



# Delaware County Commissioners

Jeff Benton  
Barb Lewis  
Gary Merrell

County Administrator  
Tracie Davies

Deputy Administrators  
Dawn Huston  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Policy Translated into Action at the State of the County**

DELAWARE, Ohio — At their 2024 State of the County event today, the Delaware County Commissioners focused their presentations on showcasing how they translate their “Smart Growth” policy into action every day.

“It’s a phrase that has become closely associated with Delaware County,” said Commissioner Jeff Benton. “We certainly know all about growth in terms of population, but it’s also the growth of choices we face when managing the needs of our constituents.”

The annual event, now in its seventh year, was held at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium’s Heart of Africa Event Center and attracted its largest audience ever with more than 250 local leaders and community representatives in attendance.

At last year’s State of the County event, the Commissioners announced the launch of a new economic development strategic plan project. One of the videos unveiled today showcased the results of that study.

Commissioner Barb Lewis spotlighted the physical and social-service infrastructures that play in a pivotal role in managing the county’s continued growth.

“Here in Delaware County, we all recognize that creating safe and healthy communities is essential for maintaining the quality of life for which we are renowned,” Lewis said.

Commissioner Gary Merrell unveiled the results of another countywide study completed in the last year: A project that analyzed the state of broadband services in Delaware County and developed recommendations to improve them.

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“Reliable and affordable access to the internet has become a basic and fundamental need for our society,” Merrell said.

Among the study’s findings:

- A survey that received 554 responses from throughout the county showed that nearly 98% of respondents had access to the internet from their homes or businesses and 83% of this access met the Federal Communication Commission’s standards for download and upload speeds.
- About 80% of respondents are satisfied with the speed of their connections, 72% find their access reliable, but only 43% are satisfied with what they pay for internet access.
- Access to fiber connections, the most reliable kind, can be improved throughout the county, but primarily in the northern half.
- Enabling access is primarily a matter of helping homes and businesses make “last-mile” connections to existing networks. It was recommended that the county issue a Request for Proposals from Internet Service Providers to focus on resolving this challenge and to pursue state and federal funding opportunities that currently exist.
- It also was recommended that the county help develop programs to improve digital literacy, affordability and device access.

The State of the County event closed with a video that captured the events of April 8, 2024, when a total solar eclipse occurred in Delaware County. The videos, along with the Commissioners’ presentations can be viewed on the county’s website at: <https://co.delaware.oh.us/2024-state-of-the-county/>.

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