

# Rural Ohioans Lag behind Taiwanese Aboriginals In Race for High-Speed Internet

by [John Michael Spinelli](#)

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ONB COLUMBUS: Before Gov. Ted Strickland can really turn around Ohio, as he famously promised to do as a candidate for the office last year, he might first have to first turn on the Internet, especially in many of the state's rural counties where the slow speed of expanding high-speed broadband connectivity puts residents and business at a competitive disadvantage to other states and the rest of the world.

But even as news from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that [Ohio will receive \\$35.4 million](#), part of a larger \$ 417 million distribution from its [Rural Health Care Pilot Project](#) (RHCPP) designed to deliver rural residents high-speed Internet access for acute, primary and preventive health care, the news from the BBC that [aboriginal tribesmen living in Taiwan's remote central mountain area are logging on using broadband connections](#) should be a wake up call to get with it before its too late.

When 700 members of the Tsou tribe are using the Internet to market local farmer's produce and lure travelers to local restaurants and hotels, the paucity and slow-speeds of Internet connectivity throughout Ohio's many rural counties is both troubling and confusing, considering Ohio's [Supercomputer Center](#) (OSC) is a model state initiative but its Statehouse, where the state's future is up for grabs on any day the legislature is in session, only recently became WI-FI enabled.

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## FCC FUNDING SPEEDS UP STRICKLAND BROADBAND INITIATIVE

With the deployment of broadband connectivity in rural America ranking as one of the FCC's top priorities, its RHCPP funding will help construct 69 statewide or regional broadband telehealth networks in 42 states and three U.S. territories. Telehealth and telemedicine services, which provide patients in rural areas with access to critically needed medical specialists in a variety of practices, including cardiology, pediatrics, and radiology, in some instances without leaving their homes or communities, will network through hospitals, clinics, universities and research centers, behavioral health sites, correctional facility clinics, and community health centers.

But while the focus of RHCPP funding is in on health care, Ohio's funding can only help reeve up [Strickland's Broadband Ohio Initiative](#) (BBI), announced in late July that allows the Broadband Council housed at OSC to manage policy, procedure, process and development related to system resources.

In an explanation of his July announcement, Strickland said the state's "future relies on our ability to compete in a high-speed, high-tech global marketplace" by creating a public-private partnership he said will "make sure that every Ohioan has viable access to affordable, high-speed Internet service, regardless of where they live, work or learn."

OSC Executive Director Stanley Ahalt told the Akron Beacon Journal that the FCC money will be leveraged in light of Strickland's BBI.

"The state 'should be able to leverage the Ohio connections for productive purposes beyond health care . . . (and) significantly expedite Gov. Strickland's Broadband Ohio plan to deploy high-speed connections to every county." [Stanley Ahalt, ABJ]

### **AMERICA (AND OHIO) 14th in TOP 20 INTERNET SPEEDS**

In a ranking of the world's top 20 highest average advertised broadband download speeds included in a [BBC article about the United Kingdom's plan to speed up its Internet connection](#), Japan tops the list at more than 90 Megabytes per second (Mps) with France and Korea, both at slightly more than 40 Mps, ranked 2nd and 3rd respectively.

Right behind Germany but slightly ahead of the Czech Republic in the 20th spot is America, in 14th place, with slightly below 10 Mps.

Ohio should not expect the rest of the country or the rest of the world to put themselves on hold until Buckeyes get their act together with respect to high-speed Internet availability. But when aboriginal tribes, who likely don't have a Starbucks, Wal-Mart or Kroger grocery store in their communities due to their isolation are setting up personal Websites, something is really wrong.

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