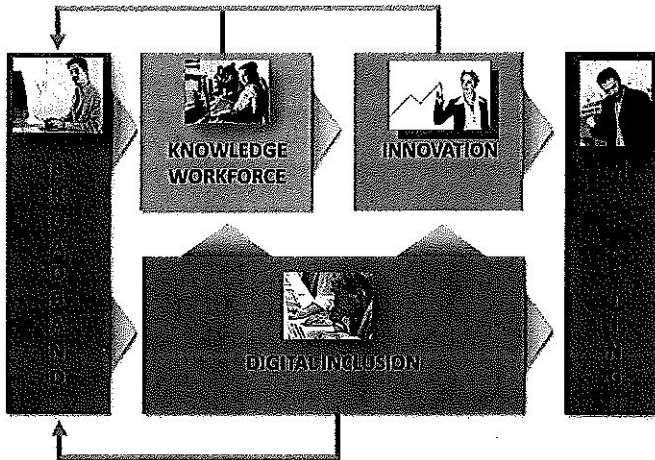


Blandin Broadband Communities Intelligent Community Self-Assessment

Community Name: Region Five



Broadband

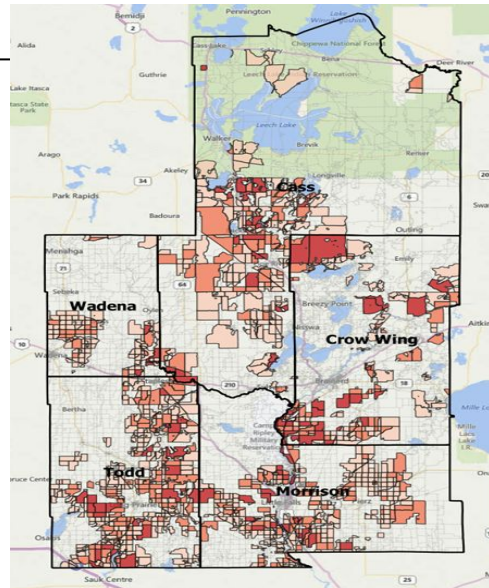
Generally, how well is your community served with broadband - in towns and across the entire BBC community?

1. Assets: 55+ Resilient Region Champions and Blandin Broadband Steering Committee (a unique public, private, nonprofit, philanthropic community-driven partnership) working to reach the goal of 95% of households in the five-county region

with access to high-speed internet.

2. Our city is served by both Midcontinent and Century Link so we have access to high speed internet. Some residents in the Royalton School District are underserved and this has an impact on how students get homework done.
3. Stacey Stockdill:

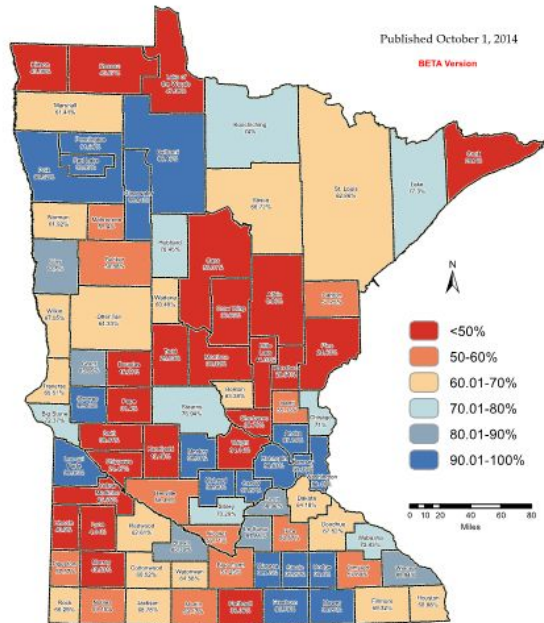
- A. Our region is a puzzle. There are areas within the region with high speed internet - fiber to the home. There are other places with limited or no access (much of Todd County as well as the communities of Prescott, Oak Point, Sugar Point, Kego Lake, Winnie Dam, and Noopiming - on the Leech Lake reservation).
- B. The Office of Broadband Development provided our region with households by census blocks for number of households unserved. We developed quintiles mapped these (see map). The dark red is where 95-100% of the households are unserved, pink = 80-95% of the households are unserved and very light pink is where 0 to 80% of the households are unserved. We will preparing a similar map for underserved. (The map was prepared by Sonya Hills Research Analyst for HFMN and EnSearch, Inc.)



C.

Broadband Availability in the State of Minnesota Percentage of Households Served by Terrestrial, Non-Mobile Broadband Service

At Least 10 Mbps Download/6 Mbps Upload Speeds
Statewide Availability: 78.16%



Map users are encouraged to participate in improving broadband data granularity through data validation and field testing efforts. Learn more about this and other broadband mapping tools at www.connectmn.org.

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D. Bill Coleman and Karl Samp provided the attached map for Broadband. In terms of broadband access 10 Mbps Download and 6 Mbps Upload - it shows that only 25.69% of households in Todd County, 38.32% in Morrison County, 36.66% in Crow Wing County, and 38.01% in Cass County have broadband access at those levels. In Wadena, 60.48% have broadband access but that is because the WCTA cooperative members decided to many, many years ago in installing fiber throughout their service territory.

E. Service depends on how you decide what are the broadband goals. This is an area that the Connectivity Theme Champions struggle with. What do we use for our goal? 4/1? 10/5? 20/10? 25/3? Those served and unserved depend on what we pick for service standards. The

maps change depending on the type of carrier/technology and, how you define "served". The first map we provided to the region, through the Virtual Highway white paper, had a map on page 7

http://www.resilientregion.org/cms/files/Presenting_the_Virtual_Highway_Project_September_13_2013_new_logo.pdf regarding areas with fiber.

