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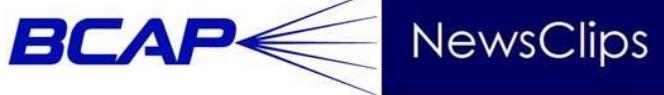
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May 18, 2021

**Vacaville (CA)  
Reporter**  
**Newsom proposes  
\$7 billion expansion  
in broadband  
internet**

[Actifai](#), an AI software-as-a-service provider for cable and telecom companies, has partnered with [Atlantic Broadband](#), the nation's eighth-largest cable operator, to drive growth and to enhance Atlantic Broadband's customer experience by optimizing product recommendations based on the needs of its prospects and customers.

**New York Times  
Rural Areas Are  
Looking for  
Workers. They Need  
Broadband to Get  
Them.**

Atlantic Broadband will deploy Actifai's web-based tools for its sales, retention and care agents, and will use Actifai's APIs to power offer recommendations and selling points for users on its e-commerce site. This partnership follows a successful pilot engagement conducted between October 2020 and February 2021.

**The Hill  
Biden revokes  
Trump-era order  
targeting shield for  
website operators**

Atlantic Broadband and Actifai are partnering during a period of growth for cable and telecom operators, most of whom see an increasing opportunity to harness the power of data and AI to enhance customer interactions. AI has many potential benefits in the sector, including combining real-time demographic, competitive and behavioral data to determine offers that will better meet customers' needs and improve the likelihood of conversion, satisfaction and long-term retention.

**Bloomberg  
King of Trash TV  
Gets Keys to HBO  
Kingdom**

"Atlantic Broadband is committed to providing clear and transparent offers to our customers, while making it easy to do business with us," said Frank van der Post, President of Atlantic Broadband. "Actifai is critical in supporting this mission. Its software provides product recommendations and selling points that empower our agents, help our customers better understand the value we deliver, and more intelligently match offers to needs — resulting in a substantial financial return that will be reinvested in serving our customers."

**AdAge**

[Streaming TV threatens cable networks' value for advertisers](#)

[Reuters Analysis: AT&T, Discovery deal highlights media's thirst to be like Netflix](#)

[Harrisburg Patriot-News](#)

[Pa. court nixes town's ban on digital billboards](#)

[Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)  
[Former Congressman Lou Barletta changes the calculus on Pa. GOP gubernatorial primary](#)



**Today is Primary Election Day in Pennsylvania. Polls will be open until 8:00 pm. Visit [votespa.com](http://votespa.com) for more information.**

Actifai is still a relatively new market entrant, but it is gaining widespread adoption among leading cable operators seeking to utilize AI in practical ways to create bottom line impact. Actifai's customers have achieved an average return on investment of ~3,000%, which is driven by the platform's unique ability to couple complex AI algorithms on the back-end with easily accessible APIs and a simple, modern front end for users.

"It's a real privilege for us to be partnering with a customer-centric company like Atlantic Broadband that shares our commitment to using AI in practical ways to drive business benefit," said Ned Brody, Founder of Actifai. "We are very excited about the value our technology has created, and we look forward to the opportunity to build upon our early successes together in this expanded partnership." – **ABB, Actifai news release**

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America's first federally funded highway — dating to Thomas Jefferson's second term in the White House — is now helping pave the information highway as part of an ambitious effort to bring the 21st century to rural America. Wireless internet hot spots have been activated along Route 40, the historic National Highway that passes through Fayette County, as some more remote parts of Pennsylvania that have long been shunned by the big internet service providers find their own solutions to getting online. "We realized that if we wanted access to high speed internet, we'd have to do it ourselves," said Doug Friend, co-owner of Markleysburg-based Vitalink LLC, the 30-year-old company partnering with Fayette County to bring online access to nearly 150 square miles of the state where service can be spotty.

Fayette County wasn't alone in having that problem. A 2019 Penn State University study found that none of the counties in Pennsylvania could say that at least half the population there has access to the internet at a minimum speed set by the Federal Communications Commission. The gold standard for broadband is 100 megabits per second for both download and upload data speeds, but most Pennsylvania counties have median download speeds of less than 30 megabits per second and median upload speeds of less than 10 megabits per second, according to a study last year by Reimagine Appalachia, a nonprofit advocacy group.

Speeds up to 1 gigabit are possible with fixed-point wireless internet like the system that's being rolled out in Fayette County — 10 times faster than the gold standard speed. Long an issue in rural areas, the need for access to good broadband service was highlighted by a pandemic that sent people home to work and to take classes online. And businesses everywhere stepped up their efforts to connect with customers digitally, making reliable service key.

