

Mississippi Public Service Commission



Dane Maxwell, Chairman
Mississippi Public Service Commission

5G Creates Opportunity for Mississippi Workforce Development, Businesses and Industry, and Residents

On February 27th, Senator John Thune of South Dakota introduced a piece of legislation titled The Telecommunications Skilled Workforce Act geared to increase the number of workers enrolled in 5G training programs and to grow the overall workforce in the telecommunications industry.

5G technology can deliver speeds up to 100 times faster and connect 100 times more devices compared to current 4G networks and will have a major impact in the way we communicate, educate our students and conduct business in the future. I believe this creates tremendous opportunities here in Mississippi for our community colleges (expanded curriculum and training); businesses and industries (enhanced efficiencies and productivity); and those who live and work in rural settings (access and communication).

While 5G technology is here and can be seen in large cities like New York, Atlanta and Dallas, there is still a great deal of work that must be done to get this much needed infrastructure deployed to rural states like Mississippi. A major hurdle for us will be to establish and manage the workforce required to maintain these new 5G networks. It is estimated that 5G will create 50,000 new jobs per year throughout the initial deployment phase, with the potential to reach three million jobs. This creates an incredible opportunity for Mississippi to be a leader in this area of workforce development and training as well as help close the digital divide that many Mississippians feel, particularly in rural areas.

We are fortunate to have the leadership of Senator Roger Wicker, who is the Chairman of the Committee on Commerce, and great champion of similar legislation like The Precision Agriculture Connectivity Act. This legislation created more access to high-speed technology for farmers in Mississippi. The nationwide deployment of 5G is the next step in closing the urban-rural gap and will have a significant impact in areas like healthcare, education, agriculture, small business growth and streaming services, just to name a few.

As Chairman of the Mississippi Public Service Commission, two of my top goals are to encourage economic development and identify new avenues to build a stronger, more sustainable workforce. The deployment of new technologies like the 5G network is a victory in both of these areas. I look forward to working closely with our state and federal leadership, industry leaders and educational institutions across the state to find solutions and partnerships that will bring more reliable networks and higher-paying jobs to Mississippi.