Connected Nation Salutes Launch of Nation’s First Broadband Map

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Watch: Brian Mefford Remarks on National Map

Map is significant milestone in charting America’s broadband deployment.

Washington, DC (Vocus/PRWEB)February 17, 2011 -- Today the U.S. Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA) is launching the National Broadband Map, which marks an important milestone in building the nation’s broadband infrastructure. The product of an intensive and joint effort of the NTIA, FCC, state governments, industry, and non-profits like Connected Nation, the map will be a key tool for the American public and policymakers.

“Broadband is the vital infrastructure to the information economy, but until now, the American public has not had a comprehensive picture about where that infrastructure is robust and where it needs improving,” said Brian Mefford, CEO of Connected Nation. “Today’s launch of the National Broadband Map is a key milestone, as it will lead to smarter investments, and targeted state and local broadband policies and programs. I’m proud of the role that Connected Nation has played in creating such a powerful tool that will benefit consumers and businesses nationwide.”

Connected Nation, a non-profit, public-private partnership, has played an instrumental role in developing, gathering data, and verifying data for the National Broadband Map. As the broadband mapping agent for twelve states and the Territory of Puerto Rico, Connected Nation has contributed nearly a quarter of the records in the national map. Connected Nation’s contribution covered approximately 42 percent of the country’s landmass, approximately 39.5 million households, and data of more than 1,200 broadband service providers.

“Having access to broadband can literally make or break a community’s economic future and the welfare of its citizens,” continued Mefford. For example, Connected Nation surveys have shown that:

• In Michigan, businesses that use broadband average $200,000 more in annual revenue than business without broadband.
• 77% of Internet-connected adults with disabilities go online to access e-health resources.
• Nearly half a million (480,000) rural Texans use the Internet to further their education by taking online classes.

The National Map also offers several tools for analyzing broadband availability by broadband speed and technology. These tools will be critical to important policy debates. For example, last week, the Federal Communications Commission proposed to redirect up to $1 billion in current federal universal service subsidies to areas the map marks as unserved. Similarly, state and local broadband policymakers will use the map to inform government infrastructure initiatives, planning projects, and adoption programs.

This collaborative and largely state-driven approach to broadband mapping has succeeded in boosting broadband availability and adoption. Connected Nation pioneered this approach beginning in 2001 in Kentucky, and later in Ohio and Tennessee. During the span of these Connected Nation programs, broadband availability in Tennessee jumped from 87% in 2007 to 94% in 2010, while availability in Ohio climbed from 93% in 2008...
to 98% in 2010. These achievements led to Congress passing the Broadband Data Improvement Act of 2008, which established similar programs for states and public-private partnerships to gather broadband availability information, verify it, and release it to the public. Funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, this program is today administered by the NTIA as the State Broadband Data Development Program.

About Connected Nation: Connected Nation is the broadband mapping agent in 13 states and territories (Alaska, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, Ohio, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas) under the NTIA’s State Broadband Data and Development grant program. This work comprises approximately 42 percent of the country’s landmass and encompasses approximately 39.5 million households. Connected Nation is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that expands access to and use of broadband Internet and related technologies. Connected Nation effectively raises the awareness of the value of broadband and related technologies by developing coalitions for improving technology availability and use. Connected Nation works with consumers, community leaders, states, technology providers and foundations, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to develop and implement technology expansion programs. Connected Nation’s mission is to improve digital inclusion for people and places previously underserved or overlooked. [www.connectednation.org](http://www.connectednation.org)

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