

Written by Leslie Wertheimer
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Strategic \$1 Million State Investment Will Help Northwestern University and Area Businesses to Build Innovation Corridor, Create Jobs

EVANSTON – January 18, 2013. Governor Pat Quinn was joined today by leaders from the city of Evanston and Northwestern University to announce a \$1 million state investment to help the city become an Illinois Gigabit Community, bringing ultra-high speed Internet to one of the nation’s top universities and the surrounding area, home to more than 160 start-ups. This gigabit service will be crucial to developing an economic innovation corridor that will attract entrepreneurs who create jobs as they grow the next generation of world-changing companies.

Announced during Governor Quinn’s 2012 State of the State Address, this investment advances the governor’s efforts to encourage world-class broadband infrastructure across Illinois.

“To compete in the 21st century economy, we must have technology infrastructure that is second to none,” Governor Quinn said. “Internet service that’s 100 times faster than what we have today will help businesses, universities and governments to revolutionize our communities and make them stronger today and in the future.”

The governor’s strategic investment of \$1 million will help connect fiber optic gigabit Internet

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service from downtown Chicago to Northwestern University, which will then place more than 400 access points in locations throughout campus and in surrounding Evanston.

This will enhance the research capabilities of Northwestern University and the ability of the city of Evanston to offer the kind of ultra-high speed Internet service that technology businesses need to start-up and grow. In addition, the capability will boost the city's efforts to create an innovation corridor that will utilize proximity to Northwestern University's extensive academic resources and robust public transportation.

"Evanston is home to over 160 technology start-ups housed in various scattered locations with limited synergistic relationships or facilities. The awarding of this Gigabit Community Challenge Grant Award will build a direct link between technology start-up companies, Northwestern University, the city of Evanston and private investors via gigabit fiber connections. The researchers on Northwestern University's campus, workers in technology start-up companies and entrepreneurs will be able to access faster data speeds leading to greater discoveries and commercial applications," said Evanston Alderman Melissa Wynne (3rd Ward). "This award will be a catalyst allowing the city of Evanston and the state of Illinois to keep great thinkers, innovators, entrepreneurs and growing technology companies here in Illinois through a critical public-private-non-profit partnership."

"Northwestern is grateful for the opportunity provided by Governor Quinn and the state of Illinois and for the prize awarded to our community via the Illinois Gigabit Communities Challenge," said Sean Reynolds, Northwestern University's vice president for Information Technology and chief information officer. "This support will allow the University to again partner with the city of Evanston to enhance our mutual and collective competitiveness through the advancement of technology – in this case, by advancing networking capacity to the University and the city of Evanston and the interconnection between them. We are excited about the potential for increased reach and interactions for researchers, startup companies and other commercial and public entities throughout the city of Evanston, the Chicago area, the state and the wider connected world."

coLab Evanston is just one of many small and growing businesses that will reap enormous benefits from ultra-high speed gigabit Internet service. The company provides shared working space for companies and individual entrepreneurs who are often looking to take ideas and grow them into larger enterprises. The company acts as an incubator for innovation and provides its clients with the resources to be successful.

Governor Quinn Announces Gigabit Internet Partnership with City of Evanston and Northwestern University

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"At coLab, we're committed to helping professionals by giving them the tools they need to be productive and innovative," said Eric Harper, co-founder of coLab Evanston. "Gigabit will be a key benefit we offer as we strive to create an environment where ideas can turn into reality."

The city of Evanston is also collaborating with Urban Communications, Inc. to expand broadband availability to residential and small business entities throughout the city. In addition to traditional Internet, the company plans to provide other IP-based services such as VoIP, video conferencing, web hosting, disaster recovery and email.

"This project will help Urban Communications extend the benefits of gigabit Internet service to residents and businesses all over Evanston who are always searching for better technology services at a better value," said Edmund G. Urban III, CEO of Urban Communications. "We're proud to be partnering with the city of Evanston to make our community a better place to live and work."

Governor Quinn has led major efforts to improve Illinois' technology infrastructure and worked to expand broadband deployment in all areas of the state. As part of the *Illinois Jobs Now!* capital construction program, the Broadband Deployment Fund was used in 2010 and 2011 to jumpstart more than 4,000 miles of new fiber optic cable construction and more than \$300 million in private and federal investments in Illinois. The governor previously announced gigabit investments in Aurora's public and private K-12 schools, higher education and healthcare institutions, commercial corridors and community anchors in underserved areas, and major non-profit organizations across the city as well as communities across Chicago including Hyde Park, Kenwood, Woodlawn, Washington Park, South Shore, Greater Grand Crossing, Grand Boulevard, Douglas and Oakland.

For more information on Illinois Gigabit, visit Gigabit.Illinois.gov.

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