F. There are a number of other maps:

- this map reflecting the state's definitions of served, underserved, and unserved: <http://mn.gov/deed/images/InfrastructureGrant.pdf>
- This one shows the new 25/3 FCC definition of served and unserved: <http://www.fcc.gov/maps/2015-broadband-progress-report-fixed-broadband-deployment-map>
- this old RBE map shows a pretty good approximation of the areas that will be available for CAF II funds very soon (for price cap carriers to take or leave for the whole state, if they say no, guessing about a year later others will be able to bid on them.) These are just the areas that fall within their old definition of unserved (<4/1), currently served by Price Cap carriers, and fall within a certain price range: <http://www.fcc.gov/maps/fcc-connect-america-fund-phase-ii-initial-eligible-areas-map> and they could change slightly.
- This one shows how well our schools are connected: <http://www.fcc.gov/maps/E-rate-fiber-map>
- This one shows whether the incumbent is a price cap carrier or rate of return, which

is an important piece to the puzzle because we know even less about future FCC support for rate of return, so the good service that people have from ROR carriers was based on big gambles and most are holding back on blazing forward too far and too fast on much else until the FCC provides more clarity. <http://www.fcc.gov/maps/regulatory-type-holding-company-level-study-area>

The recent Open Internet ruling may provide more clues as to what the rules will be for all carriers (wireless will now be regulated under Title II but it is not yet known exactly how the rules will be applied. It appears “interconnections” will be regulated which may level the playing field for all carriers to have equitable access to backhaul, reducing the cost and helping create a better business case for rural areas. The order does not address universal service fund support for broadband, but there is still a possibility that that may be addressed in the near future.) Bottom line, it has been a momentous year at the FCC with it appearing they have finally heard our rural voices, in which case our unserved areas will stand a much better chance of finally getting reliable, equitable broadband service within the next 5+ years.

The challenge is in creating our long-range regional plan without knowing some of these important missing pieces of the puzzle, starting with whether the Price Cap carriers such as Centurylink will make the statewide commitment for broadband service, or if these unserved territories will be up for auction by year’s end.

What we know that our region is a puzzle with many missing pieces. from the:

- Virtual Highway White Paper (see page 7)
http://www.resilientregion.org/cms/files/Presenting_the_Virtual_Highway_Project_September_13_2013_new_logo.pdf
- Anchor Tenant Needs Assessment
[http://www.resilientregion.org/cms/files/Virtual%20Highway%20Anchor%20Tenant%20Assessment%20\(full\).pdf](http://www.resilientregion.org/cms/files/Virtual%20Highway%20Anchor%20Tenant%20Assessment%20(full).pdf) and
- Telehealth Needs Assessment
<http://www.resilientregion.org/cms/files/Virtual%20Highway%20Telehealth%20Survey.pdf>

that many of the anchor tenants, schools, hospitals and clinics have access. But their customers - throughout the five-county region - don’t always have the service needed.

We have also learned:

- **Without adequate broadband - there is no telehealth.**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2aGx572Juv&feature=youtu.be>
- **School superintendents** also testified in a regional broadband video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2aGx572Juv&feature=youtu.be> - that broadband at the school building is generally not an issue - the issue is when their students go home. We have letters from parents and students who talk about having to either “drive 25 miles to a wifi hotspot or to family member’s home or business” to complete online homework. An essay by a **student from the region** gives an important picture of how our youth struggle because of the lack of access:

*How has technology in rural America affected my education? To be completely honest, how hasn’t it?
I’ve spent countless nights camped up next to a West-facing window, holding up my phone trying desperately to load the last 45 seconds of a video on how to calculate the percent composition of CuSO₄ because I had to learn it before our Chemistry test the next day.*

I've also spent countless mornings rushing to get ready so that when I got to school I could rush to finish the online assignment that I wasn't able to the night before because of lagging internet.

Adults seem to enjoy poking fun at "technology obsessed" teenagers. But there are several things that they don't understand.

We've grown up with these things. To some adults, they're some new invention that makes communication easier. Some technically handicapped (technically challenged?) adults even refer to cell phones as nuisances.

But what do we do when the only way to learn is to have immediate access to the internet? It's not that far out. Eventually we could be living our whole lives through technology.

So here I am. In little Fort Ripley, Minnesota, and I can't even load a simple video.

My friend a mile down the road can, as can my friend that lives a mile the other way. We're in a dead zone. Lucky us.

Technology has both good and bad impacts on my education. When available, the convenience of technology is invaluable.

But when it's two a.m. and I've spent the past twenty minutes attempting to load a crucial article or video needed for the next day, I go to sleep frustrated, wake up stressed, and rush to school so I can finish learning there.

So in conclusion, the impact technology has had on my education is phenomenal. But it's not always high speed internet and instant downloads for everyone. Especially for me.

