Rural Places Matter

Members of NYS Rural Caucus Convention Team:
Kathleen Stein, Convener
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2021 NYS Convention
LWV NYS Rural Caucus Counties as of 6/1/21
RAC Survey Results: Top Five Concerns

1) Healthcare
2) Broadband access
3) Voter rights, engagement
4) Econ devel, poverty
5) Climate, Sustainability
Broadband Access in Rural New York

Kathleen Stein, LWV St. Lawrence County MAL Unit
Jim Siplon, the President of the Warren County Economic Development Corporation on lack of internet service in the ADKs:

“It wasn’t life or death ten or fifteen years ago. Today it is life or death. It’s as important as electricity and water.” (NCPR)
Georgia 2020 Broadband Report

GEORGIA BROADBAND AT A GLANCE

70% of unserved Georgia locations are rural
31% of rural Georgia is unserved
26 rural counties have >50% unserved
Lewis Co./DANC Survey: Pink lines are fiber optic cables, blue are coaxial cables, grey areas are Census Blocks counted as “served” by the FCC.
Lewis County Download Speeds as Advertised: “...the information by its very nature is overstated by the providers.” Inventory Report Lewis County, p.36

(Dark green is fastest, red is slowest speed.)
Comparison of Lewis County Population Density with Advertised Download Speeds. (Map on the left: purple is lowest density, orange is highest density. Lines represent coaxial and fiber cables.)
Why are rural areas underserved by internet providers?

Almost invariably, lack of available internet somewhere means either that there are *too few potential customers* in the area, or that those who *are* there are *too widely dispersed to serve efficiently.*

“The private sector’s not going to solve this.”

Adie Tomer, Brookings Institute.

*New York Times, May 17, 2021*
What can the LWV NYS do?

• Identify State Leagues that have, or are engaged in studies to propose, a position on Broadband Access with which we might concur.

• Define what a NYS Position on Broadband might cover.

• Do our own study of how best to guarantee equitable access to the internet. (Both rural and urban Leagues could participate.)

• Monitor legislation being proposed that would promote increased access and get the word out!
Bridging the Digital Divide

“Everyone has a right to high speed and affordable broadband. If we want people to fully take advantage of the opportunities available in education and the workforce, we’ve got to be able to meet this need.”

Monroe County NY “Bridging the Digital Divide Task Force” member, County Legislator Rachel Barnhart

- One third of rural households in Monroe Co. are not connected to the internet.
- One fifth of urban households in Monroe Co. (City of Rochester) are not connected.

(wxxinews, March 31, 2021)