

**Connect
Minnesota**



Receives Recovery Act Funding for Broadband Mapping and Planning

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NTIA Awards \$1.7 Million to the Connect Minnesota Broadband Mapping Initiative to Improve High Speed Internet Access Across State.

St. Paul, MN – Yesterday, the U.S. Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) awarded Minnesota a \$1.7 million grant to support a comprehensive broadband mapping and planning initiative through the Connect Minnesota program.

Connect Minnesota (www.connectmn.org) is a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Commerce and Connected Nation to increase broadband Internet access throughout Minnesota. The grant is comprised of \$1.2 million for broadband data collection and mapping activities over a two-year period and almost \$500,000 for broadband planning activities over a five-year period in Minnesota, bringing the total grant award to approximately \$1.7 million. The award provided through NTIA’s State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program is a matching grant and part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The data collected from the Connect Minnesota initiative will be displayed in the national broadband map, which will help inform policymakers and provide consumers with improved information on broadband Internet services available in the United States. The national broadband map is scheduled for release in February 2011. Connect Minnesota will also be implementing a brand new interactive mapping tool for viewing, analyzing and validating Minnesota’s broadband data. Called BroadbandStat, the new interactive mapping platform is a multi-functional, user-friendly way for local leaders, policymakers, consumers and technology providers to devise a plan for the expansion and adoption of broadband. BroadbandStat was developed by Connected Nation in conjunction with ESRI, the world market leader in geographic information system (GIS) software.

Minnesota has been a leader in bringing broadband-enabled technology to its citizens. In the fall of 2008, the Minnesota Department of Commerce first began working with Connected Nation through its subsidiary non-profit, Connect Minnesota, to assess the level of broadband connectivity statewide through an initial broadband mapping process. On June 30, 2009, Connect Minnesota [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 represented broadband availability data from 110 broadband providers across the state, has served as a key asset for providers within the state as they seek federal stimulus funding to support broadband investment.

“We are honored that Connect Minnesota has been recognized by this award and proud to be continuing our partnership with the Minnesota Department of Commerce,” said Brian R. Mefford, Connected Nation’s chief executive officer. “The funding provided by this award is going to allow us to make valuable updates to Minnesota’s broadband maps and gather critical information for the expansion of broadband service and use throughout the state over the next few years.”

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Related Links:

[**ARTICLE:** Minnesota Census Block Level Data on Connected’s Broadband Maps \(TMC.net, 07/27/09\)](#)

[**PRESS RELEASE:** Connect Minnesota Launches New Maps and Data Tools for Tapping Broadband Stimulus Dollars \(07/24/09\)](#)

[**PRESS RELEASE:** Connect Minnesota Updates Broadband Inventory Maps to Prepare for Federal Stimulus \(06/30/09\)](#)

[**ARTICLE:** At Issue: Connecting The State \(Minnesota Public Radio, 02/13/09\)](#)

[**PRESS RELEASE:** Connect Minnesota Releases Broadband Inventory Map to Highlight Available Service and Identify Remaining Gaps \(Minnesota House of Representatives, 02/05/09\)](#)

[**ARTICLE:** New Map Shows Speeds of the Information Superhighway \(Minnesota Public Radio, 01/26/09\)](#)

[**PRESS RELEASE:** Connect Minnesota Launches Web Site to Promote Universal Broadband Access \(12/16/09\)](#)

About Connect Minnesota: Connect Minnesota is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit 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.

About Connected Nation: Connected Nation is a national nonprofit 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 improving technology availability and use. Connected Nation works with consumers, community leaders, states, technology providers and foundations, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 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. www.connectednation.org.