



Governor Branstad Announces Connected Community Program as Next Phase of Connect Every Iowan Initiative

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Governor, Connect Iowa Recognize West Des Moines as Third Certified Connected Community in State

[West Des Moines Technology Profile](#)

Des Moines, IA – Governor Terry Branstad today announced that the Connect Every Iowan initiative will leverage the Connected Community Engagement Program to support local broadband planning efforts in communities across the state. During the announcement, Governor Branstad and Connect Iowa recognized West Des Moines as the third certified [Connected](#) community in the state and 12th in the nation.

“Last month I announced our initiative to Connect Every Iowan, with the goal of becoming the most connected state in the Midwest. The Connected community program will help us achieve that goal by allowing towns large and small throughout our state to improve access, adoption, and use of broadband technology. Connect Iowa, an affiliate of Connected Nation, has been an incredible partner in our efforts,” said Branstad.

“We want to thank Gov. Branstad for bringing attention to a program that helps communities factor broadband into their technology planning. It is an important next step for the Connect Every Iowan Initiative to ensure that we are working at the local level to help communities get connected. I encourage Iowans to contact us and get involved,” said Connect Iowa State Program Manager Amy Kuhlers.

“In addition, we are very excited to have West Des Moines join our state’s growing list of certified Connected communities. Iowa now has three of the twelve communities in the entire nation to reach this important designation. The Connected program offers communities a framework to assess local assets, resources, and needs in order to build a modern technology environment to support both business and lifestyle in our global society,” she said.

“I’m pleased and proud that our city is now the third certified Connected city in Iowa,” said West Des Moines Mayor Steve Gaer. “We are developing our city’s Grand Technology Gateway as part of the Connected initiative. Our economic development plan acknowledges that our businesses are not going to grow and succeed if we can’t attract or retain young people in Iowa

and we cannot do that without broadband and the countless economic and lifestyle opportunities it provides.”

The [West Des Moines 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. West Des Moines plans to establish a Grand Technology Gateway in the center of town to host a new Microsoft facility and other technology firms.

West Des Moines’ Connected certification comes after 13 months of local Technology Team members 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 Community Engagement Program provides a framework that communities can use to work toward Governor Branstad’s goal to [Connect Every Iowan](#). 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 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 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.

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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>