

# Connect Minnesota Updates Broadband Inventory Maps to Prepare for Federal Stimulus



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

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*Broadband map helps chart the course  
for prioritizing federal broadband stimulus funding*

**St. Paul, MN** –Today, Connect Minnesota, a non-profit group partnering with the state, released an updated version of the statewide broadband inventory map that illustrates the extent of broadband services available across Minnesota. The Connect Minnesota map, which represents broadband availability data from 110 broadband providers across the state, is expected to serve as a key asset for the state as it prepares for federal stimulus funding to support broadband investment.

The Connect Minnesota broadband map was created through a collaborative, public-private approach to broadband mapping, as Congress prescribed in the Broadband Data Improvement Act of 2008. The map illustrates broadband service availability at the street level, based on information from 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.

"Minnesota has laid the groundwork for broadband expansion with this map," said Brian R. Mefford, CEO of Connected Nation, parent company of Connect Minnesota. "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. Minnesota is ahead of the game."

The Connect Minnesota map was developed under the leadership of the Minnesota Department of Commerce and as directed by the Minnesota State Legislature in 2008. Through a rigorous system of broadband data collection, GIS analysis, and data verification, Connect Minnesota's mapping project determined that broadband service is currently available to 94% of Minnesota households statewide. This leaves 97,282 Minnesota households who are unserved by any broadband provider.

Through its interactive mapping website, Connect Minnesota solicited the feedback of consumers and businesses across the state to refine and ensure the highest level of accuracy for the broadband maps. The interactive site allows individuals and businesses to search an address

and generate a list of broadband providers serving each address serving the area as of June 30, 2009.

Currently, more than \$7 billion is available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) for broadband projects nationwide. In the ARRA, \$350 million funds the Broadband Data Improvement Act of 2008. These grant funds are available for states to develop public-private partnerships for grassroots-driven expansion of broadband and computer use, particularly among unserved and underserved populations.

Connected Nation conducted a recent study of the impact of public-private broadband expansion programs funded through the Broadband Data Improvement Act and the ARRA. The study found that a comprehensive, grassroots-driven program for increased broadband access and 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.

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 such as providing 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).