



Governor Branstad Announces Connect Every Iowan Initiative

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Connect Iowa will work with STEM Broadband Committee to create new policy recommendations supporting broadband expansion

Des Moines, IA – Governor Terry Branstad and Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds unveiled today their plan to Connect Every Iowan to the life-enhancing benefits of high-speed Internet. The goal is to position Iowa as the top broadband-connected Midwestern state, ready to support new businesses while providing the highest quality education and healthcare services available.

“Broadband is the electricity of the future and it’s going to be critically important to economic progress,” said Governor Branstad. “Broadband is also almost certainly the way education of the future is going to be delivered and we want to make sure that Iowa is on the cutting edge of this very important technology and that we don’t have anyone left out.”

The Governor is charging the existing [STEM Advisory Council’s](#) Broadband Committee with the creation of a broadband expansion plan. He wants to see the plan in place and reaping successful results by January 1, 2015. The Committee will rely heavily on the Connect Iowa program to serve in an executive leadership role as it drafts new legislative recommendations for the 2014 session that will support the expansion of broadband access, adoption, and use across the state.

“The expansion of Iowa’s broadband network will be achieved through public-private partnerships,” said Lt. Governor Reynolds. “Part of a successful task force is making sure all stakeholders are at the table as we walk through what we need to do to implement changes. All stakeholders will have a seat at the table on this task force, so they will have the opportunity to sit down and discuss how we provide and expand broadband access throughout the state of Iowa in a way that benefits everyone.”

“Governor Branstad’s vision for connecting every Iowan will be crucial to ensuring the global competitiveness of Iowa communities and citizens alike. Working across the state to cultivate an

environment friendly to broadband-based growth, we have seen the concrete positive economic impact of increased broadband across all sectors of Iowa's economy," said Amy Kuhlers, Connect Iowa state program manager. "We are proud to be part of such an important effort to connect and empower all Iowans."

Through its broadband mapping and planning efforts, Connect Iowa has measured the reach and potential impact of broadband expansion in the state. Recent studies reveal opportunities for significant improvement in connecting more homes and increasing the number of jobs in the ICT industry across the state. In a Connected Nation report on "broadband readiness," 85 Iowa counties received a grade of "C" or below. Connect Iowa research indicates that 29% of Iowa residents and 22,000 businesses still do not subscribe to broadband. Efforts to drive up the adoption rate in homes and businesses would have positive ramifications across all sectors. An economic impact report released by Connected Nation estimated that a one percentage point broadband adoption increase could result in more than 26,000 jobs created or saved in Iowa and a boost to Iowa's economy totaling approximately \$1.2 billion annually.

"This is an initiative that requires the collaboration and resources of both public and private entities," said Kuhlers. "We are counting on not only on the industry to drive the future of the broadband network, but also the beneficiaries, including education, healthcare, ICT, and other sectors, to step up and helps us make Iowa the most connected state in the Midwest."

The Broadband Committee is set to have its first meeting on September 10, 2013, with its recommendations due back to Governor Branstad by December 1, 2013.

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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: <http://www.connectiowa.org>.

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