To expand high speed broadband, public-private partnerships are forming in Bedford and Crawford counties, while early discussions for such a partnership are underway in Westmoreland County. Indiana County recently received a \$1.5 million Appalachian Regional Commission grant to install over 100 miles of fiber optic cable and to set up eight wireless nodes to provide high-speed access to about 825 homes and 75 businesses. A local funding match brought the total amount available for the project to \$3 million, which will improve broadband access in a dozen communities in the county, population 84,073.

In the typical arrangement, counties spend grant dollars to install fiber optic cable and build broadband towers and other infrastructure that are leased to private internet service providers. The Fayette County approach is typical of this approach. In addition to 10 to 15 miles of the 36.5-mile stretch of Route 40 that have been lit up with hot spots, county commissioners partnered with Vitalink last year to install 27 wireless internet hot spots at churches, municipal buildings and visitors centers around the county. About 20% of county residents live within 5 miles of a new hot spot.

This year, five wireless hot spots went live in tiny Ohiopyle Borough, which is surrounded by the 20,500-acre Ohiopyle State Park. "We're ready to fly with it

right now," said Fayette County Commissioner David Lohr, adding that 18 months was his goal for getting most of the county online. "The faster the better. We want to do the sweep to make sure everything is covered." The county commissioners spent \$5.3 million in federal grant money last year on broadband expansion, and a "big chunk" of another \$25 million in grant money will be spent over the next few years to finish the build-out, Mr. Lohr said.

Among the businesses that benefited from free wireless in Ohiopyle was Bittersweet at the Falls, one of two eateries operated by Terri Krysak. Many residents of rural areas accept spotty internet as a fact of life in Pennsylvania's Laurel Highlands, Ms. Krysak said. "There are certain dead zones," she said. "That's part of life up here."

Big internet service providers generally overlook wiring rural areas in favor of connecting cities, where a higher concentration of customers guarantees a larger return on investment. At an average installation cost of \$27,000 per mile, fiber optic connections might not be cost-effective in out-of-the-way areas because of the sparse population. That's why the fixed-point wireless internet service option is getting noticed in parts of Pennsylvania. In such systems, antennas pick up signals that have been broadcast from nearby towers. Installing fiber optic cable in public rights of way connected to the broadcast towers, companies such as Vitalink transmit signals to receivers mounted on churches, barn silos and the like. The signal appears on smartphones as "FayetteCounty.Net."

Homes and businesses can be connected to the hot spot, too, by mounting an antenna on a point on the building that's within eyesight of the transmission tower. Expanding access in Westmoreland County with fixed-point wireless internet would cost an estimated \$4.9 million, according to a 2019 study. Jason Rigone, director of Westmoreland County Planning and Development, said early talks about forming a public-private partnership to expand access are underway. The study found widespread dissatisfaction with existing internet service.

Crawford County Commissioners are scheduled to consider adopting recommendations on May 19 that would expand access to an area covering 322 square miles, about one-third of the county's land area and home to some 19,000 people, said Ron Mattocks, who serves on the Crawford County Planning Commission Broadband Committee. "An educated guess" of the project's cost, if it is fully implemented over several years, is \$4 million, which is likely to come from grant money, Mr. Mattocks said. An advisory committee, made up of people with technical expertise, would be formed to oversee the work.

In Bedford County, population 48,337, the commissioners are moving ahead with a broadband plan to bring fast internet speeds to 85% to 90% of the county over the next 18 months, said Dwayne Zimmerman, founder of Altoona-based Crowsnest Broadband LLC, which is partnering with the county. An investment of \$5 million to \$10 million will be needed. "If it were easy to connect people, it would have already been done," said Bedford County Commissioner Deb Baughman, who said she loses cellphone access during her 35-minute drive to work. "Five years in my heart feels too long to wait. It should've been done five years ago. We're really kind of driven with this."

– **Pittsburgh Post-Gazette**

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[Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine](#) (R) signed legislation Monday creating a grant program meant to help expand broadband access in underserved and rural areas around Ohio. The Republican visited an elementary school in Middletown to sign the [measure](#), which provides \$20 million this year for the new Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant Program. DeWine proposed providing additional funding for broadband expansion in the state budget, and lawmakers are considering that.

Supporters of the effort say high-speed internet access is not a luxury but a necessity these days — an issue highlighted during the pandemic as more people relied on broadband for remote work and school and staying connected. State officials say an estimated 300,000 households and more than 1 million residents across Ohio lack high-speed internet.

The program is intended to help overcome the cost hurdles that dissuade broadband providers from connecting hard-to-reach homes. The grants would fund the so-called “last mile” parts of such projects that providers might otherwise consider cost-prohibitive and unjustifiable from a business perspective. — **Associated Press**



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