- **Public Safety.** The information below shows that we have locations within the region where lack of internet access is a public safety issue:
 - *"During emergencies and trainings, the importance of our country's communications systems becomes clear ... The Pillager Area Fire Protection Association maintains two fire halls, Station #1 and Station #2 ... There is no internet access currently available at Station #2 ... There is no streamlined way of providing maps, directives, guidelines, or copies of "essential personnel" credentials during emergencies without ... internet access!" Chief Randy Less, Pillager Area Fire Protection.*
 - *"We have a volunteer fire department operating out of two fire halls. Station #1 is located in Pillager. Station #2 is attached to our town hall. Everything they do to communicate with each other is done by fax because they can't connect via internet. If a fire or a tornado went through Pillager and possibly destroyed or make the Station #1 inoperable, they would have to rely on Station #2 for all their services and communication. It wouldn't be a very good command post in an emergency since there is no internet." Marla Yoho, Clerk, Fairview Township*
 - *"... The Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement services for all areas of Cass County. Therefore, our deputies patrol and respond to incidents in every community. It is important for public safety for citizens in our county to have internet access for emergency notifications and weather disasters. We also need real time internet availability for deputies to use their mapping, especially during search and rescues. Emergency Management is also a division of the Sheriff's*

Office. Through this division, we focus on Emergency Preparedness, especially in terms of disasters and/or other emergency situations. It is imperative that we are able to establish a central communications point during a devastating event. If we were to have an emergency or disaster in Fairview Township, quality internet service would be a necessity. During emergencies, our focus needs to be on providing for the safety of our citizens without having to worry about how to handle our communication needs. We strongly support Fairview's effort to provide quality internet service in their township."Sheriff Tom Burch, Cass County (October 17, 2014).

- We know from regional businesses that lack of broadband affects their bottom line. The Brainerd Dispatch article and video provides wonderful testimony regarding the need within the region. <http://www.brainerddispatch.com/news/3671996-253-million-grants-helping-bring-high-speed-internet-underserved>

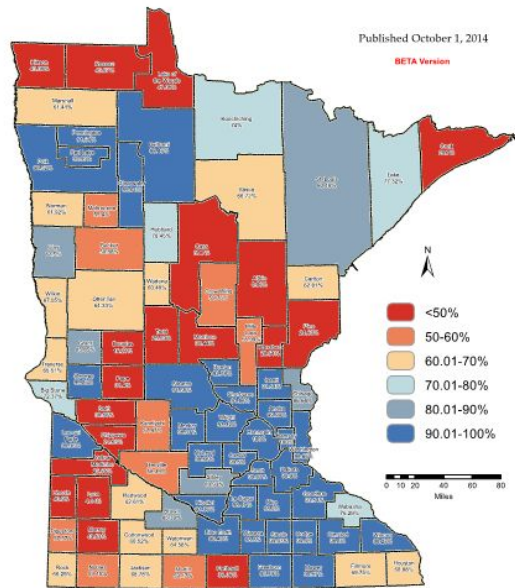
To what degree, if any, do educational institutions, the public sector and healthcare organizations in your area use broadband to deliver services? Do they connect at Gb speeds? Are they part of a specific sector network that enables collaboration ? Cross-sector? Is the network available in your area adequate to meet their current and future needs?

1. I'm not familiar with the connection speeds for school. I have heard that some families in the Royalton School District are not able to connect to the internet to complete homework assignments.
2. Stacey Stockdill: The Anchor Tenant Assessment (see pages 19 - 25) [http://www.resilientregion.org/cms/files/Virtual%20Highway%20Anchor%20Tenant%20Assessment%20\(full\).pdf](http://www.resilientregion.org/cms/files/Virtual%20Highway%20Anchor%20Tenant%20Assessment%20(full).pdf) show the type of internet services the facility receives (page 19-20), the advertised data transfer (pages 22 - 23), the upstream data transfer (pages 24) the downstream data transfer rate (page 25). To summarize:
 - only 4 locations have “advertised data transfer throughput rates of 1 Gpbs or more (Pequot Lakes Schools, Pierz Schools, Swanville Schools and Cass County Court House) ;
 - upstream rates range from 2 to 3 mbps (City of Harding) up to 250 mbps (for Eagle Valley Schools)
 - Downstream data transfer throughput rate ranges from 2.79 mbps (City of Pequot Lakes) up to 250 mpbs (Eagle Valley Schools)

What is the state of cellular wireless services in your community?

Broadband Availability in the State of Minnesota Percentage of Households Served by Terrestrial and Mobile Broadband Service

At Least 10 Mbps Download/6 Mbps Upload Speeds
Statewide Availability: 88.90%



Map users are encouraged to participate in improving broadband data granularity through data validation and field testing efforts. Learn more about this and other broadband mapping facts at www.connectmn.org.

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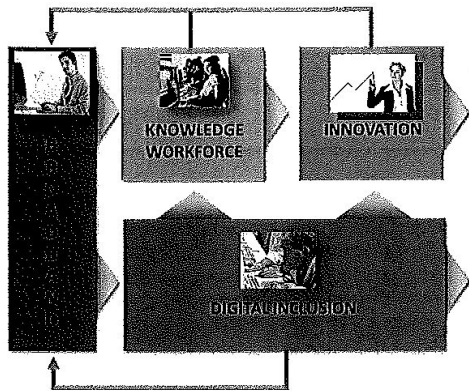
1. Verizon wireless provides excellent cellular service. Other providers (Sprint for example) are not as reliable.
2. Stacey Stockdill: We learned from public safety and health personnel that the region is a puzzle with many missing pieces. During a ride in an ambulance from Cuyuna Medical Center to the Twin Cities I learned that there are times in the region when medics and EMTs don't have cell phone access. This will also affect their ability to become "wifi" hot ambulances (something that it appears that a number of ambulances are working to do in the near future). Wireless is available in Garrison except during *Fishing for Ducks*, Labor Day weekend, 4th of July Weekend, etc. when the cell phone and DSL lines are so jammed that it is not possible to gain access or dropped calls are frequent.

3. To answer the question, what is the state of cellular wireless service in our region? According to the state map provided by Bill Coleman and Karl Samp for our Blandin Broadband Community Visioning Meeting - it's not good: only 37.7% of households are

covered in Cass County; only 25.69% of households are covered in Todd County; only 38.44% of households are covered in Morrison County. 60% or above are covered in Crow Wing (59.76%) and Wadena (60.48%) counties.

