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# Connecting All Missourians

OCTOBER 17TH 2022 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Connecting All Missourians

The Office of Broadband Development in partnership with the Regional Planning Commissions and the University of Missouri system, invite you to join us for the Connecting All Missourians regional listening session.

October 19, 2022

10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Bootheel Regional Planning Commission 105 East North Main Street, Dexter MO 63841

The meeting will be held in person, with a concurrent virtual option available for those who are unable to attend in-person. To view the schedule of meetings and register please [click here](#).

The Connecting All Missourians programs - funded through the Federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program and the Digital Equity Act (DEA) - represent an unprecedented opportunity to connect unserved and underserved Missourians. These programs will fund lasting investments in broadband infrastructure and digital inclusion programs to make sure Missourians can make full use of the internet once they get it. Connecting All Missourians aims to ensure that every Missourian has access to the internet, an internet-capable device, and the knowledge/skills necessary to take full advantage of the opportunities broadband provides. Feedback received from stakeholders at the events will guide the creation of a five-year infrastructure plan and Missouri's Digital Equity Plan.

The main purpose of the regional listening session is to hear from a diverse range of broadband stakeholders, including, citizens, businesses owners, community anchor institutions such as libraries, schools, and hospitals, local governments, and service providers.

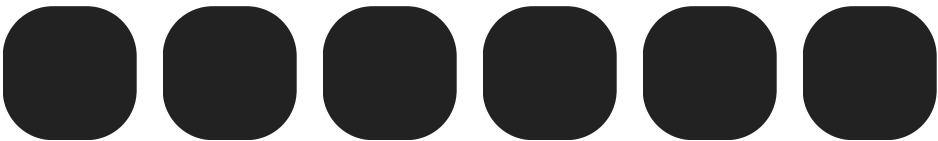
Stakeholder input is crucial to the work of the Office of Broadband Development as they develop future programs.

The information collected will shape the development of broadband infrastructure in Missouri for the foreseeable future. The goal of this campaign is to identify broadband challenges and barriers while identifying resources that can further our mission: Connecting All Missourians.

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# Stoddard County Commission Opens Bids for Health Insurance

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## Stoddard County Commission Opens Bids for Health Insurance

The Stoddard County Commission held a special meeting on Wednesday, October 12, 2022 at 1:30 p.m. to open bids from the five final insurance brokers who have quotes for the new health insurance plan for the county employees.

Presiding Commissioner Danny Talkington opens the first bid from Arch Brokerage which was received in the County Clerk's office sealed at 8:54 a.m. on October 6, 2022. Arch Brokerage offered a fixed amount per employee of \$349.45 and for the employee/spouse/family a cost of \$1,247.90. The total yearly cost for the Health EZ Pan American plan would be \$721,378.80 to Stoddard County.

The second bid was from Mitchell Insurance. it was received on October 11, 2022 at 8:58 a.m. They offered a D2E Three Tier Plan design at a yearly cost of \$707,566 with a max of \$788,650. Mitchell Insurance's coalition is Renovate Health Coalition.

The third bid was from Billington Insurance and it was received on October 11, 2022 at 9:32 p.m. Billington had a stop/loss at \$32,500 with an option to raise to \$35,000. Their quoted annual cost to the county would be \$749,112.32.

The fourth bid was from Mutual Medical and it was received on October 11, 2022 at 11:56 a.m. The presented three options. Option 1 was Symetra at a cost of \$701,528. Option 2 was Pan American Life at a cost of \$754,089. Option 3 was Berkshire Hathaway Life Insurance Co. at a cost of \$687,091.

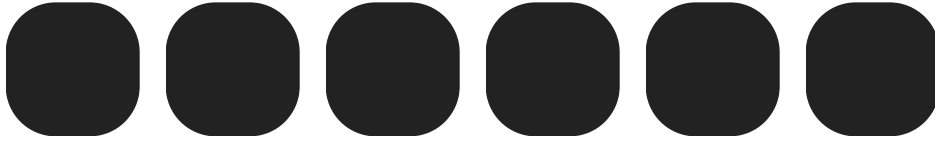
Bid #5 was from County Wide Insurance and it was received on October 11, 2022 at 3:49 p.m. They offered a Saint Francis Health Plan. All hospitals are in the network within a 12 county region on a Tier 1 level. The plan had a stop/loss of \$25,000. The annual cost to the county for the base plan is \$677,306.

