



Governor Branstad Recognizes Black Hawk County as Iowa's Fourth Certified Connected Community

Community releases new technology action plan designed to increase technology use, promote economic development

Media Contact: Jessica Ditto
jditto@connectednation.org
(202) 251-4749

For Immediate Release
February 27, 2014

[Black Hawk County Technology Action Plan](#)

CEDAR FALLS – Today, Governor Terry Branstad and Black Hawk County and Connect Iowa officials recognized Black Hawk County as the fourth community to become a Certified Connected Community in the state and 20th in the nation. More than thirty-five residents and community leaders attended the celebration event at the Cedar Falls Utilities building where results of an assessment and details of the county's new [technology action plan](#) were unveiled.



“Last fall, we announced our initiative to Connect Every Iowan, with the goal of making Iowa the ‘Most Connected State in the Midwest.’ The communities that will thrive in this new economy are those which take every opportunity to organize and plan to continually improve their technological capabilities. We’re here today because that is precisely what Black Hawk County has done,” said Governor Branstad.

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 Community Engagement Program to support local broadband planning efforts in communities across the state.

“This accomplishment would not have been possible without everyone’s involvement, and I must commend the hard work and effort that this group has put towards the project over the past couple of years. This being said, Connected certification does not mark the end of a project, but rather the first step towards our community’s future,” said Kevin Blanshan, executive director of INRCOG and community champion for the technology planning team.

The Black Hawk County Technology Team has been working the past two years with Connect Iowa to assess the local broadband landscape, identify gaps, and establish actionable goals and objectives to increase broadband access, adoption, and use for families, organizations, and businesses throughout the county. The Technology Action Plan includes actionable projects and objectives for Black Hawk County to increase digital literacy, promote and expand broadband service within the community, and increase utilization of technology resources in the community. Residents and businesses are encouraged to visit the [community technology profile](#) on the website and help project leaders populate a directory of technology assets in the county.

The 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 Connect Iowa initiative is funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce NTIA State Broadband Initiative program. Connect Iowa is working to facilitate the access, adoption, and use of technology throughout the state to create a better business environment, more effective community and economic development, improved healthcare, more efficient government, enhanced education, and improved quality of life.

###

Photo Caption: Governor Terry Branstad, center right, and Black Hawk County and Connect Iowa officials celebrate Black Hawk County becoming a Certified Connected Community in Cedar Falls today.

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.

Follow **Connect Iowa** on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



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. www.connectmycommunity.org