



Contact: Jessica Ditto
202-251-4749

jditto@connectednation.org

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Iowa Gets \$3.5 Million to Improve Statewide High-Speed Internet Service and Use

Des Moines, IA – Iowa will expand its efforts to improve high-speed Internet service across the state with the help of a new federal grant of \$3.5 million. On Monday, Connect Iowa was awarded the Recovery Act funds as part of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) State Broadband Data and Development (SBDD) grant program. Connect Iowa is working closely with the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) and Iowa Broadband Deployment Governance Board (IBDGB) to facilitate more broadband availability and use in Iowa.

The newly awarded SBDD grant will support further data collection by Connect Iowa for three additional years, as it continues to track the state's broadband market. This broadband improvement project will also provide training to and support for the coordination of 14 regional planning teams across Iowa. The teams will benchmark technology use across relevant community sectors; set goals for improved technology use within each sector; and develop a plan for achieving its goals, with specific recommendations for Web-based application development and demand creation.

"Quality high-speed Internet services are critical to Iowa's future competitiveness in the national and global economies," explains IUB Board Member and IBDGB Chair Krista Tanner. "These funds will better position us, through the work of the IBDGB and the Connect Iowa initiative, to increase our broadband capacity for both our homes and businesses."

The new broadband expansion work will build upon the important advances already completed by the Connect Iowa initiative. In late December 2009, Connect Iowa was awarded approximately \$1.7 million to complete the state's first broadband availability map and maintain it for two years. The map was publicly [unveiled](#) in June and is now available at www.connectiowa.org. Most recently, the Iowa Utilities Board unveiled a [statewide broadband market assessment](#) produced using the data gathered by Connect Iowa.

(MORE)

“The new federal dollars will improve our broadband expansion planning and building efforts as well as help us focus on bringing the benefits of high-speed Internet service to residents who have broadband service available to them, but may not realize the ways in which using it can enrich their lives,” explains Brian Mefford, CEO of Connect Iowa’s parent company, Connected Nation. “The regional planning teams that this grant money now allows for will ensure all Iowans have access to vital services like telemedicine, higher education opportunities, and improved e-government.”

All Iowa residents are encouraged to visit the Connect Iowa Web site, www.connectiowa.org, to join in this important initiative and offer feedback. The Web site gives residents a one-stop portal where they can find broadband providers able to serve their address, check their current Internet speeds, notify officials of unserved areas, and share stories of how high-speed Internet has impacted their lives. To access a summary of the new grant project, please visit: <http://www2.ntia.doc.gov/grantee/connected-nation-iowa>.

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About Connect Iowa: Connect Iowa is a subsidiary of Connected Nation and operates as a nonprofit in the state of Iowa. The Iowa Utilities Board and the Iowa Broadband Deployment Governance Board are leading the initiative to increase broadband Internet access throughout rural Iowa. Connect Iowa was commissioned by the Iowa Utilities Board to work with all broadband providers in the state of Iowa to create detailed maps of broadband coverage in order to accurately pinpoint remaining gaps in broadband availability in Iowa. This work will support the activities of the Iowa Broadband Deployment Governance Board, which includes developing a statewide plan for the deployment and adoption of broadband in the state. For more information visit: www.connectiowa.org.