

Missouri

Covering the last mile to connect rural communities

As in many larger, more sparsely populated states, Missouri struggles to provide rural residents with high-speed internet connections. Only a third of households in the state enjoy speeds of at least 25 mbps.

The Missouri Agriculture Department aims to fix that with Connect MORE. The new initiative will help bridge the “last mile” in broadband, delivering high-speed internet to rural areas.

Kansas City, meanwhile, continues to burst with growth in technology positions. Between 2011 and 2016, the city’s tech workforce grew by 39 percent, adding approximately 15,000 new jobs. State business leaders credit the city’s low cost of doing business and programs that funnel tech talent into its workforce.

A new center at the University of Missouri-Kansas City will soon help local companies meet the growing demand for tech workers. In December 2017, the university announced plans for a \$32 million computer science facility — a much-needed expansion of its School of Computing and Engineering, which has seen enrollments double over the past decade.

Business leaders have praised the project, which is funded with a combination of public and private donations, as a necessary step in maintaining a pipeline of well-educated science and technology workers to fuel local growth. University leaders hope the center will continue to attract talented students looking to hone their high-tech skills in a state-of-the-art facility.

Sources: (FCC) (MORE) (St. Louis Today) (Missouri Partnership) (KCUR)

WHAT DID WE DO RIGHT?

Missouri state law focuses on voluntary computer recycling programs.

WHAT CAN WE DO BETTER NEXT YEAR?

The state can do more to create new jobs.

WHERE HAVE WE MOST IMPROVED?

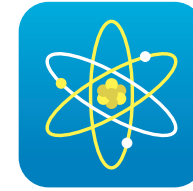
A 2017 vote passed Right-to-Work legislation, but the law will now face the voters in a November 2018 veto referendum. The state also legalized ridesharing statewide.

Best & Brightest	B
Fast Internet	C
Grants Advanced Degrees	B
Tech Workforce	B
Tax Friendly	B
Attracts Investment	B
Entrepreneurial Activity	C-
Ridesharing	A
Short-Term Rentals	B
Sustainable Policies	B
Self-Driving Vehicles	A
Drones	A



Attracts Investment

The state saw nearly \$1,000 per capita spent on R&D, an impressive sum that offset the state’s lackluster flow of VC investment.



Grants Advanced Degrees

More than 10 percent of residents over the age of 24 have an advanced degree.



Tech Workforce

Missouri boasts 37.21 tech jobs per 1,000 residents.



Tax Friendly

The state has a relatively low (6.25 percent) corporate tax rate and business-friendly property and unemployment insurance tax rates.

A Bioscience Surge Launches a Fresh Wave of High-Tech Hiring in the Gateway City

St. Louis saw its number of tech jobs increase by 6,200 in only four years — and by 2,000 in 2016 alone.

The growth comes primarily from a mix of large healthcare and bioscience companies — a third of new ventures in the state are in healthcare — and expanding tech companies including Square and Answers.com.

In Kansas City, Honeywell Federal Manufacturing & Technologies hired 600 people in 2017 — mostly engineers — and it plans to hire another 450 this year to meet its manufacturing needs.

Executives at the company, which opened its doors in the region in 1949, said hiring will likely remain steady over the next several years as workers retire and need to be replaced at the facility. “We not only need new people to work here, but we need to transfer a lot of that knowledge, experience and mission focus into the newer employees,” said John Ricciardelli, president of Honeywell Federal Manufacturing & Technology.

Sources: (REBusiness) (Kansas City Business Journal)