The Commissioners will have some work ahead of them this week reviewing all the bids submitted. They will give each of the five insurance brokers/companies a chance to give a presentation during a work session. Then the Commission can ask questions. The Commission will make a final decision on Monday, October 24, 2022 in their regularly scheduled weekly meeting.

The Commissioners will begin their work session at 1:30 on Thursday and continue until they have had a chance to review all the bid information and meet with each broker individually or in a conference call.

<https://showmetimes.com/Blogpost/vhtr/Stoddard-County-Commission-Opens-Bids-for-Health-Insurance>

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## Stoddard County Commission Meeting, Water District #5 Update

OCTOBER 11TH 2022 BY DEE LOFLIN

### Stoddard County Commission Meeting, Water District #5 Update

The Stoddard County Commissioners met in a regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, October 11, 2022. Monday was the Columbus Day/Indigenous People's Day holiday so they chose to move the meeting to Tuesday.

### Update Stoddard County Employee Health Insurance

All health insurance insurance bids from the five brokers the commissioners had already chosen must be in by 4 p.m. today, Tuesday, October 11, 2022. Tomorrow, Wednesday, October 12, 2022 at 1:30 p.m. there will be a Bid Opening meeting, Bid Opening meetings are open to the public. Unfortunately the Commissioners will not be able to

meet in their regular room due to scheduled training for the upcoming November election. The meeting room they have available is too small to have all the insurance representative to attend at the same time.

"I anticipate it's going to take us a few days to break it down and we may need further information. We may need to talk with you (the insurance representatives) so we can make a good comparison. It just may take us a few days," Commissioner Talkington explained. "I am not as knowledgeable of all the insurance terms you all use in everyday life."

"We will have to meet individually with each insurance company to go over everything. There may not be enough detail for a novus person. I will have to ask several questions," continued Talkington.

"I have met with Cecil Weeks, County Clerk, several times and he is pretty knowledgeable of the insurance and would be a good asset as he knows the terminology." stated Beth Johnson with Mitchell Insurance.

"Our goal is to make the final decision on October 24, 2022 as we have to notify our current insurance broker by November 1, 2022 or this is all for not." stated Talkington.

Members of SoutheastHEALTH were on hand to let the Commissioners know how dedicated and committed they are to this community. They have new and exciting ventures coming that will be announced soon.

Charlie Kruse of Dexter serves as a system board member for SoutheastHEALTH and said, "I don't know a lot of the insurance terminology either, but serving on this board has given me a greater awareness of how grateful we are to have not only an emergency room, but this hospital as well."

David Andraus and Ron Jones with Mutual Medical Insurance out of Peoria, Illinois presented their proposal for county employee health insurance.

### **Update on Water District #5**

Ivan Bostic joined the meeting. He is a concerned citizen and is here today to discuss the Water District #5. He wanted to know what was going on with Water District #5.

"They have been sending out water bills. They got the meters read and mailed bills on Thursday, October 6, 2022. Bills should hit the mailboxes today (October 11th) due to the holiday yesterday. They are conducting business. A couple of old board members are looking to appoint some new board members," stated Commissioner Danny Talkington.

"I think we need to do something more to get them a board," commented Commissioner Jarrell.

"We do not have the authority," stated Commissioner Talkington

"I have talked to Dave Cooper and Debbie Robey and they both are willing to serve. Debbie gave me two names that would also like to serve Dough O'Neil and Judy Geary," Jarrell said. "We need to get a board. I want to make a motion and appoint these two people. I may be stepping out of bounds, but we need to do something for those people in that water district."

"We don't have the authority," commented Commissioner Talkington.

"I am making that motion and I may be stepping out of my lane, but I have made the motion." stated Commissioner Jarrell. "Something needs to be done."

