



News Release

COMMISSIONER SAM BRITTON
MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
SOUTHERN DISTRICT

For Immediate Release: July 31, 2018

Contact: *Daniel Forde*
601-720-1886 cell
601-961-5470 office
daniel.forde@psc.state.ms.us

Commissioner Sam Britton calls for High-Speed Internet access for all Mississippians

JACKSON, Miss.—Access to High-Speed Internet is an increasing problem in rural areas across the country. Currently, Mississippi is ranked 49th in connectivity with nearly thirty percent of the population lacking broadband service as reported by the Federal Communications Commission.

Internet access can be compared much like electricity was one hundred years ago. With businesses and individuals making decisions on where to locate based on expected services like High-Speed Internet, this remains an important issue that must be improved. Mississippi will fall further behind in education, healthcare and business if solutions are not found.

“It is my goal for all Mississippians to have access to High-Speed Internet.” Public Service Commissioner Sam Britton said. “The service offered today is inadequate and nothing short of a crisis in rural Mississippi. It is important to remember there is no quick fix and no single solution to this issue, thus an “all hands on deck” approach is appropriate. As a supporter of free-market solutions, I believe any entity that wants to offer High-Speed Internet service should be allowed to do so.”

Current Mississippi Law prohibits Electric Power Associations from providing High-Speed Internet. In other states, there are models that allow these associations to provide Internet service which Britton believes should be considered as a possible solution in Mississippi.

“Following models established in other states, I support state law allowing Electric Power Associations to offer High-Speed Internet service in Mississippi,” Britton explained. “This is a complex and expensive issue to implement. Ventures of this sort should be heavily vetted and discussed openly. I believe the state’s pursuit of universal access to High-Speed Internet would be benefitted if Electric Power Associations would explore their potential role in solving this issue.”

“As a state”, Britton concluded, “we should be proactive in seeking out solutions to deliver this service to all Mississippians.”

###

For more information, please contact: 601-720-1886
