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## **FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS CELEBRATE OPENING OF WESTERVILLE COMMUNITY DATA CENTER, RESULT OF STIMULUS INVESTMENT**

As part of the celebration in Westerville to officially open the nation's first municipal community data center, Franklin County Commissioners are recognizing that this world-class connectivity hub for local and regional business is a direct result of investing federal stimulus funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Similar to how a local government might provide water and electric service, the WeConnect community data center provides an advanced fiber optic network, access to data center space, and affordable broadband and information-technology managed services for new and existing companies in the Westerville area.

As part of financing the construction of this cutting-edge development, Franklin County Commissioners allocated more than \$5.7 million in Recovery Zone Facility Bond funds made available to the county under the Recovery Act.

"Because of our strategic investment of federal stimulus funds and our partnership with the City of Westerville, businesses of all sizes will now have access to advanced technologies so they can thrive locally and compete globally – and that means the potential for creating new high-tech, high-wage jobs," said Franklin County Commissioner Paula Brooks, who attended today's official opening of the data center.

"Our region's future as a high-tech center of opportunity grows stronger by more of these collaborations between our research institutions, county and local governments, and private business," added Commissioner Brooks. "We must look for more ways to leverage these types of cutting-edge public-private partnerships to promote economic development, education and business commerce."

Partners in the data center not only include Franklin County and the City of Westerville but also Otterbein University, the Westerville Public Library, Tech Columbus and the local business community.

Construction on the 16,000-square-foot-facility was completed last November, with the first business moving into space last December to take advantage of the impressive suite of services designed to help local businesses grow.

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