

Fort Collins group supports broadband election measure

Kevin Duggan Kevinduggan@coloradoan.com 4:11 p.m. MDT August 24, 2015



(Photo: Coloradoan library)

Several local residents have come together to promote passage of a measure on the Nov. 3 ballot that could lead to the city of Fort Collins providing broadband services.

If approved by voters, the ballot measure would allow Fort Collins officials to explore the feasibility and costs of creating a utility that would deliver high-speed Internet and other services through a fiber optic network.

City officials say a vote is necessary because state law – Senate Bill 152 – blocks local governments from competing against private interests in providing Internet services. The law allows local voters to override the prohibition.

The Fort Collins Citizens Broadband Committee wants to ensure the community has a shot at receiving high-speed Internet services, said Tim Tillson, the committee's chairman.

A positive vote on Nov. 3 "doesn't mean service would be available Nov. 4," Tillson said. But it would give the city a green light to explore its options for creating a service, including partnerships with private companies.

Other regional cities, including Boulder, Estes Park and Longmont, have already received voter approval to pursue broadband. Loveland has a similar measure on its November ballot, Tillson said.

"We don't want Fort Collins to be a 'have-not' city surrounded by the "have" cities of Northern Colorado," he said.

Tillson, a retired Hewlett-Packard and Agilent software manager, said the committee's campaign efforts will depend on how much money it raises. It has already established a website – fortgigabit.com – and might do some advertising.

Committee members include Pat Burns, vice president of IT at CSU, and Holly Carroll, director of the Poudre River Public Library District.

The group's focus will be on educating the public about broadband and what its availability would mean to city residents and businesses. The impact could be especially meaningful to students and researchers, Tillson said.

"Everything is happening on the web, including homework assignments," he said. "It's an important issue for low-income students who may not have web access."

Kevin Duggan is a Coloradoan senior reporter covering local government. Follow him on Twitter, [@coloradoan_dugg](https://twitter.com/coloradoan_dugg).

Learn more

For additional information on the Fort Collins Citizens Broadband Committee and the city's November ballot issue related to potentially delivering broadband services, visit www.fortgigabit.com.

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Fleming: Carnegie Library monument to freedom, democracy

Barbara Fleming 5:37 p.m. MDT August 30, 2015



(Photo: Courtesy photo)

Once upon a time in Fort Collins, a group of determined citizens decided the town needed a permanent public library. The land was available, in Lincoln Park, set aside decades earlier by Franklin Avery when he laid out the town. All that was needed was the money to build it.

Philanthropist Andrew Carnegie was giving money to towns like ours, all over the country, to build libraries. An application was submitted and accepted; Carnegie liked the moral uprightness of our town — no saloons and an abundance of churches. Construction of the graceful rectangular building with its stone façade was completed, the library on Mathews Street opened to the public, in 1903.

Decades later this writer rejoiced when, on entering first grade, she could acquire a children's library card. Housed on the lower level, that library contained wonders such as "Winnie the Pooh," Kipling's Jungle books, "Little House on the Prairie" and so many more — all free. The small auditorium on that level often hosted piano recitals, which many a young student trembled through before a kindly audience, and provided space for lectures and clubs.

But I, an avid reader, was soon more than ready to move upstairs to the grown-up library and get an adult library card. Finally attaining the age of 12, I was eligible.

Climbing the stone stairs, going through the large wooden doors, I entered the main floor, where shelves full of Dewey-Decimal-filed books lined the walls and long wooden tables offered reading and study space, with the card catalogue near the front desk. Quiet was required; one spoke, when necessary, very softly. Often the only sound was the rustling of paper or an occasional cough — which might cause the librarian, whose authority was unquestioned, to raise her head and frown.

OPEN DATA: [Fort Collins citizens group backs city broadband \(/story/news/2015/08/24/fort-collins-citizens-broadband-committee/32291415/\)](http://www.fortcollins.com/story/news/2015/08/24/fort-collins-citizens-broadband-committee/32291415/)

The high-ceilinged reading room to the east provided a cozy sanctuary, where sunlight streamed through the tall, narrow windows to dance on the wooden floor and high-backed wing chairs lined the walls — a haven in which to curl up and lose oneself in another world while feeling secure and comfortable in this one. The upper level, reached by a ramp, held fiction shelved from A-Z; I read my way through the alphabet, ignorant of the fact that in many parts of the world, young girls like me had no such access to books, nor the freedom or leisure to read them.

Time and technology took their toll; by the 1970s, Fort Collins had outgrown its library, built with such pride so long ago. It became a museum (and that's another story) when the new library was finished. The new library is warm and welcoming, bright, cheery and friendly. But anyone who, like me, spent countless blissful hours in the Carnegie still harbors a special affection for that magnificent monument to freedom and democracy.

Contact history author Barbara Fleming at fcwriter@frii.com.



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September 12: Fort Collins Comic Con coming up

Rebecca Powell, The Coloradoan 4:43 p.m. MDT August 31, 2015



(Photo: Coloradoan library)

Now you don't have to drive all the way to Denver or beyond for Comic Con. Northern Colorado's geeks now have their own outlet via Fort Collins Comic Con. Get your fill of comics, Star Trek, Star Wars, Firefly, Buffy, Harry Potter, steampunk and more. Cost is \$20. All profits benefit the Poudre River Public Library District.

WHEN: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sept. 12

WHERE: Northside Aztlan Community Center, 112 E. Willow St., Fort Collins

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