



DATELINE – Thursday, April 9, 2020

FORMAL PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

St. Louis County in partnership with the Range Association of Municipalities & Schools (RAMS) is pleased to announce the formal public kickoff of a crowdsourcing project covering all of St. Louis County. This broadband speed testing initiative is being conducted by GEO Partners, LLC during a time when more people are at home per the Governor's "Stay at Home" directive. This includes over 30,000 students (K-12) as well as parents required to work from home and thus should provide the most comprehensive, accurate accumulation of actual broadband speeds ever conducted in the County while demand on the system is highest.

The data collected via a one minute speed test can be conducted from any device connected to your broadband signal including cell phones and will result in **statistically valid data** and mapping. This data will then enable any locale in St. Louis County to utilize the validated information for a broadband expansion project and seek grant funding from the FCC, USDA or Border to Border state program. We anticipate a higher than normal volume of participation, partially because of all the students who are struggling to stay connected to their E Learning while living in rural areas in the county.

RAMS, as an organization has been a strong advocate for broadband expansion across the region. RAMS' and St. Louis County Commissioners, recognize that high speed quality broadband is a critical utility to economic development, education, business and virtual healthcare. RAMS is grateful to the partnership with St. Louis County on this project and encourages everyone to TAKE THE TEST and SHARE THE LINK <https://expressoptimizer.net/public/> TAKE IT NOW! **Your participation is important and no personal information will be collected.**

For further comment Steve Giorgi – RAMS Executive Director is available via Zoom or by phone (sgiorgi@ramsmn.org 218.780.8877) or Matthew Johnson Director of Planning & Community Development JohnsonM12@stlouiscountymn.gov or phone (218) 725-5008 or County Board Chairman Michael Jugovich jugovichm@stlouiscountymn.gov 218.969.4323