

1930s electricity coops takes Internet initiative

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The Delta-Montrose Electric Association's recent decision to start a broadband company reflects frustrations across rural America that being unconnected hurts business, hampers access to health care and leaves students behind.

Delta-Montrose is among cooperatives across the country formed in the 1930s to bring electricity to hard-to-reach areas. Many are taking the initiative again now that communication and information power the economy.

The Federal Communications Commission estimates 39 percent of America's rural population is without access to minimum levels of fixed broadband, compared to 4 percent in urban areas.

Broadband companies say scattered populations and difficult terrain make business unprofitable in much of rural America.

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