



Governor Mark Dayton Names 15 to Task Force on Broadband

Connect Minnesota Applauds Important Step in Increasing Vital Broadband

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ST. PAUL, MN – Connect Minnesota applauds the naming today of 15 members to the Governor’s Task Force on Broadband. The Task Force is charged with developing policies to promote the expansion of broadband access in Minnesota. Governor Dayton’s stated goal is “border-to-border” high-speed Internet and cell phone access throughout Minnesota.

Connect Minnesota [research](#) has repeatedly shown the economic and quality of life benefits of expanded broadband. This announcement comes a week before the 2011 Broadband Conference co-hosted by Connect Minnesota and Blandin Foundation. The conference is taking place in Duluth on November 16 and 17.

“Connect Minnesota looks forward to supporting and informing the work of the Governor’s Task Force on Broadband in the months ahead,” said Connect Minnesota Program Manager Bill Hoffman. “The Task Force’s work on access and adoption issues will play a key role, in conjunction with efforts underway in the private and public sectors across the state, to ensure Minnesotans maximize the economic and social benefits of broadband.”

According to Governor Dayton, the Task Force will develop an action plan for identifying and correcting disparities in access and adoption of broadband in all Minnesota communities – urban, rural, and suburban. Dayton says that action plan will help ensure that homes, schools, hospitals, and businesses have access to the technology and information resources they need to thrive in a global economy.

Connect Minnesota research shows that 28 percent of the state’s residents are still not subscribing to broadband for a number of reasons.

Members of the Task Force represent a cross-section of broadband interests, including consumers, business and residential users, educational and healthcare institutions, telephone and cable companies, wireless providers, and government.

The Minnesota Department of Commerce, which houses the state's Broadband Development Office, will work closely with the Governor's Task Force on Broadband.

"For the short- and long-term success of our economy, every school, business, and consumer in Minnesota must have affordable, high-speed access to information and the online marketplace," said Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman. "That is what the work of this Task Force is all about."

Members of the Task Force are:

- Shirley Walz, *Senior director of technology for Thomson Reuters*
- Bernadine Joselyn, *Director of Public Policy and Engagement for the Blandin Foundation*
- Margaret Anderson Kelliher (Chair), *Director of the Minnesota High Tech Association*
- Steve Lewsader, *President of the Communication Workers of America (CWA), Local 7201*
- Duane Ring, *President of the nine-state Midwest Region of Century Link*
- Gary Evans, *CEO of Hiawatha Broadband Company*
- Dick Sjoberg, *Sjoberg's Cable*
- Daniel Richter, *President of MVTV Wireless*
- Danna MacKenzie, *Director of Information Systems for Cook County*
- Maureen Ideker, *Director of Telehealth, Essential Health*
- Matt Grose, *Superintendent, Deer River Public Schools*
- Steve Peterson, *Bloomington City Council*
- Bob Bass, *Bloomington, AT&T Wireless*
- Keith Modglin, *Information Systems Director for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe*
- Bao Vang, *President/CEO of the Hmong-American Partnership*

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About Connect Minnesota: As a public-private partnership, Connect Minnesota partners with technology-minded businesses, government entities, and universities to accelerate technology in the state. The work of Connect Minnesota is made possible by support from the Minnesota Department of Commerce. For more information about what Connect Minnesota is doing to accelerate technology in Minnesota's communities, visit www.connectmn.org.

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