Motion made by Carol Jarrell to appoint Debbie Robey and Dave Cooper to Water District #5. Talkington seconded the motion. Call for the vote. Carol Jarrell yes. Danny Talkington voted no. The motion did not pass. With Steve Jordan, not available, as a commissioner and only two commissioners available, the Presiding Commissioner has the final say.

"We do not have the authority to appoint any board member to Water District #5," commented Talkington. "I have been told by both Travis Elliot and Alvin Shrader, Missouri attorneys, that the commissioners could not appoint a board of any kind for the Water District #5. This also falls under Mo Fire and Water State Statutes."

This reporter asked Mr. Talkington then who does appoint the board and Talkington said the Circuit Clerk Judge.

I replied, " So Brandy Ross, the only remaining board member, needs to talk with Judge Rob Mayer."

Talkington said yes, I have told her she will have to petition Judge Mayer to appoint a board for Water District #5.

### **In Other Business:**

Commissioner Jarrell made a motion to accept the minutes from Monday, October 3, 2022. Talkington seconded the motion. Both voted yes.

In those minutes they approved the Qualifications (RFQ) from Conexon Engineering Firm to provide our engineering services for the broadband fiber for the Puxico School District

of Stoddard County. Engineering firms submitting a RFQ and not selected are Utilisource, RuCon and CT&T.

Also approved were the minutes from September 26, 2022 as well as the Investment Policy for Stoddard County as presented by the Stoddard County Collector/Treasurer.

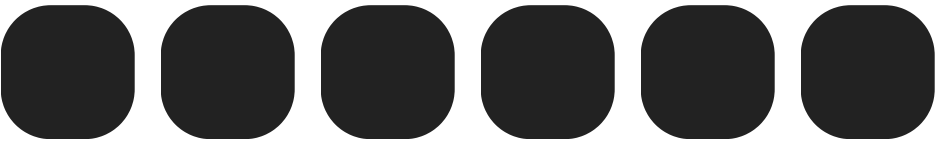
Motion was made to approve the Adds and Abates for September 1st - September 30th, 2022 by Commissioner Jarrell. Seconded by Commissioner Talkington. Call for the vote, Jarrell yes, Talkington yes. Motion passed.

Commissioner Jarrell made a motion to adjourn at 12:44 p.m. Commissioner Talkington seconded the motion. Both voted yet.

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# Route V in Stoddard County Closed for Bridge

# Repairs

OCTOBER 11TH 2022 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Route V in Stoddard County Closed for Bridge Repairs

Route V in Stoddard County will be closed as contractor crews perform bridge repairs.

This section of roadway is located between County Road 234 and County Road 232.

Weather permitting, work will begin Tuesday, Oct. 11 through Thursday, Oct. 13 from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily.

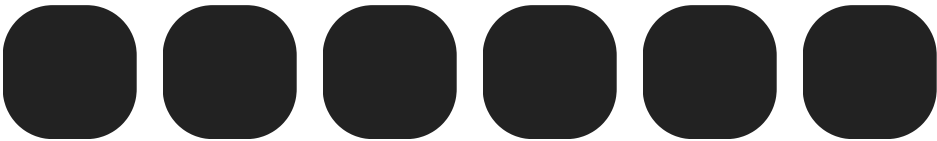
The work zone will be marked with signs. Motorists are urged to use extreme caution while traveling near the area.

For additional information, please contact MoDOT’s Customer Service Center toll-free at 1-888-ASK-MODOT

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# Flags to Fly Half Staff for 41st National Fallen Firefighters Memorial

OCTOBER 08TH 2022 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Flags to Fly Half Staff for 41st National Fallen Firefighters Memorial

In accordance to Public Law 107-51, the American flag should be lowered to half-staff on Sunday, October 9, 2022 from sunrise to sunset in observance of National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service.

The United States Congress created the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation to lead a nationwide effort to remember America's fallen firefighters. Since 1992, the tax-exempt, nonprofit Foundation has developed and expanded programs to honor our fallen fire heroes and assist their families and coworkers.

The 41st National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service will be held Sunday, October 9, 2022, to honor firefighters who died in the line of duty.

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