

Energy, Utilities & Technology Committee hearing 2/15/22 @ 9:00am

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Retired Caribou business owner; State Farm Insurance franchisee, 22 years
Assistant Director Caribou Chamber of Commerce, 1975-1981
Caribou City Council, 1994 To 1999, Mayor 1997-1998
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First, I want to commend the Caribou Utilities District for stepping out of the box to move this project forward and get their charter amended to include broadband.

I have been an advocate of broadband in Caribou for several years and I believe the definition of "utility" is useful, profitable, and beneficial, and feel that broadband encompasses all three of these factors.

Although broadband has many benefits, most if not all already known to this committee, I want touch briefly on a few that in Caribou we have seen, because of the recent pandemic, will greatly benefit our citizens in the future.

Our school district, RSU 39, will benefit by students having broadband internet for a far better distance learning education than what was experienced during the pandemic. The Superintendent of schools mentioned back in 2020 that no less 30 families did not have the required internet connectivity to allow students to even participate in remote learning.

Our hospital, Cary Medical Center, will benefit by patients in Caribou having broadband internet for telemedicine appointments.

Covid created a surge in working from home/remotely for continued employment; setting a future precedent for the need for a broadband utility in Caribou as more of these jobs are shifted or created to a 21st century workplace model.

A famous quote by former President John F. Kennedy, from May 4th, 1962, is prescient and applicable to this broadband project and the state of economic development in Caribou; "If not us, who? If not now, when?"

By changing the CUD charter to include broadband, it allows us as a community to embrace progress for our future leaders today. I appreciate the Maine Legislature taking this matter seriously and allowing our community to prepare for the future.

Thank you

David Corriveau