

Connect Minnesota Launches Web Site to Promote Universal Broadband Access



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Connect Minnesota's new web site provides a forum for Minnesotans to express their technology needs and test their connection speeds

St. Paul, MN – Connect Minnesota has launched a web site for its comprehensive broadband mapping initiative designed to assess current broadband availability across the state, highlighting those areas that are currently unserved by a broadband provider. The web site (www.connectmn.org) allows current broadband subscribers to test the speed of their connections and describe how broadband has impacted their life. For those that don't currently have broadband access, the site offers visitors the opportunity to add their name and address to a secure database of households that would like to subscribe if given the opportunity. The information collected on the web site supports the creation of the broadband inventory that will inform the next steps to deliver broadband to all residents across the state.

"I encourage Minnesotans to take advantage of this opportunity to tell us about their broadband service needs," said Glenn Wilson, Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Commerce. "Minnesota's economy depends on a strong technology infrastructure in every region of our state."

"This web site, and ultimately the maps that will be made available on it this coming February, will serve as the first step toward connecting all Minnesotans," according to Brent Legg, Connect Nation's vice president of state and local initiatives. "This web site will provide greater insight into the technology needs of Minnesota families in every corner of the state."

Minnesota is one of several states with which Connected Nation, Connect Minnesota's parent company, is working to pursue broadband expansion initiatives. Public-private partnerships have proven to be an effective model for expanding the availability of broadband and increasing computer literacy and Internet use. Through its extensive work, Connected Nation has proven that states and communities can realize a significant economic impact if broadband is universally available and is being adopted into the home at high rates.

Given the current economic climate across the United States, the need for universal broadband has captured the attention of policymakers in both Washington, DC and St. Paul. In September, the 110th Congress passed the Broadband Data Improvement Act (S. 1492), which seeks to improve the quality of federal broadband data collection and encourages state initiatives that promote broadband deployment. In collaboration with the State of Minnesota, Connect

Minnesota will be working hard to take advantage of the resources that will be made available by the passage of S.1492, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that every Minnesotan has access to affordable broadband service in the near future. The launch of the Connect Minnesota web site represents the first step in that process.

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About Connect Minnesota: Connect Minnesota is a comprehensive broadband mapping initiative in Minnesota designed to assess current broadband availability across Minnesota and determine where broadband is not available. Connect Minnesota works with technology providers to develop broadband inventory maps for the purpose of improving digital inclusion statewide. This project is sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Commerce.

For more information about Connect Minnesota, visit www.connectmn.org.