Big Stone County BBC Registration Survey
Updated 11/22/21
Updated 11/23/21 (responses 29-32 added)

Please describe how your home or business Internet connection supports or hinders your online world.

1. We were able to connect with the fiber optic cable connection for our wifi when it came to Big Stone County. My husband farms and uses our wifi internet for his crop data and equipment needs. It has enabled my son to work remotely at his job while here helping with planting and harvest.

2. Our business in Clinton uses internet and has one main building with boosters for internet connectivity to an office building located nearby. We are also in the process of installing a new scanning/tracking system which will be used in storage units on our property which will be connected to the internet in order to work properly.   I also often work remotely from my home in Graceville. Luckily, we have Federated Internet (underground cable) and it has been very reliable; this is very necessary for my main job as Marketing Manager for a local John Deere Dealership.

3. I work remotely and require fast reliable service. Non- work related meetings are frequently virtual as well.

4. Major tool in my tool box! Helps me offer photoshoot work and editing, photo enlargements going in and out, make needed contact and give customers an outlet to hunt me down when they want me.

5. I do banking, shopping (of things I can't get locally), news reading and many other daily activities that rely on good internet access.

6. Without internet any simple interaction becomes a frustration and takes up time. Internet is an absolute necessity for all interactions including medical, legal, financial and routine needs.

7. The fiber optic internet supplied to our farm is absolutely critical to our success direct marketing farm products to consumers and wholesale grain buyers and gives us the ability to stay informed on cutting edge agronomy knowledge. Allows us to stay in regular contact with farm organizations.

8. Quality internet connection is vital to public health operations. Connection to our network from our five office locations or when working off-site greatly impacts our ability to provide public health services.   Women-Infants-Children (WIC) program requires internet connection to the state Hubert program to certify participants and issue benefits to clients.

9. I am a writer and my fiber to the home internet connection enables me to live where I want to live and work where I want to work.

10. We are fortune to have fiber internet. As a business consultant who works remotely, I would be unable to do this job from home without solid internet connectivity. Prior to fiber internet, I rented an office space to ensure adequate internet.

11. Being in the computer repair business, it is essential to be connected. When there are disruptions in service we come to a stand still.

12. A lack of legitimate broadband (25/3 Mbps) negatively impacts the ability to consume content in the manner in which it was intended to be delivered. More importantly, a lack of broadband nation-wide impedes the evolution and advancement of the Internet as a whole.

13. majority of the time I have very good service through Mediacom at home and at work. I have never been down at work for very long as Mediacom is very good about keeping business going, home is a different story, they sometimes will not get out to you for a week

14. We currently have a fiber connection at both of our school sites. Internet at both schools is suburb and we rarely run into connection or speed issues.

15. supports - allows remote access to workers, video visits with families, and connection to community, regional, state partners

16. It is vital to maintaining employment, especially with many work from home options. Virtual meetings are essential when working from home and a stable internet is necessary.

17. For the most part our internet supports are needs to meet patient needs. There are a few workers that we have that work from home and they don't have much for a choice on internet in rural areas.

18. Fiber connection works great for all online activities

19. I think the internet is really pretty good at both my business in Graceville and my home in rural Big Stone County.

20. Our school district greatly relies on internet connection for all learning and activities. Families rely on internet to complete homework and stay connected while learning. Many families continue to use Google Meet or videoconferencing for communicating with school or learning.

21. I work with programs for older adults who need assistance with accessing technology.

22. Business: Sometimes my phone does not work and sometimes working in online databases gets bogged down and I have to wait for an updated screen to continue working. Home: We have a lot of buffering happening when we try to watch shows.

23. It allows for remote access for work.

24. Woodland Centers provides a wide range of mental health and substance use services across Big Stone County but also across our seven county region. Since COVID-19, a large portion of our services are being delivered via telehealth. Access to reliable high speed internet for our providers, office, and our clients is essential to ensure access to our services in a timely manner. When our staff do not have reliable high speed internet, he/she is not able to work from home. In addition, clients not having access to high speed internet at home requires that person to travel to one of our office locations for services. IN addition to telehealth services, a large portion of our business relies on internet connection including our electronic health record where all client data is stored, email, phone systems, and data analytics. The majority of our work relies on internet connection.