Where are the wireless hotspots? Are they available to community members?

1. Some of our local bars provide wireless connections and the local library does also. I am not aware of any place in the city that has a wireless hotspot.
2. Stacey Stockdill: I hope many will respond to this question. We are hoping to develop a map of wifi available spots. In Garrison wifi is available at MacDonalds and Twin Pines Resort.
3. Pam Mahling: Many restaurants in Wadena County (as well as the other Region V counties) are wi-fi hotspots, as well as the Menahga and Sebeka public parks (these are all I know of, there are probably many more in the county and the region, which is why mapping them will be useful). Todd County has created and promoted several new hotspots with help from a Blandin grant. The CTC Border-to-Border broadband project will create high-speed hotspots at the Brainerd Chamber of Commerce Technology and Training Center, the Fairview and Fort Ripley town halls, the Highway 371 Visitor Center, and will also enable the Crow Wing State Park and Crow Wing Campground to provide high-speed hotspots with 1 gigabyte service now available to them.



Knowledge Workers

Describe the "state of the workforce" in your community.

1. Royalton has one family owned manufacturing business that has been in business for many years and has no expansion plans. We have another manufacturing business that is in the process of expanding. That company will rely on welders and they are concerned about getting sufficient workers.
2. One source of information regarding workforce Readiness comes from the Brainerd Lakes Chamber *Ready or Not Here They Come*.
[http://www.resilientregion.org/cms/files/Combined Ready or Not and Bridges Presentation.pdf](http://www.resilientregion.org/cms/files/Combined_Ready_or_Not_and_Bridges_Presentation.pdf) The workforce task force estimated that 75% of the workforce would be left behind because they do not possess the technical skills they need to succeed.
3. The strengths of the region - academic achievement for the region is above that seen within the Twin Cities metro area. Another strength is the Bridges Career Academies and Workplace Connection program that works with school districts throughout the five-county region.
4. **Labor Migration Patterns** - In anticipation of the regional labor shortage, a recent [DEED article](#) examines labor migration patterns in the area. It emphasizes the region should focus on mid-professional ages 25-45 who are returning to the region.
5. A number of Initiative Quarterly (IQ) Magazines focused on changing face of the workforce within our region: *Millennials make their Mark in Central Minnesota*
<http://www.ifound.org/initiative-quarterly/generation-next/> and *The Changing Face Racism and Diversity*
http://issuu.com/ifoundiqmag/docs/su07_fullissue_highres?e=1604868/3091621
6. **Stacey Stockdill** Assets: Brainerd Lakes Chamber's Bridges Workforce Connection, Central Lakes College, M-State, Leech Lake Tribal College, economic development professionals in each county, Economic Engine Theme Champions, Education and Workforce Theme Champions - are all working together to create a region of knowledge workers
7. **Stacey Stockdill** The Brainerd Lakes Chamber's "Ready or Not Here They Come" data indicated that there is a gap workforce trained for high-skill, high-wage positions that exist within the region. A Lakes Area Human Resource Association survey indicated that the lack of skills included: technical qualifications, soft skills, acceptable attitudes and work ethic. Poor attendance was given by area employers as primary reason for termination.
8. **Stacey Stockdill** State of the Workforce: The Resilient Region Plan identified a number of changes on the horizon, "As our future workforce shrinks and ages, it is important that every citizen has the skills necessary to be productive, valued, and self-reliant ... Ethnic diversity will continue to grow ... The region's aging population may need to continue working longer for financial reasons or personal satisfaction.
9. The Resilient Region Changing Population Theme describes and has a number of recommendations related to the needs of the changing workforce and digital inclusion.
 - a. **Changing Populations Issue:** As our future workforce shrinks and ages, it is important that every citizen has the skills necessary to be productive, valued, and self-reliant, rather than dependent on society. Ethnic diversity will continue to grow and expand from existing clusters that are now mostly associated with areas of food processing jobs and will be an important source of future workforce growth. The region's aging population impacts every area for which we are planning. Housing, transportation, land use, and the current and future workforce will be affected by the age of our population.
 - b. **Recommendations:**
 - i. **Recommendation 2: Housing support services:** Provide housing

- support services to the elderly and mentally ill that would allow them the option of remaining as independent as possible under their circumstances.
- ii. **Recommendation 3: Diverse workforce:** As our population becomes more diverse and the need for new workers increases, the region must offer services and opportunities to welcome newcomers into our communities and workforce.
 - iii. **Recommendation 4: Older Workers:** As the workforce in the region grows and many older workers need to continue working longer for financial reasons, or for personal satisfaction, the region will need to offer opportunities and services to update the skills of older workers.
- c. **Update regarding the work in this theme.** The Changing Populations Theme leads (Mary Sam, Dean Loidolt, DeAnn Barry, and Dan Frank) gave an expanded update regarding the work to date in these areas. The ones related to broadband and workforce are provided below.
- i. **Brainerd Center's Tele Care Program:** a personal phone call to shut ins Monday through Friday where our front desk volunteers make the contact call at a specific time, have a short "How are you doing today" conversation with the individual. No medical advice is given. Individuals on the program provide a family member or neighbor that can be called if we don't receive a response in a timely fashion.
 - ii. **IF Community of Leaders:** The Initiative Foundation, as part of a new program called Communities of Leaders, is identifying where new Americans are settling in the region as well as the people and organizations that are trusted leaders with those groups. Existing organizations that are serving those groups are also being mapped. Funding has been secured to do this work. An event is scheduled for late March that will bring together people of different generations and ethnic backgrounds to work on cultural agility and leadership development.
 - iii. **Promise to Act:** Minnesota Minority Education Partnership (MMEP) received a grant from the Blandin Foundation to assist the Mille Lacs community (3 schools) and Brainerd schools on implementation of their Promise to Act: Race Equity and Excellence Action Plan. Part of this work includes training school board members from all 3 schools on race equity work and eliminating the opportunity gap and understanding and implementing board policies that address race equity and excellence.
 - iv. **We need to work with education and workforce theme on training for seniors who are working longer and to people of color who will make up most of our workforce growth in the future.**

Where are the workforce gaps? Is the gap in high-skill, high wage positions, qualified manufacturing workforce or basic skills, or both? Is it a quality or quantity question?

