



Connect Kansas Receives \$4.4 Million for Broadband Expansion Efforts

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Topeka, KS – Formation of regional technology teams across Kansas, continuing unprecedented broadband mapping across the state, digital literacy training, and many more related initiatives have been funded with almost \$4.4 million today by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

“Today’s announcement is great news for Kansas as we continue our efforts to increase broadband availability and adoption across the state,” Governor Mark Parkinson said in a press release. “This additional funding allows us to expand high-speed Internet access, thus bringing economic opportunities and quality-of-life improvements for all Kansans.”

The NTIA’s State Broadband Data and Development (SBDD) program awarded Connect Kansas approximately \$4.4 million in Recovery Act funds to expand the rural broadband initiative. Connect Kansas was formed in 2009 with approximately \$1.9 million in funds from the NTIA to promote and expand broadband across the state over a 5-year period in conjunction with the Kansas Department of Commerce. Its efforts are producing the first comprehensive maps of broadband service across the state as well as planning activities with the goal to promote high-speed Internet, a vital resource for economic and quality of life improvement.

Data compiled by Connect Kansas reveal that approximately 28 percent of Kansas households do not subscribe to home broadband service. The additional funds announced today will promote efforts to drive up home broadband adoption particularly in vulnerable areas.

Specifically, the new round of funding will allow Connect Kansas to continue data gathering vital to planning; enhance its existing program office to ensure that statewide stakeholders are engaged and involved; support the Kansas Broadband Task Force; support various broadband initiatives in the state; conduct digital literacy and broadband adoption activities; and form 7 Regional Technology Planning Teams to provide train-the-trainer activities at the local level to foster local community planning which will be aggregated to assist statewide efforts.

“Broadband is the driver of today’s modern economy,” explains Brian Mefford, CEO of Connect Kansas’ parent organization, Connected Nation. “This grant will help Connect Kansas expand the effort to ensure that all rural Kansans have easy access to affordable high-speed Internet. Through the formation of regional technology teams we will be working across all sectors – agriculture, tourism, education, healthcare, business, government – to address technology needs and challenges from the various perspectives of the community.”

The SBDD program is funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which provided \$7.2 billion to expand broadband access and use in the United States.

For more about Connect Kansas, see www.connectkansas.org. To access a summary of the grant project please visit <http://www2.ntia.doc.gov/grantee/connected-nation-kansas>.

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About Connect Kansas: Connect Kansas was commissioned by the [Kansas Department of Commerce](#) to work with all broadband providers in the state of Kansas to create [detailed maps](#) of broadband coverage in order to accurately pinpoint remaining gaps in broadband availability in Kansas. Connect Kansas will continue to develop and update the broadband data as it is collected and the services that can be made available to public and private entities as well as citizens. Connect Kansas is a subsidiary of [Connected Nation](#) and operates as a nonprofit in the state of Kansas. For more information visit: www.connectkansas.org.