



CASE STUDY

ENRICHING RURAL AMERICA THROUGH DIGITAL EQUITY

INDUSTRY

Telecommunications

CHALLENGE

Expand Cox Communications' market share in rural communities throughout the U.S.

SOLUTION

Create and launch a public relations campaign to build local brand champions and advocates for Cox's high-speed internet services

EXPERTISE

Public relations | Content marketing
Interactive



Cox Communications' Market Expansion division is on a mission to bridge the digital divide by closing the gap between those with high-speed internet access and those without.

One of the division's primary challenges, however, is securing support and approval from government leaders in the rural communities where Cox's services are needed most.

To cultivate community champions for its work, Cox partnered with Arketi Group to develop and launch a public affairs campaign that would:

1. Help local elected officials and government stakeholders better understand the benefits of high-speed internet
2. Further Cox's mission of expanding high-speed internet access into new, rural markets
3. Create advocates for Cox's high-speed internet and the infrastructure improvements needed to deliver those services to homes and businesses across the nation.

MEASURING WHAT MATTERS



240+

earned media hits



\$72MM

in grants and
funding secured



200+

attendees engaged
at in-person events

CONNECTING THE UNCONNECTED

Partnering with Cox's public affairs and PR teams, we set out to achieve these goals through an integrated campaign combining in-person events, survey research, strategic media relations, and digital marketing.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP DRIVES COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our initial planning revealed a lack of research on the state of rural high-speed connectivity. To engage the right stakeholders and policymakers, we would need powerful data points that illustrated the benefits of high-speed internet for these communities.

Following an in-depth literature review, we crafted a consumer-centric survey exploring the benefits of high-speed internet, the digital divide, connectivity, education, economics, and more. The survey was fielded to consumers in Cox markets that were previously unserved or underserved. At the same time, we conducted interviews with local officials who partnered with Cox to bring its services to the area.

Following an analysis of the survey results and an Unearth Workshop with Cox's Market Expansion team, we developed three themes to build our campaign around:

- Increasing economic optimism with more opportunities to work remotely and apply for jobs online.
- Closing the education gap between high-income and lower-income households by providing students with online learning resources such as remote tutoring, online textbooks, and informational videos.
- Reversing urban migration by providing younger generations with equal resources that they previously could only have by moving to urban areas.

LAUNCHING A RED-HOT CAMPAIGN

Arketi used the three themes to develop written content, video animations, and a microsite to house all our research and assets. The website was continuously updated as new campaign events and content were available, including fact sheets, infographics, and videos.

To put our research front-and-center with local community leaders, government officials, and other stakeholders, we made the strategic decision to host a series of events throughout the United States. Our first, a partnership with the National Press Club, was hosted in Washington, D.C., and saw a significant turnout as Cox presented its research to a live and remote audience.

“Arketi's ability to understand and translate the vision for what we aimed to accomplish into a powerful, compelling campaign made this entire process all the better. They managed everything from the research to our media relations and were a valued partner at every step of the process. That's not the case everywhere.”

MATT FREEMAN

Senior Director of Public Affairs
Cox Communications

We likewise hosted an in-person reception alongside the National Association of Counties' Annual Conference, which included everything from managing venue logistics to providing printed materials that highlighted key survey findings. Between these two events alone, Cox was able to engage 200+ government officials and community leaders.

EMPOWERING RURAL AMERICA

Our integrated campaign with Cox Communications generated significant community engagement and interest from local officials. It also helped the company secure 240+ media hits, 1,110 syndicated article placements, powerful testimonials from customers, and a framework to replicate this campaign across the United States.

Most importantly, since launching the campaign, Cox Communications has secured more than \$72 million in grants to expand broadband infrastructure. This enabled the company to deliver services to more than 60,000 unserved or underserved households in Arizona, Florida, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Virginia.

That's the power of public relations!