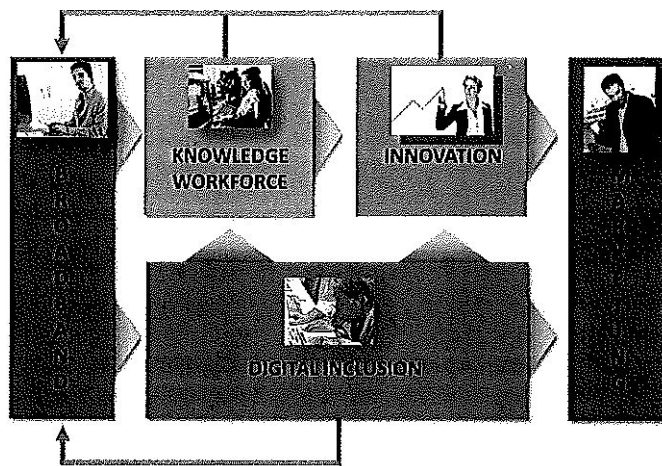
1. The manufacturing company needs skilled welders to build its products and there is concern about getting enough skilled labor to meet the expansion needs.
2. The Ready Or Not Here They Come - provided data that indicate that there is a gap in high-skill, high wage positions. It also indicates that it is both a quality and quantity question. Businesses who responded to a Lakes Area Human Resource Association survey indicated that the lack of skills included: technical qualifications, soft skills, acceptable attitude and work ethic. Poor attendance was given as the primary reason for termination.
http://www.resilientregion.org/cms/files/Combined_Ready_or_Not_and_Bridges_Presentation.pdf
3. DEED conducted a [comprehensive study on Hiring Difficulties](#) to determine which are caused by skills gaps versus demand-factors that are in employers control and could make employment in several industries more appealing and / lucrative.

What assets do you have for improving your supply of knowledge workers?

1. We can work with area Community/Technical Colleges and the Work Force Center. We are also able to connect with our local high school. There is also a possibility to get an on-site school to train workers.
2. Stacey Stockdill:
 - a. The Brainerd Lakes Chamber Bridges Workforce Connection and Central Lakes College Career Academies are working to improve the supply of knowledge workers in all the Minnesota Careers, Fields, Clusters & Pathway areas <http://www.bridgesconnection.org/career-planning-tools/> for 23 school districts in the Carl Perkins Central Lakes Consortium <http://www.bridgesconnection.org/about-bridges/participating-schools/>
 - b. We are fortunate to have 3 colleges in our region. They provide a number of courses and degree programs for high-wage, high-demand careers.
 - i. Central Lakes College: <http://www.clcmn.edu/>
 - ii. M-State: <http://www.minnesota.edu/>
 - iii. Leech Lake Tribal College <http://www.lltc.edu/>
 - c. Each county has economic development professionals who are working to attract high-tech businesses and skilled workforce to our region:
 - i. BLAEDC <http://www.growbrainerdlakes.org/>
 - ii. Todd County Development Corporation http://www.co.todd.mn.us/departments/tc_development_corp/tc_development_corp_frontpage_panel
 - iii. Morrison County (can someone add the link?)
 - iv. Wadena County- West Central Alliance Regional Economic Development: <http://thealliancemn.com/wceda>
 - v. Cass County: (can someone add the link?)
 - d. The Economic Engines Theme Champions are working to address the workforce development in a number of initiatives:
 - i. SPROUT is working to support family farms as well as Amish and Latino farmers.
 - ii. Five Wings Arts Council completed 2014 Work of Art: Business Training for Artists training series.
 - iii. Initiative Foundation, SCORE and the SBDC are working on a pilot to spur business transition (succession) planning in the region five area. The project's purpose is to help retain small businesses in communities by helping existing business owners prepare to transition to the next generation of ownership whether that be a family member, existing employee or outside person. We hope the project will also help attract skilled professionals to the area by providing self-employment opportunities to spouses as they look at relocating to our communities.
 - e. The Education and Workforce Theme champions described in their January report

a number of important programs:

- i. Rural MN CEP reported in the Education and Workforce Development theme about a number of projects to address workforce development needs including: Ramp-up to Readiness, Rural Minnesota Career Advising Consortium, and Central MN Regional Career Advising Model projects.
- ii. NJPA has a Cradle to Career Planning Group, which includes key leaders from schools, college, and regional partners.
- iii. Central Lakes College offered a FastTRAC Manufacturing/IT.
- iv. M-State, Rural MN CEP, and the Lakes and Prairie ABE offered FASTTRAC in Industrial Maintenance/Electrical.
- v. Advanced Manufacturing Education Alliance (AME) has partners with the 360 Center for Excellence in Manufacturing to deliver courses.
- vi. CLC is creating a FabLab at the Staples Campus. The lab will provide access to equipment that the public and businesses cannot afford: 3D printers, scanners, lasers, metal and wood equipment, lathes, mills, and computers.
- vii. The CEO program continues to develop and expand in the region.
- viii. MNSCU Center of Excellence in Agriculture will be launched February 3rd.
- ix. The Staples Ag & Energy Center, Lakewood Health Systems and Hunger Free Minnesota will engage students in providing low income families with food raised at the Center.
- x. MState (Wadena) will be launching a Gas Utility Construction and Service program in June.
- xi. MState (college wide) received a TAACCCT grant to provide 3 mobile training labs in the areas of Safety, Blueprint Reading, Precision Measurement, and CDL training.
- xii. MState (college wide) is a TAACCCT grant consortium partner with 13 MNSCU institutions. The focus of the grant is to provide career pathways in advanced manufacturing in the fields of mechatronics, machining and welding.



