

# Co-ops Connect FYI

By Jonathan Chambers • Jun 03, 2022

Smart Brevity® count: 2 mins... 580 words

Updates and insights for electric cooperatives considering or operating rural broadband networks.

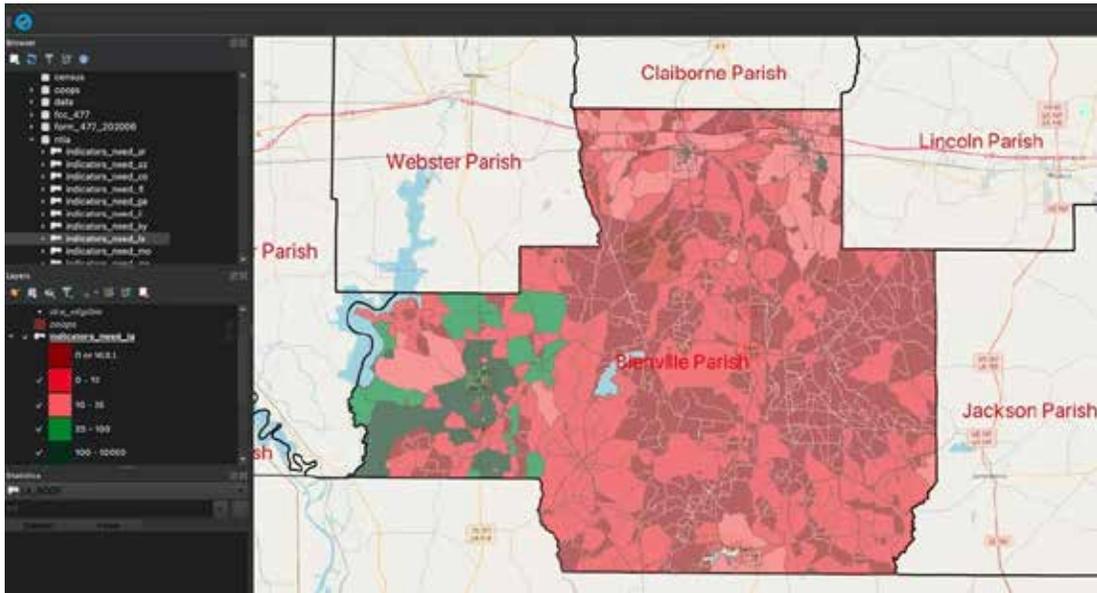
## No Broadband at Home? Your State's Broadband Office May Choose Not to Believe You



Let's recap:

**Broadband in Bienville Parish**, about which I've previously written [here](#) and [here](#), is **nearly non-existent** according to the FCC's maps, NTIA's maps, and the citizens of Bienville.

- One enterprising resident collected the sworn statements of 400 Bienville residents attesting to the lack of broadband availability.



*Broadband availability in Bienville Parish*

- We used those sworn statements and NTIA's maps to apply for a broadband grant from the GUMBO program.
- CSC Holdings, LLC, aka Suddenlink aka Cablevision dba Optimum, a subsidiary of Altice USA, **protested the application**, asserting that it does indeed provide broadband service.

**So, who would you believe:** the citizens of rural Louisiana or French billionaire Patrick Drahi?

- CSC provided only shapefiles and copies of its FCC 477 filings, which are census block-based and ***“claimed” speeds in excess of 25/3 Mbps.***

## More Bad News for Bienville



Last week, we received this **FINAL decision from the Louisiana broadband office siding with CSC/Suddenlink/Cablevision/Altice USA**. As to the sworn statements of the citizens of Bienville, the broadband office demurred:

“While sworn statements may offer beneficial feedback as to end-users’ satisfaction with current services or perceptions of what services are available, they indisputably do not provide any objective relevant **data** towards assessing whether internet access services in excess of 25:3 were or are available in the protested application area.”

**Let’s ignore for a moment** the Catch-22 of doing speed tests if broadband is unavailable or unaffordable at your home. Maybe a sworn statement is the best evidence you have.

The broadband office states that it reviewed speed test data from the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) and found **four** tests of Suddenlink customers in Arcadia, Louisiana, that exceeded 25/3 Mbps.

