



Lt. Governor Reynolds Recognizes Creston as Iowa's Fifth Certified Connected Community

*Union County also proclaims commitment to economic development and
quality of life with Connected community technology plan unveiling*

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DES MOINES – Today, Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds and city of Creston and Connect Iowa officials recognized the city of Creston as the fifth community to become a Certified Connected Community in the state and the 21st in the nation. More than 30 residents and community leaders attended the celebration event at the Creston Chamber of Commerce, where results of an assessment and details of the county's new technology action plan were unveiled. The event also included Union County unveiling its technology action plan, which will make way for greater technology use across the entire county and pave way for a brighter economic future.



“Governor Branstad and I launched the ‘Connect Every Iowan’ initiative to increase access, adoption and the use of broadband technology in Iowa,” said Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds. “I commend Creston and Union County on completing the extensive assessment and planning process in order to be recognized as a ‘Certified Connected Community.’ I’m confident that the community will use this designation to increase the robust economic development efforts in Creston and across Union County.”

Connect Iowa's Connected Community Engagement Program provides a framework that communities can use to work toward Governor Branstad's goal to [Connect Every Iowan](#). In October 2013, he announced that the Connect Every Iowan initiative would leverage the Connected program to support local broadband planning efforts in communities across the state.

“Creston is extremely proud of being recognized as the fifth Certified Connected Community in the State of Iowa. It is a real testament to our many businesses and broadband providers that Creston has attained this goal,” said Ellen Gerharz, Creston Chamber of Commerce executive director and Creston community champion. “It shows that the community is truly invested in continuing to improve upon our business environment and economic development, while at the same time continuing to improve upon the quality of life of our citizens. Creston truly is the ‘Hub of Southwest Iowa.’”

The city of Creston and Union County have been working over the past 2 years with Connect Iowa to assess the local broadband landscape, identify gaps, and establish goals and objectives to increase broadband access, adoption, and use for families, organizations, and businesses throughout the counties. The city of Creston was able to meet the point requirements necessary to achieve the Certified Connected Community status, while Union County continues to work toward certification.

“The Connected Community Engagement Program has given us the opportunity to better understand our current broadband capabilities. The rural areas of Union County struggle to get adequate broadband, and this has a significant economic impact for the area,” said Wayne Pantini, CECD executive director and Union County community champion. “The program has helped us to develop a technology action plan to assist us in being proactive in addressing issues and gaps in services. We have benefited by making connections to those in the industry and hope to continue to enhance broadband capabilities for Union County.”

The Connected program is a national model designed by Connect Iowa’s parent organization, Connected Nation, to establish a framework for broadband expansion planning at the community level. The U.S. Department of Commerce NTIA State Broadband Initiative program funds the Connect Iowa initiative. Connect Iowa is working to facilitate the access, adoption, and use of technology throughout the state.

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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 to promote broadband access, adoption, and use. The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) is leading the initiative to increase broadband Internet access throughout rural Iowa. Connect Iowa was commissioned by the state to work with all broadband providers in Iowa to create detailed maps of broadband coverage and develop a statewide plan for the deployment and adoption of broadband. For more information visit: www.connectiowa.org.

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Connected Nation developed the Connected Community Engagement Program to help guide a community through an assessment of its overall broadband and technology status. Connected certified communities have measurably demonstrated their proficiency for effective Access, Adoption, and Use of broadband-supported technologies. Connected Nation through its partners provides a national platform for recognizing those communities that excel across these important benchmarks. Funded by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), this effort is part of the State Broadband Initiative.

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