

# Connect Minnesota Releases Broadband Inventory Map to Highlight Available Service and Identify Remaining Gaps



**Media Contact:** Kasey McCrary  
[kmccrary@connectednation.org](mailto:kmccrary@connectednation.org)  
202-340-5776

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*Broadband map supports existing state efforts and helps chart the course  
for prioritizing future federal broadband stimulus funding*

**St. Paul, MN** –Today, Connect Minnesota, a non-profit group partnering with the state, released to the public a statewide broadband inventory map that illustrates the extent of broadband services available across Minnesota as a major step towards targeting the state’s broadband-based gains.

Presented as a work in progress that will require constant updating as well as feedback from citizens across Minnesota, the map provides the first accurate representation of broadband availability in the state. The broadband map illustrates the level of broadband investments made to date by all types of providers across Minnesota, including cable, telephone, wireless internet service providers, rural cooperatives and municipalities. Most importantly, the broadband map illustrates the service gaps that remain in rural and other hard-to-reach locations.

Connect Minnesota was selected through a competitive process to partner with the state to complete this effort under the leadership of the Minnesota Department of Commerce. Connect Minnesota’s mapping project has gathered broadband data from more than 95 providers and determined through GIS analysis that broadband service is currently available to 92% of Minnesota households statewide. Citizens, businesses and any interested party with knowledge of the state broadband landscape are asked to go to Connect Minnesota’s website ([www.connectmn.org](http://www.connectmn.org)) to provide input that will be used to refine and ensure the highest level of accuracy for the broadband maps. Additionally, citizens are able to test the speed of their current connections which will further improve the quality of the broadband map. With consumer feedback, and in cooperation with public and private entities, the broadband map will support efforts to deliver broadband to all residents across the state.

Connected Nation, parent company of Connect Minnesota, projects that increased broadband use in Minnesota could result in a total economic impact of \$2.8 billion through the creation of more than 48,000 jobs and cost savings in areas such as healthcare, the environment and through activities such as telecommuting.

Just as Minnesota has been a leader in prioritizing broadband as a key to the state's economic development, federal lawmakers have recognized the national benefit of enabling similar programs in virtually every state. Congress recently passed the Broadband Data Improvement Act (Public Law 110-385), which seeks to enable state initiatives that promote broadband deployment. Moreover, \$350 million in funding for the Broadband Data Improvement Act is included in both the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate versions of H.R. 1 -- the American Recovery and Reinvestment Bill of 2009. The U.S. House passed H.R. 1 on January 28, 2009, and the bill is currently under consideration in the U.S. Senate.

“The federal government has set the expectation that states must be able to illustrate the extent of broadband coverage in order to prioritize broadband stimulus investments for unserved and underserved areas. This map will provide Minnesota the opportunity to emerge as a technology leader among states, becoming one of only a handful of states that have taken this important step,” according to Brian Mefford, CEO of Connected Nation.

Connected Nation is a national non-profit and the parent company of non-profit Connect Minnesota. Connected Nation works across the United States to create public-private partnerships that seek to increase the availability and the use of broadband and related technology. Through programs to provide computers to underprivileged households and community service organizations, Connected Nation is able to effectively address barriers to adoption pertaining to affordability and tech literacy. Through its extensive national work, Connected Nation has proven that states and communities can realize a significant economic and social impact when broadband is universally available to all people wherever they may live.

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**About Connect Minnesota:** Connect Minnesota is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the broadband-based development of Minnesota. Connect Minnesota is working in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Commerce and other public agencies as well as technology providers to develop a broadband inventory map for the purpose of improving digital inclusion statewide. For more information about Connect Minnesota, visit [www.connectmn.org](http://www.connectmn.org).

**About Connected Nation:** Connected Nation is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that expands access to and use of broadband Internet and the related technologies that are enabled when individuals and communities have the opportunity and desire to connect. Connected Nation effectively raises the awareness of the value of broadband and related technologies by developing coalitions of influencers and enablers for technology deployment and adoption. Connected Nation works with community stakeholders, states and technology providers to develop and implement technology expansion programs with core competencies centered around a mission to improve digital inclusion for people and places previously underserved or overlooked. For more information about Connected Nation, Inc., visit [www.connectednation.org](http://www.connectednation.org).