- **Four tests.** Not tests at any of the 400 locations where there are sworn statements. Just four random tests.
- The broadband office further explained that since Suddenlink uses a cable technology, **it is presumed to provide** service greater than 25/3 Mbps.

### Go deeper:

Twenty-five miles due west of Arcadia is the town of Minden, also served by Suddenlink. The Delta Regional Authority published these speed test results by Suddenlink customers:

DRA Speed Test Lat/Long	Address Provided by CSC	CSC Subscription Speeds	DRA Speed Test Results
32.6309931, -93.2586841	Minden, LA 71055	400:40	14:1.04
32.62247, 93.281066	Minden, LA 71055	1000:35	16.81:15.64
32.6425179, 93.2586414	Minden, LA 71055	400:20	15.93:19.38
32.603967, -93.22142	Minden, LA 71055	100:10	17.11:7.88
32.628841, -93.284567	Minden, LA 71055	400:20	18.8:6.17

### That's:

- 14 Mbps down/1.04 Mbps up.
- 16.81 Mbps down/15.64 Mbps up.
- 15.93 Mbps down/19.38 Mbps up
- 17.11 Mbps down/7.88 Mbps up
- 18.8 Mbps down/6.17 Mbps up.

**By the numbers:** Not exactly 25/3 Mbps.

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## The Big Picture

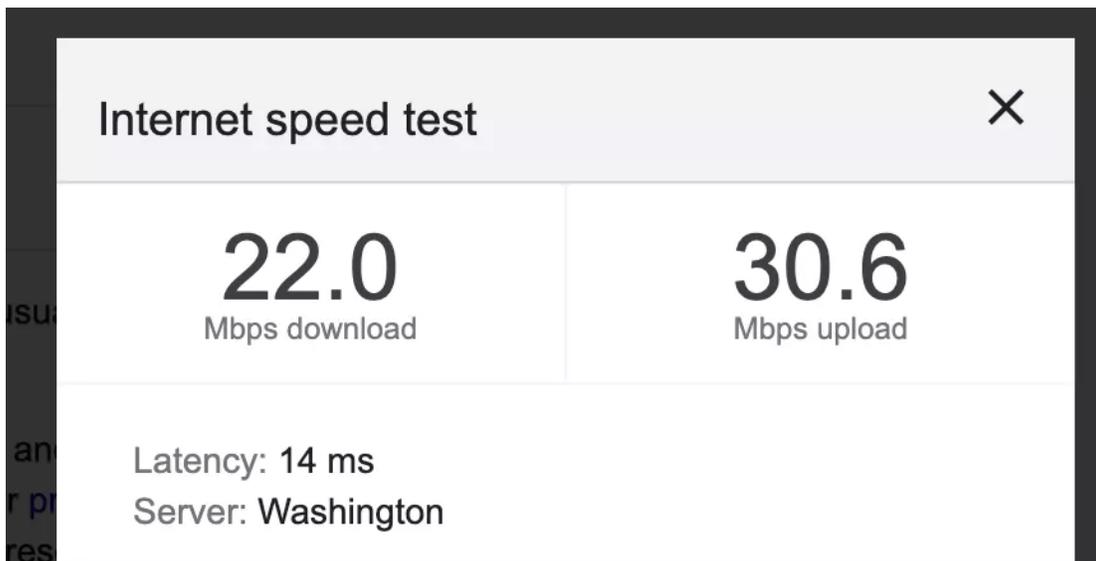


Just for giggles, while writing this, **I ran a speed test for my service.**

- I subscribe to Verizon FiOS 1 Gbps symmetrical service and I'm sitting in my library just feet away from the router.
- I ran both an Ookla and an M-Lab test, since those are the ones NTIA uses for its maps.
- I ran the tests one immediately after the other and then ran them a second time in reverse order.

**The results:**





**Why it matters:**

**It doesn't.** Speed tests run this way are almost meaningless.

***If a broadband office:***

1. Isn't going to produce its own maps
2. Will accept unverified household-by-household challenges to grant applications
3. Won't accept the word of its citizens

Then: ***We'll prepare for the battle of speed tests.***

- We have our own speed test servers.
- We follow the FCC Office of Engineering and Technology speed test protocols for our federal funding.
- We'll work with local communities to help them withstand challenges to their grant applications.

**The bottom line:**

What a colossal waste of time, energy, and resources. **While rural America waits.**

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