Innovation

When you look at organizations and technology practices in your community, in what areas can you say "we are really doing great things with technology?" Conversely, where are you not keeping up? Which sectors need improvement?

1. Our school is doing a great job with its STEM curriculum and it also has a YES! team and Technology Club. The school recently passed a referendum for building expansion and it will include a Technology Lab. The City of Royalton has made some energy efficiency upgrades and added renewable energy to our city. We partnered with our power company on a Community Energy Challenge and look forward to the installation of LED street lights for our city.
2. Cheryal Hills: Several important initiatives around workforce development and MANY partners. IT sector, manufacturing, ag and energy sectors are among themany being prioritized.
3. Cheryal Hills: BLAEDC has several programs specific to broadband uptake that is focused on business growth.
4. Cheryal Hills: We are doing great at collaboration - our telecommunications are some of the best in the state/nation ... what we need to do better is such a long list ... tele-health, online learning, tele-work and access to the last rural mile. Probably engaging our youth in this effort is another area we could improve.
5. Stacey Stockdill: This is a region of innovators!
 - a. Central Lakes College is a part of a consortium that received a Department of Labor grant Rural Information Technology Alliance (RITA) grant. An update regarding the activities in our region is available from <http://www.ritaconsortium.org/blog/central-lakes-college-update>
 - b. M-State has degree programs in network administration and security http://www.minnesota.edu/programs_majors.php?program=network_administration_and_security
 - c. Brainerd Lakes Area Economic Development Corporation has a high-tech sector task force who recently developed a "teach-ready" brand. <http://www.growbrainerdlakes.org/>
 - d. Both CTC and WCTA received Smart Rural Communities awards for their innovations.
 - e. One of our Champions, Maureen Ideker, has worked with others in the region who were trailblazers in telehealth at Tri-County Hospital. She now works as Director of Essentia's Telehealth program which has sites in 13 sites in the East Region and one site in the Central Region in Brainerd.
 - f. Now Working to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled and building an efficient and safe transportation infrastructure - the Transportation Theme Champions are working on: a) Bike and Car Sharing Study, b) Staples and Crosby Safe Routes to School, c)

- 8 STP Road and Bridge Applications and 5 Transit Applications submitted for \$8.7M, d) 4 Transportation Alternatives Program Applications were received.
- g. Because this region is recognized for its expertise in natural resources, land use, and water quality. The Natural Resources and Land Use Theme Champions identified these projects in their January report:
- i. A \$4.04 Million grant was received by the Initiative Foundation for funding “innovative” AIS prevention strategies. Over the years they have also worked to develop and review Policy Toolkits for Local Units of Government.
 - ii. City of Crosslake is implementing Resilient Region model ordinance language to revise commercial development ordinances. Adoption is expected in early April 2015.
 - iii. Mississippi River Partnership is working with University’s Center for Rural Design to create a more vibrant river corridor in downtown Brainerd. Plans call for a Mississippi river walk, bike trails, and outdoor amphitheater.
 - iv. LSOHC funding (approx. \$1 Million) was awarded to Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation to acquire easements in Crow Wing, Cass, Hubbard and Aitkin Counties. It will protect approximately 400 acres of critical shoreland and forested parcels in “Tullibee Refuge” watersheds.
- h. The work of the Resilient Region Housing/Affordable Housing Theme Champions are working on a number of innovative projects - including one that helps low-income families become energy secure through the installation of solar heating systems. They continue to obtain input from throughout the region and all the champions as they work to design Service Member Housing facility in Nisswa.
- i. The Health Care Theme Champions innovative projects, included in their January report, were: Susan G. Komen Collaboration Grant, Crow Wing Energized, and Choose Health Project. In addition, the region was a trailblazer in the area of telehealth. Maureen Ideker, telehealth specialist with Essentia helped lead the way in the early years when she worked at Tri-county. She recently was awarded a USDA grant for telehealth!
- j. The Energy Theme Champions identified a number of innovative projects in the region in the areas of energy:
- i. Staples Ag Center: 100 acres of canola - crushed for oil for 2 tractors and 1 local foods truck.
 - ii. Biomass is alive and well - FinbroMinn is switching from manure to all wood.
 - iii. Biofuels Prairie Packing methane operation is pumping methane gas into pipeline in Long Prairie.
 - iv. The Renewable Energy Innovation Project “REIP” is a renewable energy ideation toward commercialization project that has received state and national attention.
 - v. Because of an innovative project supported by the University of Minnesota Central Region Sustainable Development Partnership, CERTS, Agstar, and RREAL there are now thousands of toasty turkeys in the region!
 - vi. Zenergy will build 900 Kw Community Solar Garden in Central MN as well as participate in building a microgrid research facility.
 - vii. RREAL to build Community Solar Garden for low-income energy assistance - the first in the nation.
 - viii. [PS – Next week, February 23, the energy group from the Resilient Region](#)

will be doing a collaborative presentation at the 25th Energy Design Conference in Duluth. Deanna Hemmesch, Jennifer Bergman, Kevin Pelkey and I will be co-presenting about the use of solar energy for low-income populations! Go team!

k. See! We are indeed a region of innovators!

