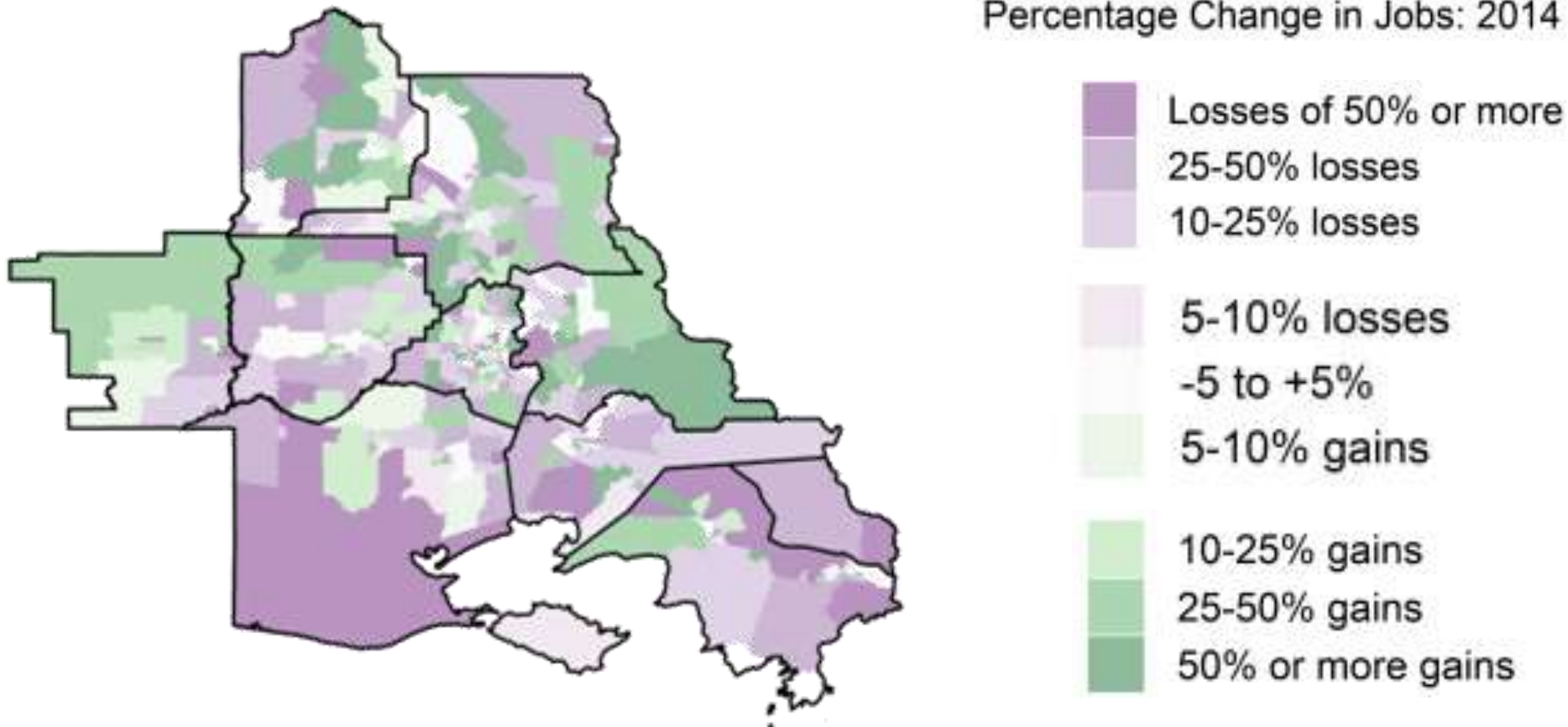 - Critical Infrastructure Facilities

BROADBAND FUNDAMENTALS –"THE 101"

- Broadband Infrastructure Type and Technologies
  - DSL
  - Cable
  - Fiber
- Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Broadband Definitions
  - 25/3   Current Standards
  - 100/20   Proposed Future Standard
  - 100/100   Ability of Fiber to the Home
- Other Definitions
  - No Service/Unserved
  - Underserved
  - Served
- Understanding the FCC Form 477 –Industry Report

