

# UNCAPPED POTENTIAL CABLE ACADEMY 2017

April 19 & 20  
Kalahari Resort in the Poconos

BCAP's 29<sup>th</sup> annual Cable Academy heads to the Poconos to highlight the direction our industry must embrace to prosper during the most competitive environment in its history. Cable Academy 2017 will showcase the "Uncapped Potential" that exists today, and how it can further expand in the near future.



"WHAT ARE WE IN 2017?"

STEVE EFFROS

President, Effros Communications  
*Cablefax Daily* columnist  
Former attorney/advisor, FCC

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Nearly 5 million households with school-age children do not have high-speed Internet service, new research shows. Meantime, more school teachers are assigning homework that requires use of the service, data show. The findings, released by the Pew Research Center and reported by Governing Magazine, underscore a troubling disconnect that impairs the ability to learn for tens of

thousands of school children, particularly minorities, in the U.S.

“Broadband is the next phase in the fight for equal opportunity when it comes to education,” said Keith Krueger, the CEO of Consortium for School Networking. The national organization has reported that two-thirds of school system leaders do not have any strategy or plan for providing off-campus connectivity to students. “Every child should have the opportunity to learn and that requires broadband access,” he said. Low-income households, particularly in black and Hispanic neighborhoods, make up a disproportionate share of the disconnected households, the Pew study showed.

Data were not available for Lancaster County or Lancaster city, but the city has been working for the past two years to provide free [Internet in public areas](#) and will be part of a municipal broadband network. The city contracted with MAW Communications Inc. of Reading to build and maintain the system.

Under the 20-year agreement, MAW will be paid about \$500,000 to [install fiber-optic cable and transmitters throughout the city.](#) The company will get a share of residential and business subscriptions, which will pay for maintenance.

Other communities across the country also have been working to bring Internet access to communities that do not generally have it. In Coachella, Calif., school leaders have turned 100 buses along with several cars into mobile hot spots, so students can do their homework. In Kent, Wash., the school district has set up Wi-Fi kiosks in community centers located near public housing. The Forsyth County school system in Georgia has installed nearly 50 Wi-Fi hot spots in public libraries as well as at local businesses, ranging from pastry shops and dentists’ offices to restaurants and barbershops. – *Lancaster New Era*

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People in rural parts of Wisconsin can’t wait any longer for faster internet access, more health care providers and better jobs, a group of Republican lawmakers said Tuesday.

Members of the Rural Wisconsin Initiative held a news conference to present their plans for improving life in rural Wisconsin and retaining young people who are choosing big cities over small towns. “It’s high time that our rural areas and our small towns had our attention,” said freshman Rep. Ron Tusler, of Harrison. Residents of these areas “are waiting without rioting, without yelling in somebody’s ear. They’re waiting patiently for us to focus on the issues that they have.”

The group proposed a bill that would allocate \$15.5 million in broadband grants to underserved rural areas. Almost a quarter of Wisconsinites live in rural areas and around 40 percent don't have broadband, or high-speed internet access, at home. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Romaine Quinn and Sen. Howard Marklein, directs the Public Service Commission to prioritize areas not already benefiting from federal grants.

Democratic Senate Minority Leader Jennifer Shilling, of La Crosse, said the group is trying to make up for Gov. Scott Walker's rejection of \$23 million of federal stimulus money to expand broadband access in 2011. She said the group ignored the "meat and potato issues" of declining wages, growing child care costs, food insecurity and public school funding cuts that impact rural residents and city-dwellers alike. Six years of Republican majorities in the state have "been very bruising for rural communities," she said.

At the news conference, Quinn praised Walker for allocating \$200,000 in his proposed biennial budget to send medical students to residencies in rural parts of the state. A bill the group supported last session that would have given \$250,000 to the program failed to pass. Quinn said bills addressing workforce shortages in rural areas are coming soon. One would allow high school students to earn credit for apprenticeships, which he believes will make jobs at manufacturers and other rural companies more attractive to young people. "Blue collar work is just as dignified as any other and we need to treat it that way," Quinn said.

The Rural Wisconsin Initiative is a year old and has 26 Assembly Republicans as members. It was created to address the "downward spiral" in rural areas when young people move away, causing the populations to drop, businesses to fail and job opportunities to decrease. The group believes investments in technology, health care and workforce development can reverse the trend. "I've heard too many stories about students that graduate from a university like UW-Stevens Point but think they have to move to places like Milwaukee, Chicago or Minneapolis to succeed," said freshman Sen. Patrick Testin, of Stevens Point.

Assembly Minority Leader Rep. Peter Barca, of Kenosha, said some of the group's proposals for helping rural areas could have bipartisan support. "We will offer additional creative ideas this session that hopefully Republicans - who control every element of government - will be open to teaming up with us on," he said. – **Associated Press**



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