What is your community doing to support entrepreneurs and spur the creation of new business enterprises?

1. The city has a Revolving Loan Fund to help local businesses that need to upgrade equipment or add to their business.
2. Region Five Development Commission and IF have loan funds to support entrepreneurs and support business expansion in the region. R5DC received a \$38,455 grant from USDA Rural Development for technical assistance for micro-borrowers.
3. WCEDA provides SBDC consulting, assists new businesses in utilizing RUS loan funds available through the local co-ops, as well as other state and federal small business incentive programs, and assists small businesses in online and social media marketing through a "B2B Marketing" program supported by the Initiative Foundation, NJPA, and other regional sponsors.
4. One of our Resilient Region Champions is Greg Bergman, Director, of the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), his office is on the Central Lakes College campus in Brainerd and works with all five counties as well.

How is your community grappling with a changing economy, demographics or other trends? Is there an organized initiative around workforce? Which specific occupational sectors?

1. The median age in Royalton is 34 and residents typically work in the St. Cloud or Brainerd/Baxter area. The city does not have a robust business district. Our focus has been to boost the amenities for the residents and hope to attract new people to the community.
2. Stacey Stockdill: As part of the Resilient Region Planning process - [DEED put together a demographic profile](#) as well as a more recent [workforce profile](#) (see page 2). The data and the 18-month planning process

Theme” because we recognize the increase and the region had to be addressed. The information was uploaded to the Resilient Region Planning process to address the needs of our community.

3. Chet Bodin, Regional Analyst, Northwest Minnesota, MN DEED, recently provided a Workforce Profile for the region. In terms of Job Vacancies he concluded, “Job Vacancies in Region Five can be found in nearly every major industry” and “Information and technology-related occupations look likely to resume growth through 2022. These occupations are found in several industries, including healthcare, education, and manufacturing. [workforce profile](#)

Current Vacancies and Employment Outlook

Job Vacancies in Region Five can be found in nearly every major industry. Retail Sales and Food Service occupations are readily available. Thousands of construction jobs were lost during the recession, but continue to return. Jobs in production occupations are also trending up. Finally, the healthcare and education industries, two of the three largest industry sectors in the region, have over 500 openings between them. Nursing Assistants and Teachers (secondary and below) have the most openings in these industries, respectively.

Top Vacancies in Economic Development Region 5: North Central, 2014 Q2

Occupation	# of Job Vacancies	Median Wage Offer	% Part-Time	% Requiring Post-Secondary Education
Total, All Occupations	2,641	\$9.71	49%	23%
Food and Beverage Serving Workers	320	\$7.19	96%	0%
Cooks and Food Preparation Workers	221	\$7.90	93%	1%
Production Occupations	183	\$8.94	0%	5%
Retail Salespersons	150	\$8.75	58%	0%
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	130	\$12.95	16%	3%
Preschool, Primary, Secondary, and Special Ed Teachers	128	\$21.40	39%	99%
Construction and Extraction Occupations	119	\$12.72	0%	6%
Nursing Assistants	99	\$10.30	57%	14%
Information and Record Clerks	96	\$12.97	33%	15%
Material Recording, Scheduling, and Dispatching	94	\$8.93	51%	25%
Building Cleaning and Pest Control Workers	89	\$8.03	66%	2%
Counselors, Social Workers, and Other Community	83	\$9.99	63%	43%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	77	\$13.12	0%	5%

Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey, 2014 Q2. <http://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/job-vacancies/>

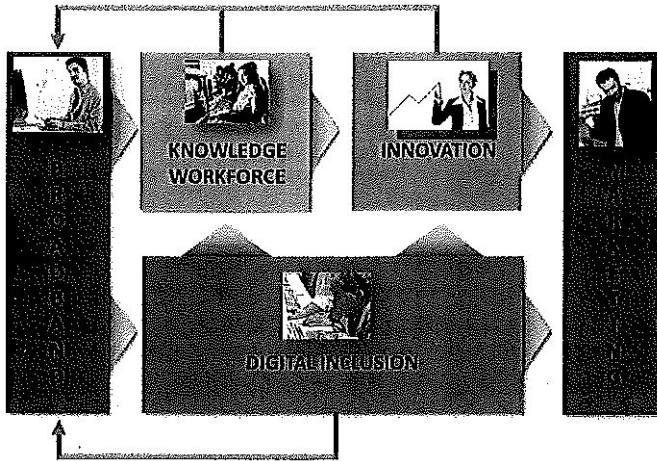
In addition, information and technology-related occupations look likely to resume growth through 2022. These occupations are found in several industries, including healthcare, education and manufacturing.

Northwest Minnesota* High Growth/High Pay Occupation Projections, 2012-2022

Occupation	2012 Estimated Employment	2012-2022		2013 Median Salary
		Total Openings	Percent Change	
Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators	499	240	48.1%	\$38,716
Computer Systems Analysts	243	100	41.2%	\$69,781
Computer User Support Specialists	418	90	21.5%	\$43,120
Software Developers, Applications	280	80	28.6%	\$62,247
Computer Controlled Machine Tool Programmers	134	80	59.7%	\$45,703
Software Developers, Systems Software	220	70	31.8%	\$72,574

Source: DEED Employment Projections, 2012. <http://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/employment-outlook/>

*Note: Northwest Minnesota includes the 26 counties within Workforce Service Areas 1 and 2



Digital Inclusion

In your community, is digital inclusion a matter of broadband availability, awareness, language and/or affordability?

