

News Release

Promoting Progress in Rural Arkansas: High-Speed Fiber Internet Launches in Johnson County

New fiber investment expands access to education, healthcare and economic opportunity for an historic Johnson Community

COAL HILL, AR — May 28, 2026 — Today, Brightspeed, the nation's third largest fiber builder, was joined by local and state leaders, community members and partners in Johnson County to celebrate a milestone years in the making: the launch of multi-gig-speed fiber internet in Coal Hill, Hartman and surrounding rural areas. The ribbon-cutting ceremony brought together Mayor Ronnie Garner, Mayor Jackie Weathers, the Arkansas State Broadband Office and residents who have long faced limited connectivity options in this part of the state.

The challenge is clear: unreliable and unavailable internet service creates barriers for residents trying to keep up with the digital age by working remotely, completing school assignments and even accessing important telehealth appointments. Now, Johnson County is taking an important step toward ensuring that rural communities have access to the same tools and opportunities as more connected urban areas.

"Today is a great day for the communities of Coal Hill and Hartman," said **Glen Howie, director of the Arkansas State Broadband Office**. "Whether it's a student doing homework with mom and dad, a small business serving a customer, or a grandmother accessing healthcare online, reliable internet opens the door to opportunity and a more secure future. Today is about celebrating progress for these communities and the people who call them home."

Once the full buildout is complete, the network will provide access to the most updated and weather-resistant fiber technology highly rated by users* for nearly 900 families and businesses in Johnson County.

State Representative Aaron Pilkington said that this fiber internet launch reflects a broader commitment to the future of rural Arkansans: "This investment is about improving the quality of life for the people of Johnson County, because the reality is that reliable internet impacts nearly every part of daily life," added Rep. Pilkington.

The broadband project was made possible through a combination of \$470,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and Brightspeed's continued investment in its fiber internet expansion across Arkansas. This funding is just a portion of the \$294.6 million ARPA money Brightspeed was awarded to augment the company's million-dollar fiber network deployment investment in 13 states, providing more than 140,000 Americans access to high-speed connectivity they don't have today.

"At Brightspeed, we believe where you live shouldn't limit your possibilities," said **Rod Mischke, Government Affairs and Public Policy Principal at Brightspeed**. "We're proud to work alongside state and local leaders who share our passion for creating opportunities. Today's event marked a big moment in our pursuit to level the playing field for people, no matter their zip code."

Residents and businesses looking for Brightspeed's reliable, next-gen connectivity can check availability and explore plans at www.brightspeed.com.

*As of 5/28/2026, Brightspeed has a 4.4-star rating on [Trustpilot](https://www.trustpilot.com) and more than 18,600 five-star reviews

About Brightspeed

Headquartered in Charlotte, N.C. and with assets and associated operations in 20 states, Brightspeed provides broadband and telecommunications services through a network platform capable of serving more than 7.3 million homes and businesses. Our nearly 4,000 employees are committed to building a future where more communities benefit from a

more connected life, deploying a state-of-the-art fiber network and a customer experience that makes being connected as simple as it should be. For more information, please visit www.brightspeed.com.

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