



Connect Every Iowan Initiative Marks Important Milestone

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STEM Advisory Council Broadband Committee delivers six key policy recommendations to Governor's Office

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Des Moines, IA – Today, Connect Iowa and members of the STEM Advisory Council Broadband Committee announced the completion of their initial assessment and delivered broadband policy recommendations to the Governor's Office for consideration. This report marks an important deliverable for the [Connect Every Iowan](#) initiative, which Governor Branstad launched in September 2013 to fast-track Iowa's goal of becoming the most connected state in the Midwest.

"The Connect Every Iowan initiative has reached an important milestone with the on-time delivery of meaningful policy recommendations on broadband access, adoption, and use for the Governor to review. We are honored to be a part of this committee, have gone to great lengths to obtain input from all sector stakeholders, and believe these to be sound recommendations worthy of support," said Amy Kuhlers, Connect Iowa state program manager.

As executive director of the committee, Kuhlers has facilitated the meetings held by the committee since its launch in September. Connect Iowa has provided broadband insights from its work in communities and data from its surveys and maps to support the assessment of the current levels of broadband access, adoption, and use across the state. Informed by this data, the committee identified six key assessments and developed corresponding legislative recommendations for the Governor's Office to consider.

The report cites Connect Iowa's latest broadband availability assessment to stress the importance of meaningful broadband legislation in the next session: "Broadband availability data from Connect Iowa indicates that, while over 98% of Iowa households can access broadband at its most basic speed (768 Kbps download/200 Kbps upload),

statewide availability begins to sharply decrease at 6 Mbps download/1.5 Mbps upload (with only 82% of Iowans able to access broadband at these speeds). And only 47% of Iowans can access broadband at speeds of 50 Mbps or greater.”

The committee also recognizes the demand-side realities of broadband adoption barriers in the state. Connect Iowa’s residential technology assessment indicates the sizable gap in adoption in comparison to current availability: “Connect Iowa’s residential adoption survey research tells us that only 71% of Iowa households have adopted broadband, indicating a real and significant digital divide in Iowa, which is more pronounced among at-risk demographic groups like low-income households (adoption rate = 46%), rural households (adoption rate = 66%), or African-American households (adoption rate = 56%).”

The committee has also been asked to develop a long-term strategic plan for broadband by January 1, 2015, and to identify and pursue any possible federal funding opportunities or public-private partnerships.

“We have made significant progress with this assessment and policy recommendations, but there is much more work ahead,” said Kuhlers. “This is a public-private effort. We want to invite stakeholders from all sectors to give us feedback and get involved in the initiative so that we can develop a well-rounded strategy for the increased deployment of technology in our homes, schools, businesses, and hospitals.”

To get more information on the broadband access, adoption, and use in Iowa go to Connect Iowa’s [website](#). In November 2013, Connect Iowa published new broadband availability data about current access levels and speeds. That analysis can be accessed on the [planning page](#) or by exploring the [maps](#).

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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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