



## Gothenburg

### Nebraska

**Model:** Attracting a telecommunications provider

**Champions and Key Supporters:** Business and Economic Development Community

**Funding:** A no-interest loan from the Gothenburg Improvement Company helped fund construction.

### Key Takeaways

- Community leaders learned about broadband and how to present a business case to invest in their community.
- Community leaders built community support by speaking to multiple community groups.
- A community survey helped document interest in subscribing.
- A no-interest loan helped finance construction.

**From broadband conference panel presentations 2014 and 2017**

Arial view of Downtown Gothenburg. Photo courtesy of Gothenburg Community Development Office

# Gothenburg's Grassroots Effort Attracts Broadband Provider



Photo courtesy of Gothenburg Community Development Office

A grassroots effort to educate the community on the importance of broadband convinced Pinpoint Communications to offer broadband service, constructing an aerial fiber network in Gothenburg.

## Educate the Business Community

"You have to educate the business community which is going to spill over into the residential side," said Nate Wyatt, investment officer & CFO at Flatwater Bank. "The amazing thing is that this started with maybe 20 business people in our community and this built to over 1,000 people in a town of 3,500."

The education effort included speaking at the fire hall, after church services and at meetings of community groups. The plant manager of a large manufacturer also gave presentations on broadband to all three shifts.

## Learn About Telecommunications

After initial efforts to approach telecommunications providers were unsuccessful, community leaders worked to learn more about the telecommunications industry. "As an economic development person, understanding the industry has helped us tremendously," said Wyatt. "We as communities need to speak the industry talk and learn how to open their eyes to the fact that there may be a profitable business model within your community."

## Document Interest in Subscribing

Community leaders surveyed residents on their interest in subscribing to Pinpoint. Over 80% of residences responded with approximately 70% indicating an interest in subscribing to Pinpoint.

# Broadband Development Starts With Community Leadership

Community leadership is a community's greatest asset. Successful broadband development efforts don't require community leaders who know all the answers. Rather, it requires community leaders who have the passion and commitment to find the answers.

The first step is to get organized and establish a core group dedicated to improving broadband. If possible, include representatives of business and industry, local government, local or regional economic development organizations, education, libraries, health care, financial institutions and community foundations, telecommunications providers, local public power districts or cooperatives, and nonprofits.



Fall trees Gothenburg. Photo courtesy of Gothenburg Community Development Office

## Provide Financing

A no-interest loan from the Gothenburg Improvement Company helped fund construction.

## How Pinpoint Evaluates Communities

Pinpoint looks at a number of factors when evaluating whether to overbuild in a community.

"We look at some of the economic

data, some of the demographics, what is the mix of people in that community as well as how vibrant is the community," said Tom Shoemaker, president, Pinpoint Communications.

"With Gothenburg their economic development efforts were high. They were identifying that fiber was important—a type of fifth utility concept—and they really wanted to have that happen. They were very united in their front of what they wanted. They knew exactly

what they wanted they knew how they wanted to come and get it and they had other potential funding opportunities that came along with that. Those are things that we look for in a community."

To kick off plans to bring fiber to Gothenburg, the community organized an opening celebration event with 28 community organizations present. "I believe we fed a thousand people the opening night so that was an eye-opener for us," said Shoemaker.

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