Quickstart Program
Partnership Community Broadband Networks & NEO Partners, LLC

Quickstart is a sophisticated mapping tool that assembles key cost information to build or partner for a community network.

The cost of the Quickstart program is at a fraction of what a consulting analysis would cost. Ballpark estimated cost for a consultant study is + $50k, and it takes three months or more. Without mapping tools, it would require the consultant put "boots on the street" for an engineering infrastructure study.

That said, Quickstart service isn't a replacement for a feasibility study, it is a compliment.

The online demo illustrated Quickstart uses a sophisticated program to determine what services are already available from incumbents, reveal where potential fiber resources are in the area, and provide cost estimates and relevant information for different publicly owned models.

Quickstart provides a map of Beaver Island with actual numbers, and a layout. We will be able to go in and drill right into the map by address to see what that particular address would be covered by, whether it would be DSL or satellite.

Anyone can go to a website and enter in their address to see the network layout that the townships have gotten to have a sense of what's available to them in that scenario. They can go to an interactive online map to be visible to the citizens, where they can go in and actually view what kind of service would be available to them.

A key component of the mapping tool is identifying a costing model of the feasibility of a mix of fiber and wireless services. We're not able to cost justify delivering fiber to all the premises on the island. Quickstart provides the information to develop scenarios on how much would it cost to get fiber out to the places where it's possible to pay for itself, get wireless out to the rest of the premises, and then reevaluate in three or five years and figure out how to expand around the time that the fixed wireless might be coming due for a replacement. Quickstart provides some guidance that we don't make a final decision upfront. This is the first step in a multipart process that's getting the wireless out there to start a revenue stream that can be reinvested in five years to connect more subscribers.

With the mapping data we can develop a projected budget to connect all the premises on the island. Using Quickstart software we can define the way to stretch the budget to do a certain percentage in fiber and the rest in wireless and if you can get the towers in these locations — and you identify existing towers as well. This is a little bit different from the conception of how we get everyone connected with broadband. We can take a given dollar figure and try to figure out how to maximize the fiber versus the wireless investment.

Glenn Fishbine, Quickstart presenter, suggested we request access to information on Great Lakes Energy's infrastructure on the island. Quickstart can map GLE's premise wirelines infrastructure to calculate the cost to deliver fiber to the home.

Our working with Community Networks Quickstart program illustrates that Beaver Island townships are prepared to commit the resources to evaluate building-your-own-network or partnering with third parties like GLE.

Quickstart provides spreadsheets that's designed specifically for financial advisors which shows an ISP or GLE the type of return on investment the ISP would expect. It shows us how to come up with the different cost models and recommendations and what constitutes an affordable versus a not affordable network. We can take these financial projections to the townships as part of the justification in moving forward.