25. Sometimes I feel as though I am the data entry clerk for Veterans seeking information/aid from the State of MN and the VA. I see a lack of computer literacy among older Veterans.

26. Mediacom is the only real option and the cost has been continually going up and the service is ok but crashes often

27. both are through Midcontinent. Midcontinent provides upload/down load speeds that meet my needs.

28. BSAG does not have an office, but shares one with the Ortonville EDA. Ortonville is well connected, so there is quality access when we are on-site and meeting with businesses.

29. We own a real estate business… having a good internet connection is vital to all aspects of our business!

30. It keeps me connected to family, friends, and organizations that are important to me.

31. Frequent times of our internet provider crashing causes problems

32. Fiber connectivity within cities is an issue for redundancy

Please share your thoughts on how Big Stone County is positioned to provide the high-quality workforce.

1.

2. I would love to see a larger company come into Big Stone County to provide better paying jobs to people who are already hear AND recruit families into the area; similar to what Westmor/Superior has done for the Hancock/Morris area.

3. In recent months more people in and new to Big Stone County have come to rely on fast reliable internet access for their work. Working remotely has leveled the field for BSC.

4. Feels like we are served well right now and in position for any future created or 'breakthrough' business opportunities. We have been discovered as a great getaway place from Mpls, Sioux Falls, Fargo areas and any regional centers that are feeling too busy for some.

5.

6. We are blessed with lots of space to navigate and not a lot of traffic to hamper progress. Anyone who works from home can work here and enjoy our beautiful surroundings after work.

7. Big Stone County has been a forward looking county that has recognized the importance of broadband infrastructure. We have very active community and farm groups willing to spread the message and help with on the ground recruitment and retention.

8.

9. We have the infrastructure - we just need to develop all the things that utilize it.

10.

11. I'm not sure what will be discussed but this is a start in the right direction.

12. I am not sure but am excited to be a part of the process.

13. I think Big Stone County is very well served but more competition and choices are always a good thing

14. In our district, we are currently attracting employers that were formerly from this area, and wanting to come back. Bringing back with them their expertise they have gained from the "big city."

15.

16. Check out the county's profile: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/091621_bigstone_tcm1045-407649.pdf Big Stone County has a young working populations, 97%+ have a high school diploma, etc

17. I believe Big Stone County is situated well with a high quality workforce. As needs change in the County the workforce adapts.

18. Well positioned

19. Certainly need a slow but steady increase in the workforce. But also need to find a way to get more new business to come to the area. I think we need to find a way to let people know the quality of life in the rural areas vs the hustle and bustle of the big city has many great benefits.

20. With solid internet connection there is a great opportunity to connect schools to businesses and community. From career readiness programs, field trips, connecting to the elderly in nursing homes, there are many opportunities to connect people within Big Stone County as well as the world.

21. I would need more information on this topic.

22. I know there are people looking for work, so there are potential employees within our county.

23.

24. Big Stone County has a lot of great resources and the use of telehealth could bring a lot of opportunities to bring in additional workforce. The use of telehealth provides the opportunity for new providers and workforce without the need to have that person relocate.

25. ? Most of my contact is with those no longer in the workforce.

26. With the initial Fiber installed in the county, it would be great if the cities and other areas in the county could take advantage of that opportunity as well.

27. Especially during COVID, more people are looking to move rural - more outdoor spaces, more social distancing activities - So we have that. Also, we have strong broadband across the county, very good health care, and strong k-12 education available. MNbump has established a strong following to quickly connect with local businesses & residents & in marketing Big Stone County as a great place to be.

28. MNbump was created as a workforce recruitment tool for Big Stone County to highlight the people, places and events of the County. The amenities we have to offer, including high quality broadband, are a significant factor in attracting and providing a high-quality workforce. Our quality broadband and marketing of our County make us well-positioned in workforce recruitment which has become a critical issues.   setting. This could easily be expanded upon if we have amenities such as broadband available to all people who reside here.

29. We have several larger employers for a smaller area. Our room for growth is expansive!

30. We have good schools, many young people who go away for higher education and wish to return.

31. More dependable internet. Maybe more from home employment opportunity

32. We are setup to provide good broadband, we just need to help enable work from home workforces.

How do you think businesses and industries in Big Stone County are using technology in an innovative way?

1.