1. There is sufficient connectivity in the City of Royalton. Our problem is that Midcontinent Communications makes changes to its services without getting approval from the city. The franchise agreement needs to offer the city and its residents more input on changes to their service.
2. Stacey Stockdill: For the region it is all of the above: Availability, awareness, language and affordability.
3. Cheryal Hills: Digital Inclusion seems to be a matter of availability and the Virtual Highway Taskforce is working hard with providers and social advocacy agencies to make broadband accessible for all.

What efforts are underway in your region to address digital inclusion?

1. Region Five has done a wonderful job in looking for ways to extend broadband coverage for the region
2. Stacey Stockdill: We have been working with The Shop to help promote their plan to have their at-risk youth refurbish PCs for the PC for People franchise.
<http://theshopbrainerd.org/shop-projects/>
3. Pam: Many community ed programs offer computer classes ranging from the most basic introduction to high-level applications. Local co-ops provide assorted technology workshops. Some local communities participated in Blandin's MIRC training which provided eCommerce classes to local businesses. WCEDA continued the effort with a B2B marketing program.

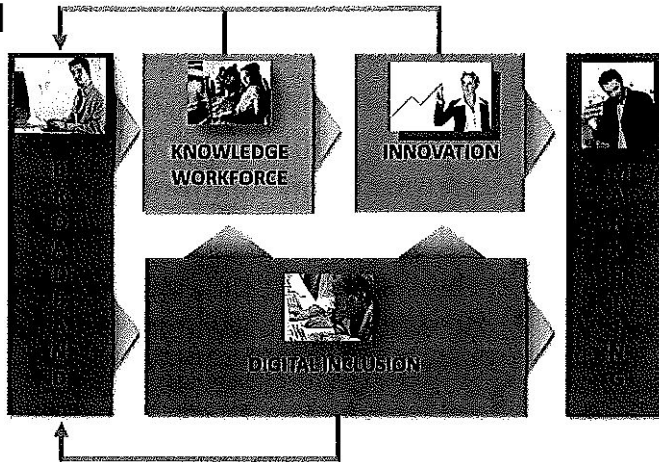
Who might be your best partners in working to address digital inclusion gaps?

1. Region Five
2. Stacey Stockdill: All the Resilient Region Theme Champions and members of the BBC Steering Committee
<http://www.resilientregion.org/cms/files/Resilient%20Region%20Theme%20Champions%20w%20BBC%20update%2001302015.pdf> as well as those on the Virtual Highway Taskforce (an additional 100).
3. [Chet Bodin](#), DEED Labor Market Analyst, Northwest Minnesota

4.

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M



Which organizations are active in external marketing efforts to attract people and investment to the community? What image or images are presented and how well? Is there any coordination across entities?

1. We are currently working with Community Development of Morrison County, MN Power Economic Development, DEED, and Two Rivers Communication. As a small community

we do not have a full-time staff devoted to marketing our city. The cities of Morrison County are working together on a Tourism Project to help all cities attract people to our county/region.

2. Stacey Stockdill: There are a number of wonderful projects to promote attracting people and investment to the region:
 - a. BLAEDC <http://www.growbrainerdlakes.org/> Are promoting the area through their "Tech Ready" brand and website as well as a newly released video on the Brainerd Lakes Area.
 - b. There are a number of community and regional chambers in the five-county area that are working to promote this region.
 - c. Region Five Development Commission "Community Asset Profiles" are included on the Resilient Region website as a way to promote the assets of this region: <http://www.resilientregion.org/quality-of-place/>
 - d. Wadena County- West Central Alliance Regional Economic Development: <http://thealliancemn.com/wceda> is using its website to promote the assets of the region for new and existing businesses, and <http://thealliancemn.com/wceda/resources/regional-profile> also promotes the assets of the region.
 - e. Our region is also being recognized nationally for a number of innovative projects. I know more about the broadband examples (CTC: Receives Smart Rural Community Award <http://connectctc.tumblr.com/post/98467083905/ntca-recognizes-ctc-2014-smart-rural-community>; WTCA: Receives Smart Rural Community Award <http://www.wcta.net/site/index.php/wcta-news/general-news/194-wcta-receives-national-recognition-as-smart-rural-community>
 - f. The Initiative Foundation, an important partner in the HUD/DOT/EPA sustainable communities planning work, is working to inspire investments in the central region <http://www.ifound.org/philanthropy/>
3. Cheryal Hills: I think the Resilient Region Plan is the unified message around broadband. I think the Chambers and DEED also play a role in "attraction." All the County Economic Development Organizations have some level of "attraction" in their work plans. There is little coordination for attraction on a regional scale as "attraction" is not where R5 invests time or resources.

Which organizations market to existing community members? What content are they delivering and how? Are there opportunities for collaboration? Is there unified messaging around broadband and the other Intelligent Community elements?

1. Midcontinent Communications and Century Link market internet to area residents. They both offer high speed internet. I'm not sure if either of these companies are willing to collaborate. I think we need more media coverage on what broadband is, how it helps residents/businesses, and how they can assist the region to accomplish the goal.
2. Stacey Stockdill: I think there are some wonderful potential collaborations around the various efforts to promote this region.
3. The WCEDA website <http://thealliancemn.com/wceda> promotes area attractions, including its broadband availability, and has a local business directory that is planned to be enhanced with new mapping and online media tools. Through support of local sponsors of a B2B program, WCEDA has helped existing community members market to each other as well as the wider world using social media, websites, and online videos. This collaborative model is being replicated in other communities in the area.
4. [DEED Office of Broadband Development](#)