Optical fibres | Metallic cables

FTTN
>300 m (1000 ft)
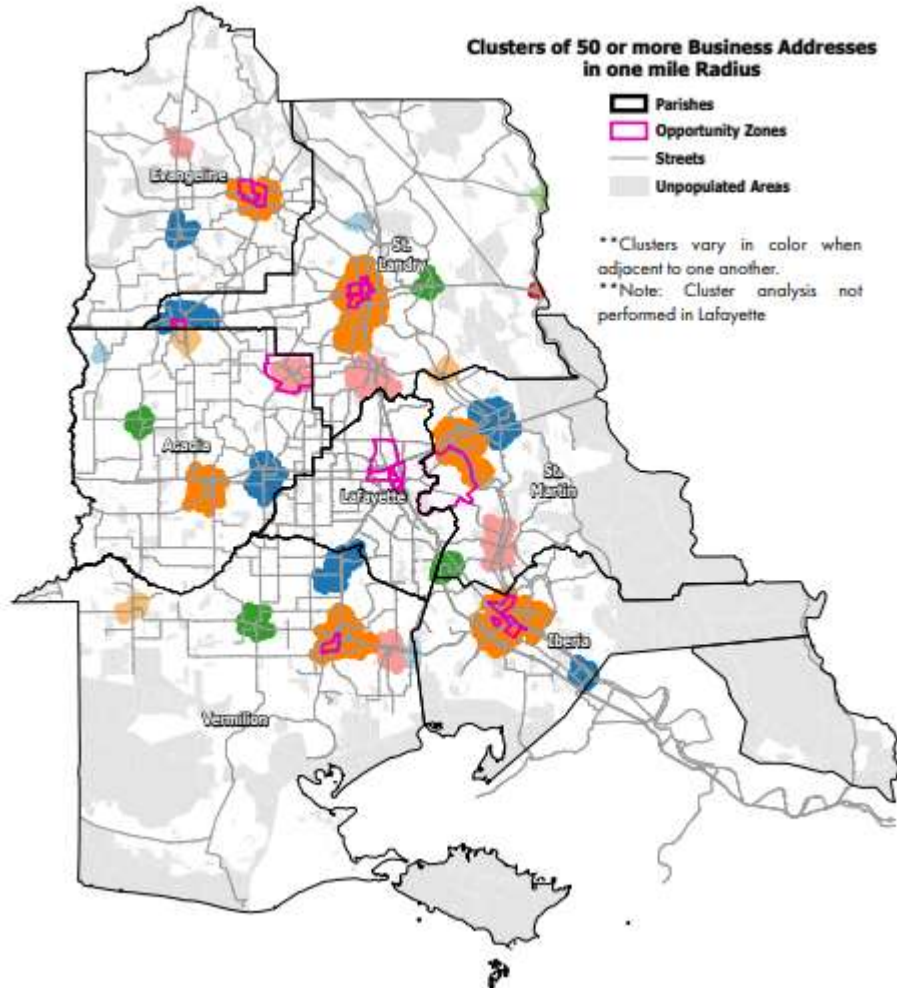
FTTC
<300 m (1000 ft)

FTTB

FTTH

WHY IS BROADBAND SPEED IMPORTANT

High-quality broadband access, which is often lacking in urban areas in Louisiana, now seems to be an almost necessity to ensure that regions remain economically viable and desirable places for current and future generations.

