

Grants awarded to improve internet access locally
(KMZA)--Grants have been awarded to improve access to high-speed internet for homes and businesses in several local northeast Kansas areas.

Governor Laura Kelly recently announced the awarding of four grants totaling more than \$680,000 to Blue Valley Technologies, in Home, Kansas.

The grant funds will be used to help deploy fiber optic broadband to the city of Bern, southern section of Blue Rapids, as well as rural areas north of Frankfort and east of Winiferd. The company will provide more than \$680,000 in matching funds.

The need to deploy fiber to these areas was validated by the numerous letters of support written by community members and business leaders.

“I cannot begin to describe how excited BVT is to provide robust broadband internet to our underserved and unserved friends and neighbors. We’ve known for a long time there are areas that have been overlooked, but the pandemic truly brought those areas to light,” commented BVT Chief Executive Officer, Candace Wright. “This grant will not only change BVT’s footprint, but it will also change the lives of those once living outside it.”

Chief Operations Officer, John Smith added, “We already have engineers working on the plans and getting our processes in place. Our plan is to start putting our fiber in the ground by early summer.”

BVT will be working to complete the entire project by spring 2022.

Grants totaling \$5 million were awarded for 14 broadband improvement projects in 18 communities statewide.

The grants are through the Broadband Acceleration Grant Program created in 2020 to bring critically needed broadband access to Kansas communities. Funded through the Kansas Department of Transportation's Eisenhower Legacy Transportation program, the office of Broadband Development administers the program to make more “last-mile” connections possible across the state.