2. I'm not sure that we are. I think some businesses have gotten better - and they see an opportunity for people to work remotely from small towns instead of having to relocate to the bigger areas where businesses are...but there is definitely an opportunity to do better and open more doors for people to stay in this area while working for companies located in larger areas.

3. Unsure. My experience is that I am connected globally and use collaboration tools to an advanced degree.

4. Often those of us who are small and behind closed doors just smile and plug in out valued resources. Shops are using Shopify, Amazon....some using Etsy, more working from home in remote jobs.

5. MNBump is a fine example of community focused communication.

6. Processing to go orders ready to be picked up, clinic and doctors record storage and notifications, telemedicine, keeping store shelves stocked through internet orders.

7. We have several farms in the county harnessing a wide array of digital tools to expand our market access beyond what has ever been available to our rural community. We can directly connect our farmers to consumers throughout the state and beyond.

8.

9. Slow but sure progress in online media/advertising.

10. As an outsider to most businesses, I would guess adapting to changes made necessary by COvID, including creating and supporting the infrastructure to work from home.

11. Most businesses need a constant connection to do business. Look at any check out in any store. If they can't process debit and credit cards, they find it impossible to do business let alone the consumer may not have any other way to pay.

12. I am not familiar.

13. Not sure on industry but we do see people moving to our community and able to work from home, regardless of where there employment is located

14. We have several businesses and schools that are always exploring different technologies to make their business or school more efficient.

15. tele-health, remote work options

16. Not sure about innovative, but it is essential to the day to day operations and selling outside of the county.

17. With Covid video conferencing has taken a big role for business meetings. Without solid internet this can't take place and businesses can't succeed.

18. Not aware of anything other then normal online usage

19. Not sure.

20. Business are using technology to connect to metro or out of state leaders. Start up businesses are allowed to work in Big Stone County being able to connect throughout the world as well as being able to ship products with ease.

21. One example is a mobile technology "bus" offered by Prairie Five Community Action Council. The Big Stone Area Memory Loss Connection group also has iPads for older adults to borrow.

22. I do not have an idea on this.

23.

24. Telehealth has opened doors. In addition, we can attend meetings quickly without having a long drive to attend.

25. A major improvement is the submission of claims and information through web site uploads.

26.

27. They are using online tools to connect with more customers - marketing and purchasing online (some)

28. Being fairly new to the role I have not had the chance to connect with a significant number of businesses to understand their existing use of technology. With the challenges of 2020, it is more important than ever that businesses understand technology available to them and building an online presence.

29. Our schools and larger employers are able to provide better care and communication to our citizens!

30. Our hospitals and clinics are using technology, as well as our high schools.

31. Online classes

32. Not sure

How do you see unequal access [digital equity] to technology and the internet creating a divide in Big Stone County? If you have an example either from your family or someone you know, please share it.

1.

2. I have not seen it personally - but I'm sure it's there. I think the biggest divide could probably be seen by local school districts when kids were distance learning. Those that had access to computers, the internet, devices, etc faired better than those who did not have these items. Also, those parents who could work remotely (using technology) and be home with their kids to make sure they were getting their stuff done had a more positive experience with distance learning than those parents who did not have this option.

3. Rural places have long struggled to support broad employment opportunities. That is no longer the case and BSC can now market those features that support a healthy work-life balance.

4. We certainly have families who still have no internet access into their homes. Even those of us who do still have catching up to learn and grow toward best use.

5.

6. Children without access can't keep up, teachers can't communicate effectively, job applicants need internet access, help

7. The pandemic has shown us that unequal access to technology among our school-aged kids creates a clear imbalance in education. Simply put, kids without effective technology options have been at a disadvantage.

8.

9. The tools are there, but the divide is growing between the people who utilize what's there and those who do not.

10. The pandemic and resulting distance learning/remote employment have made this equality very apparent. We are fortunate to have good internet and means to ensure we have the write technology in place for either, but that is not the case for everyone. I think access to consistent internet is so crucial for success in work and school, and should be available to all.

11. I have a few customers that don't have access at home and being they're on a fixed income, can't afford it. Since most information is now online, it puts them at a disadvantage.

12. Unsure.

13. na

14. The problem in Big Stone County is the reverse of what other areas experience in my opinion. In Big Stone County high speed, fiber connected internet is more readily available to families that live in the country. The towns I work in (Graceville, Clinton) still do not have fiber internet available to them, and I hear of constant problems with the service providers that are available to them.

