



## **The Board of Noble County Commissioners Receives \$50,000 Broadband Technical Assistance Grant from Appalachian Regional Commission**

The Board of Noble County Commissioners received a \$50,000 Grant from Appalachian Regional Commission for a Broadband Technical Assistance Project. Funding for the Noble County project was made via the Appalachian Regional Commission POWER Initiative that helps communities and regions affected by job losses in coal mining, coal power plant operations, and coal-related supply chain industries due to the changing economics of America's energy production.

"We are thankful for the Appalachian Regional Commission POWER program and the support from the Ohio State Extension Community Development program which provided the grant matching funds to make this project a reality," said Commission President Ty Moore. "Focusing on broadband as a critical community infrastructure, this project will provide the technical details Noble County needs for positive impacts in this area."

With project and grant writing assistance from Ohio State Extension – Noble County Community Development Educator Gwynn Stewart and Dustin Pyles of Vaza Consulting, the project will determine the next steps in broadband expansion and provide a blueprint for community leaders and stakeholders to acquire additional broadband implementation funding to provide more equitable internet access and connectivity.

"I congratulate the Noble County Commissioners for their POWER award and commend them on the leadership they have shown in their community," said ARC Federal Co-Chairman Tim Thomas. "POWER grants are playing a critical role in supporting coal-impacted communities in the Appalachian Region as they recover from COVID-19 by building and expanding critical infrastructure and creating new economic opportunities through innovative and transformative approaches. Projects like this are getting Appalachia back to work."

To date, ARC has invested over \$238 million in 293 projects, touching 353 counties across Appalachia since 2015. More information about ARC's POWER Initiative is available at [www.arc.gov/power](http://www.arc.gov/power).

"In the recent Connected Nation – Ohio broadband study report, Noble County was noted as the "least connected" in Appalachian Ohio, with only 58 percent of residents able to access broadband services of 25/3 Mbps," said Ohio State Extension – Noble County Community Development Educator Gwynn Stewart. "The COVID-19 pandemic and the need for home school, telehealth and telework options draws even more attention to this critical issue."

### **About the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)**

The Appalachian Regional Commission ([www.arc.gov](http://www.arc.gov)) is an economic development partnership agency of the federal government and 13 state governments focusing on 420 counties across the Appalachian Region. ARC's mission is to innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in Appalachia.