

# Mississippi Public Service Commission



Chairman Dane Maxwell  
Mississippi Public Service Commission  
*Southern District*

## **Mississippi among most aggressive states addressing broadband infrastructure issue**

It's no secret that 2020 has presented some of the most unprecedented times in recent memory. With businesses rushing to adapt to new guidelines in response to COVID-19 and legislative sessions across the country delayed and suspended, the first 6 months of 2020 has sent many of us scrambling to find a "new normal."

One thing the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light is the dire need for expanded broadband infrastructure not just in our state, but across the country. In 2020 alone, Mississippi along with 42 other states, including Guam and Puerto Rico addressed broadband expansion in legislative action. While each state's efforts and policy initiatives are all different according to their needs, an overwhelming majority of states agree on one thing. People need connectivity and they need it now.

In Mississippi, there were several bills brought before the legislature to address this issue including funds to the Department of Education as well as a grant application process to our rural electric cooperatives and other providers to the tune of 75 million dollars. These funds combined with the over 900 million eligible federal dollars from the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund means our state could see over 1 billion dollars of investment this year, putting us among the top states in America aggressively addressing this issue. While it is true, money is not a silver bullet solution, this year's unprecedented effort to fund upfront broadband infrastructure is undoubtedly setting the table for Mississippi's positive future.

I'm confident that putting these funds to work alongside creative policy initiatives like those included in PSC Rules, we can further set the table for a highly-competitive, all-of-the-above approach in connecting every Mississippi home to adequate internet service.

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