15.

16. Limits the company's ability to make a profit, hire more people, contribute to the community, etc. Creates winners and Losers.

17. When schools were shutdown in 2020 and everything turned to remote learning this was probably the fastest way to find out who didn't have adequate internet or in some cases no internet just due to the fact they can't afford it. Also computer equipment needed at home for school work.

18. None

19. I haven't seen that happen.

20. Cost and equipment is a major hindrance to internet. Computers, routers, networking, and paying for service can create a divide.

21. Cost of monthly service can be a barrier.

22. If people can't afford internet or their internet doesn't function seamlessly, they don't have access to resources or information that others do.

23.

24. There are people in the county that do not have access to high speed internet making them unable to access telehealth services. This then requires these individuals to travel to clinic locations to access services.

25. If unequal access includes generational issues, some older Veterans are not computer literate. An obstacle is they don't seem likely to want to become literate.

26. Being able to have a strong fiber optic access at Waters Edge has been a valuable resource for us to be able to have the clinic at our site.

27.

28. I don't have a specific story, but as a County that ranked #65 in 2010-2014 and #68 in 2014-2018 for median income, we need to acknowledge the disparities that can exist for our residents with fewer resources to access technology and how this effort can begin to address unequal access challenges.

29. We have a lot of low income families out here… it was made clear during lockdown on a school wide level that not all of our families had equal access to stay connected or get work done virtually from home.

30. I know that when we have meetings in the city of Clinton internet service is very poor. We have have broadband at our home through a grant given to FedTel.

31. Rural area has a cheaper and more dependable provider. Would be good for this provider to be available county wide now

32. Not sure

How do local organizations communicate (engage) with community members? Is this a two-way discussion? How is technology used? What are the messages Big Stone County is sending out to the world to attract people and investment?

1.

2. Our group communicates with community members via the newspaper and social media (Facebook) about events. It is mostly a 1-way conversation, but we sometimes get feedback/questions on Facebook about events.   I think Big Stone County could do a better job selling ourselves and our area - the entire county, not just one town - to people outside the area to encourage growth and opportunity. But those messages are highly dependent on our connections. Our best opportunity to grow the area comes from making connections with others who can help - whether those connections come from former community members, friends of former or current community members, or both. But in order to be connected, we need fast, reliable technology options.

3. Even with our aging population, internet connectivity has given greater access to everyone and supports broader community engagement. It is a two way discussion in my experience. I don't know the BSC message.

4. First big thought, we are very fortunate to have county commissioners who are trying to serve us and build for the future at the same time. Our message to the world is one of open doors and welcome but I'm personally not sure who it is reaching.

5.

6. Email and text are ways to communicate in our area. People seldom call when they have other options. A video was made for the hospital to attract new staff to the area by showing local places to see, restaurants, concerts, park resources, etc. We want to show this is a great welcoming place that is not only less congested but has plenty good things to offer outside of the workplace.

7. As the president of Big Stone County Farmers Union I regularly have to communicate with members. Tools such as email, zoom, and digital content are critical to keeping our organization effective. Big Stone County is sending out the message that we are actively preparing for both the present and the future and are going to work to find actual solutions for the problems our residents face.

8.

9. We're putting a lot of effort into it as a county, but there is a lot of noise that needs to be overcome.

10. I think it's mostly ideas and activities being presented via the newspaper, radio, or Facebook. These seem like one way communication steams. I don't think one specific message has been made apparent to me regarding investment in the community.

11. Most local organizations are using Facebook to notify the public. It's faster than the newspaper.

12. Not applicable.

13. Facebook, websites, could probably work a little harder attracting people from other areas

14. Here at the school we keep our families informed by utilizing our Student Information System (JMC).

15.

16. Technology - email, social media, videos - are all essential forms of communication to community members and the greater world.

17. Show corporations and industries we have the resources to make their businesses succeed out here, we are more then just a small town in a rural area.

18. Outdoor activities, open spaces. Need outdoor wifi. Precision Agriculture

19. Wide open spaces.   A traffic jam is 2 cars at a stop sign. Extremely low crime.

20. People and community is the asset to Big Stone County. There are great communities that embrace new and small businesses that could work cheaply in this area.

