



Iowa Welcomes First Certified Connected Community

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For Immediate Release
February 8, 2013

Indianola proclaims commitment to economic development and quality of life with Connected community certification

[Indianola Technology Profile](#)

Indianola, IA – Indianola, Iowa is officially a Connect Iowa certified [Connected](#) community. More than 30 Iowa communities are currently involved in some stage of the Connected program, but Indianola is the state's first to achieve the official Connected certification.

The occasion was marked with a standing room only public event Thursday at Simpson College in Indianola. The Indianola Broadband Planning Team was presented with its official Connected trophy announcing the community's official designation.

"This certification is a niche we can now sell to potential businesses," said Warren County Economic Development Executive Director Jason White. "We were the first in the state, which has over 950 communities. Indianola being the first says a lot about the community and its ability to compete in economic projects. There are a lot more opportunities now that this is on the table. This is a very exciting honor. Thanks to the community team and Connect Iowa for collaborating together so well."



Indianola is only the third community in the nation to earn the certification. Developed by Connected Nation, the [Connected](#) program entails building a comprehensive action plan for developing a technology-ready community by reviewing the technology landscape, developing regional partnerships, establishing local teams, and conducting a thorough community assessment. The broadband coverage of the area was measured using Connect Iowa's broadband availability maps and survey research.

The [Indianola Technology Action Plan](#) unveiled at the event includes projects to expand digital literacy, build awareness for the benefits of broadband, and assist businesses with websites and social media, as well as improving the online presence of local governments, among other entities. Indianola's new technology business "incubator" is one important and unique component of the plan. The incubator model ties the local Simpson College campus to the Indianola Development Association and IMU's municipal telecom team and will give the entity access to the broadband utility's server platforms, wholesale bandwidth, local

marketing/customer attraction efforts, and customer service activities, which all reduce barriers to developing new tech start-ups. The innovative partnership has already helped launch five new technology businesses since January 2013. The incubator is a perfect example of how Connected certification affords a community an avenue to discuss its success and pursue opportunities as a recognized, technologically advanced community.

“Being certified as an official Connected community is a huge step in the right direction for the future of Indianola,” said Connect Iowa State Program Manager Amy Kuhlert. “As the first Iowa community to earn this certification, we’re excited to see the beginning of a very important shift sweeping across our state. Through the Connected initiative, Indianola is the first of many Iowa communities that are ready to welcome a bright and prosperous future by making sure our state is ready to support our current residents and businesses by making sure there is access to the global economy and all of the educational, health, government, and other countless benefits that quality high-speed Internet allows.”

Indianola’s Connected certification comes after 10 months of the local Technology Team working with Connect Iowa to assess the broadband landscape, identify gaps, and establish actionable goals and objectives. The certification is an important benchmark as the team now phases into working its newly established long-term community broadband plan. Residents are also encouraged to get involved by joining their local Connected technology team. 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 Connected program is part of the Connect Iowa initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce NTIA State Broadband Initiative (SBI) 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: Connect Iowa Program Manager Amy Kuhlert (left) and Connect Iowa Technology Advisor Nichole Warren (right) present Connected certification to Community Champion and Indianola Municipal Utilities Office Manager Chelle Klootwyk (center) Thursday at Simpson College in Indianola.

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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. 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. <http://www.connectednation.org/get-connected>