Percentage Change in Jobs: 2014 to 2018

Losses of 50% or more
25-50% losses
10-25% losses

5-10% losses
-5 to +5%
5-10% gains

10-25% gains
25-50% gains
50% or more gains

ACADIANA BROADBAND ASSESSMENT

Clusters of 50 or more Business Addresses in one mile Radius

☐ Parishes
☐ Opportunity Zones
— Streets
▨ Unpopulated Areas

**Clusters vary in color when adjacent to one another.
**Note: Cluster analysis not performed in Lafayette

- Digital Divide Metrics & Analysis

  - Access

  - Education

  - Workforce

  - Affordability

- Supporting Infrastructure Mapping

- Business and Residential Cluster Mapping
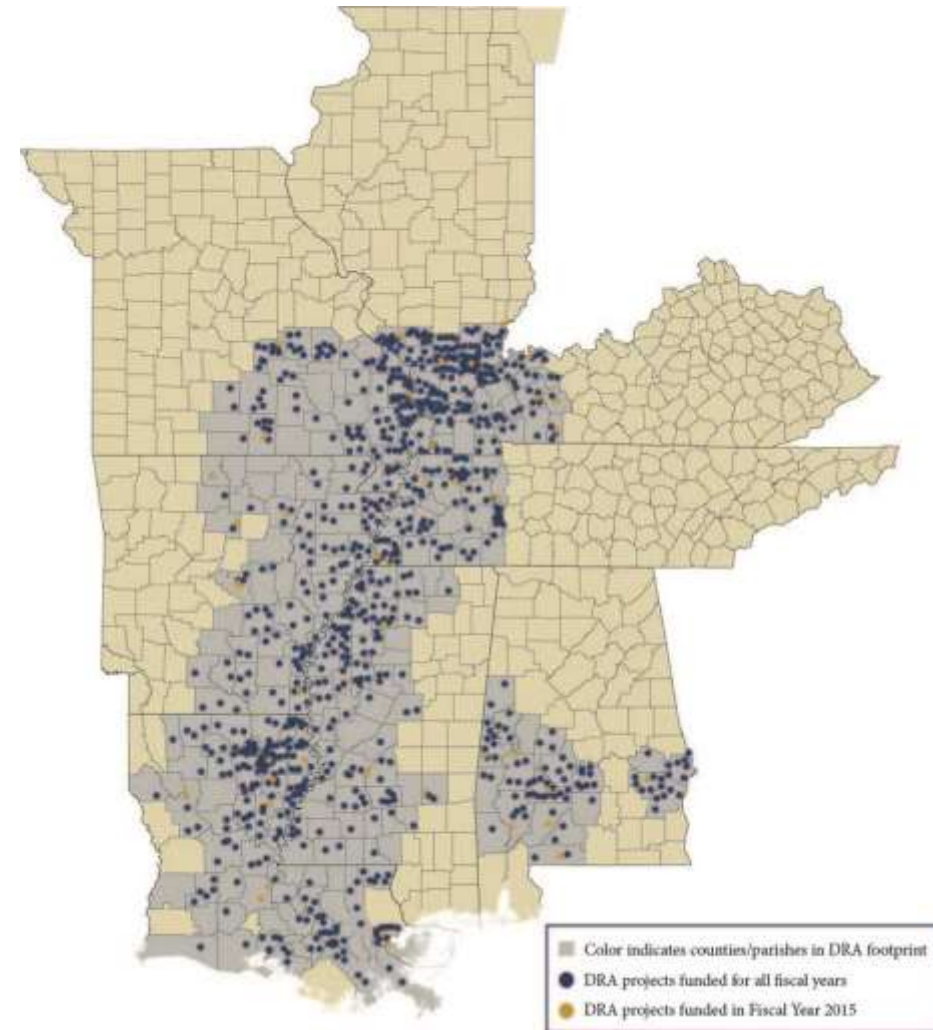
- Speed Test Data Mapping

- FCC Speed by Block

DRA SPEED TEST LINK
https://expressoptimizer.net/projects/Louisiana/speedtestmap.php

SPEED TEST TOOL FUNCTION: Provides Parish and Community data, data analytics to run feasibility analysis and potential deployment cost scenarios.

PROJECT PURPOSE: Through an innovative online crowd-sourcing platform, DRA has launched this year-long effort to gauge broadband accessibility throughout its eight-state region.

Color indicates counties/parishes in DRA footprint
DRA projects funded for all fiscal years
DRA projects funded in Fiscal Year 2015

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ACADIANA REGIONAL APPROACH

PRELIMINARY GROUNDWORK

- APC Rural Broadband Assessment Conducted & Completed 2021
- Deploy Speed Test and Data Collection which Balances Form 477 Reporting
- Understand the Political Challenges and Environment of the Industry
- Partnerships, Partnerships, Partnership!!!!

REGIONAL DEPLOYMENT STRATEGY BENEFITS

- Not Every parish in the region is competing against each other- "ONE ASK"
- Greater level of competitiveness nationally and statewide
- Creation of an "Established Plan"
- State recognizes the readiness of Acadiana to make an ask

HOW CAN IT BE ACCOMPLISHED

- Understand the service providers in your area that can offer highest quality infrastructure and speeds- FIBER TO THE HOME
- Identify existing service areas and determine intended service area

Broadband for Everyone in Louisiana (BEL) Commission

> Led to the Establishment of State Broadband Office

State Office of Broadband Development & Connectivity

> Created a Priority for Broadband Expansion
>
> Dedicated ARPA Funds to GUMBO - $188M

Statewide LA Planning and Development Districts

> Outreach and Education of Broadband 101
>
> Offer Sustainable Broadband Mapping and Tools
>
> Resources to Communities for Deployment Needs

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

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