21. The beauty! Technology is a necessity.

22. There are empty buildings in our towns and it would be wonderful to see them being utilized buy businesses. We have a hard working population. We have limited shopping options and for people that have unreliable vehicles and/or limited budgets, it is difficult for them to get clothing, shoes, etc. they need.

23.

24. Strong hospitals, strong mental health clinic, strong social services. Great advocates for change.

25. Classes directed specifically at an older generation with content pertinent to their needs and wants.

26.

27. marketing emphasis on our outdoor natural amenities, healthcare, and a strong focus on our youth and their activities & opportunities. Reviewing/upgrading housing to help strengthen. Always in need of more positive engagement with residents

28. Assets we should emphasize, and have through MNbump include quality broadband, recreational amenities, jobs, art community, and community events.   As more people are attracted to Big Stone County, the need will grow to add new housing units.

29. A lot is through social media platforms, newspapers and radio. We have a lot of good stuff coming from mnbump.com… but we should… in my opinion… invest in advertising our area out in the bigger cities!

30. They communicate using Facebook and websites. And a local radio station. There is a cable tv channel in Ortonville, but we don't have cable in the country.

31. Facebook posts on fishing successes, a local realtor was recently featured on an episode of an HGTV lakeside cabin episode

32. MNBump, Facebook, etc. I don't know if promoting outside folks to live here is part of the messaging.

Sustainability initiatives strive to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. They can also help businesses become more competitive as they use materials, water and energy more efficiently in their production cycle. How are people and organizations in Big Stone County adopting sustainable practices in their operations? What barriers to sustainable practices exist?

1.

2. I'm not sure how groups and businesses are doing this - but I do think one of the biggest barriers to sustainable practices is that they are often more expensive than being wasteful and small businesses don't have the funds to support the better way of doing things. And I think many people/businesses get stuck in "doing things the old way" and fail to look at things differently (or they don't know how to do things differently) in order to be adopt more sustainable practices. So lack of money and/or knowledge.

3. Uncertain.

4. Huge topic. Personally, my family is running a 3rd generation orchard and quietly marketing an organically grown cider. We stay positive, figure things out, enjoy caring for the land and operation with no chemicals....just don't let things get in our creative way. We are along Big Stone Lake- very few doing what we do-most lakeshore sold off for homes-makes our prairie bluffs and old trees all the more treasured, IMO. Sometimes end up in conversations where you have a gut feeling we are not understood or valued as much as one might like. Other times feel that understanding and value are here and growing among local friends/visitors. Certainly room for more education.

5.

6. Being conscious of ways to protect our water, conserve soil, recycle materials, reduce waste are some of the ways many are conserving our resources. Barriers are old ways of farming and gardening and people that are resistant to any change.

7. As a farmer, these issues are front and center is virtually every decision we make. As a result we are bringing in new climate-friendly crops and changing our farming practices to promote carbon sequestration and healthy soils. Market access and supply chain limitations (processing,

storage, and shipping) remain barriers. Large initial capital outlays for different on-farm equipment is also slowing the speed of change.

8.

9. Habits, old habits are the biggest barriers.   The possibilities and practices are all there, they just need to be implemented.

10. Sustainable practices can be costly and it's hard to create buy in for a new process when the old one was "just fine". I've noticed more original buildings have been restored instead of building new in the same it similar place.

11. This question is outside my field but I can say there are businesses that are so dependent on the internet that it completely shuts them down when there is a outage.

12. Unsure.

13.

14. I don't have enough information to answer that question with any knowledge.

15.

16. unknown

17. Using alternative resources can be a challenge as for years main resources have always been there.

18. Not aware of any

19. My guess is that cost would be a prohibitive factor.

20. Big Stone County take pride in the land and personally knowing people. Businesses and residents work more intimately than large communities so sustainability and ethics are at the forefront.

21. unknown

22. Unknown.

23.

24. The use of telehealth allows us to bring providers to the area without relying on them being physically present. finding trained mental health professionals is highly challenging, especially in rural Minnesota so being able to provide these services by a professional regardless of their place of residence is a huge win for everyone.

25.

26.

27.

28. Unsure what practices are being used.

29. I can't think of a good example in this department.

30. We have farmers using progressive methods, but I don't the details.

31. Distance learning is a reality that will continue from the looks of it. Having dependable home broadband is essential for these students

32. Laying conduit that cane be rented/changed out for new technologies as work is being completed. I.E Roads.