

RURAL BROADBAND INSIGHTS FOR CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE



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Co-ops Connect FYI

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Rural Homes Count



This is somebody's home in southern Georgia.

It is occupied, provided with electricity by an electric cooperative, and now has fiber broadband available as part of a cooperative fiber project.

- This home is counted as a housing unit by the Census Bureau. Counted as a household.
- Counted as a location in the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund.
- Counted as a location in the FCC's location fabric.
- **NOT counted as a Broadband Serviceable Location** in the National Broadband Map.

And just this week the FCC *has questioned whether this home should be counted at all.*

For background:

Within months after receiving our first RDOF check, **Conexon had surpassed a milestone of having passed over 20% of the RDOF locations** in the census blocks where we receive funds.

- As required by the federal government, we reported this milestone.

Why it matters:

It has taken the federal government nearly as long to review our Georgia data as it took us to build thousands of miles of fiber-optic networks in the state.

And now, the federal government has begun to question whether some of the locations in Georgia should count.

- **Homes such as this one.** Homes in trailer parks. Buildings on farms.
- **All questioned, discounted, and dismissed.**
- **Determined to be unworthy** of being counted as American locations that deserve broadband.

- *Even in areas we have already built broadband.*

The Big Picture



I have said it before: **In the new broadband map, the FCC discounts** rural businesses, trailer parks, farms, churches, schools, libraries, and more.

If you're counting locations in rural America and you undercount farms and trailer homes and exclude small businesses, *you're missing the most underserved segments of the most underserved parts of the country.*

Such an approach will distort the true picture of broadband availability in rural America and distort the funding allocation.

The bottom line:

We build fiber networks to rural America. Maybe the rural poor isn't fashionable enough for the FCC.

These are people's homes. *They count.*



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