

# NEWS RELEASE

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**ILENE  
SHAPIRO**  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**Contact:** Greta Johnson  
Director of Communications & Assistant Chief of Staff  
Office of County Executive Shapiro  
[ExecutivePress@summitoh.net](mailto:ExecutivePress@summitoh.net)  
330-643-2656

## County Executive and Environmental Design Group high speed fiber study receives award

**SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO**—County Executive Ilene Shapiro is pleased to announce the Summit County Job Hubs & Opportunity Zones High Speed Feasibility Study, completed earlier this year with Environmental Design Group (EDG), was selected to receive an Engineering Excellence Honor Award from The American Council of Engineering Companies of Ohio (ACEC Ohio). Each year, ACEC Ohio holds the Engineering Excellence Awards competition to highlight and celebrate achievements in engineering. The program brings well-deserved public recognition to Ohio's engineering industry by spotlighting engineering projects that demonstrate a high degree of uniqueness, ingenuity, and value.

The County Executive's Office contracted with EDG to develop a feasibility study for its county-wide, high-speed fiber project, Summit Connects, within 16 identified "job hubs" or heightened areas of employment and "opportunity zones" or underserved regions. EDG used phases of community outreach, including a web-based survey and interviews, inter GIS mapping, existing fiber location discovery, and demographic analysis to assess the need for and feasibility of providing high-speed fiber internet to these areas.

The study revealed residents, municipalities, and public and private organizations all identified the need for internet that is more accessible, reliable and affordable, specifically for the underserved and unserved areas of Summit County. The study also makes it clear Summit Connects is a feasible solution to the issues identified by respondents.

"As we begin our work to build the Summit Connects high speed fiber network, it's critical to understand the needs of our residents, local governments, businesses and others. Environmental Design Group did an incredible job designing and implementing this study. We now have valuable insight into existing needs, challenges, prices, and user experiences of current internet services in Summit County," said County Executive Shapiro. "We are honored to receive recognition from The American Council of Engineering Companies of Ohio and will continue to conduct this work at the highest levels of achievement."

Entries for the Engineering Excellence Awards are evaluated by a panel of judges who rate each entry on its uniqueness and originality; technical value to the engineering profession; social and economic considerations; complexity; and how successfully the project met the needs, including time and budget constraints, of the client. The awards banquet will be held on March 12, 2023 in Powell.

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