



## West Des Moines Leaders Join Innovative Broadband Expansion Effort

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** – September 20, 2012

**Contact:** Jeremy Thacker, (615) 521-5905 or [jthacker@connectednation.org](mailto:jthacker@connectednation.org)

*Area leaders enlist in Connected program to bridge technology gap, boost economy, and pave way for improved quality of life*

**West Des Moines, IA** – West Des Moines community leaders have enrolled their community in an innovative program that seeks to boost the local economy and quality of life for residents through increased access, adoption, and use of broadband.

Iowa Association of Regional Councils (IARC) and staff from Connect Iowa, the statewide nonprofit promoting broadband expansion, led area leaders through the steps of the new [Connected](#) community certification program that offers a comprehensive and localized way for communities to bridge the digital divide impacting many communities.

The West Des Moines Connected community leadership team recently met to begin building a plan to ensure that every home, school, organization, and business in the local area has access to broadband.

Several local leaders are already involved in the project. The committee is part of Iowa's plan to deliver broadband access to every part of the state. Ultimately, the goal of the Connected community certification program is to increase the number of high-tech companies and jobs in Iowa, and ensure schools have access to the quality of broadband required to deliver the best educational resources available through the Internet.

The team will assess the current state of technology in the local area, determine what improvements are needed, and devise a plan for achieving those goals.

Community members interested in the project are welcome to join future meetings. Volunteers represent the following areas:

- Business and industry
- Healthcare
- Libraries
- K-12 education
- Higher education

- Community-based organizations
- Government
- Tourism, recreation and parks

The meetings are organized by IARC and Connect Iowa, a nonprofit group that is working to accelerate the availability and use of technology throughout the state towards creating a better business environment, more effective community and economic development, improved healthcare, more efficient government, and enhanced education.

Wes Des Moines City Planner Naomi Hamlett is excited to see the opportunities for technological progress that the Connected process will bring.

She said: "The City of West Des Moines is excited to be part of this important initiative that will help our citizens accelerate on the information superhighway. As our world becomes increasingly technology-driven, we will continue to find ways to improve upon our existing infrastructure to ensure that the City of West Des Moines remains attractive to tech-savvy businesses and residents. The Connected community certification process will help us achieve a better business environment, more effective community and economic development, improved healthcare, enhanced education, and more efficient government."

The use of broadband technology is already enhancing the lives and businesses of citizens all across the state. In fact, Iowa businesses with broadband report an average of \$300,000 higher annual revenue than businesses without. Many companies cite the availability of broadband as essential to starting or expanding their operations. The Internet also allows small businesses, even those based in remote locations, to compete worldwide.

Broadband also promises to boost the economy and quality of life in Iowa. For example, doctors can remotely monitor patients with chronic illnesses, working parents can complete their college degrees by attending classes online, and residents can access government services like car registration, driver's license renewal, and voter registration.

For more information about the project or to join the Connected community technology team, please contact Connect Iowa at [info@connectiowa.org](mailto:info@connectiowa.org), or Connect Iowa Program Manager Amy Kuhlers at (515) 421-2561.

###

**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](http://www.connectiowa.org).

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