Champion Report
Theme Area: **Connectivity**
Cheryal Hills, Pam Mahling, Janelle Riley, Kevin Larson, Kristi
Westbrock, Stacey Stockdill, Sally Fineday, Paul Drange, Anna Gruber,
Janet Johnson, Rich Utech, Matt Killian, Mary Gottsch, Sheila
Haverkamp, Megan Rehbein, Maureen Ideker , Brenda Thomas and
Cindy Moore
REPORTING PERIOD:
April 1 through June 15, 2016

What NEW success have you had in moving your theme goals forward over the reporting period?	
Goal 1: All Action Steps	**Since 2012 -- $7.6 Million has been raised & leveraged for broadband related projects!**
	Over the past 3 years, NJPA has provided more than $200,000 in support and assisted the Virtual Highway Project team by serving as Resilient Region Champions and on the Blandin Broadband Community Steering Committee. In addition, the NJPA and Blandin Foundation investments led to: 1. DEED to CTC ($2 Million from DEED with $2.22 Million Match by CTC) 2. DEED to CTC ($759,525 from DEED and $839,472 match by CTC) 3. DEED to WCTA ($193,515 from DEED and $1,925,503 match by WCTA)
	Since 2012, Blandin Foundation has invested $205,000 in R5DC/Virtual Highway projects: 1. $50,000 to R5DC for Connectivity of Fire Departments 2. $17,000 to R5DC for PCø for People Development 3. $8,0000 for Tele-health project 4. $75,000 to BBC 5. $15,000 to City of Long Prairie for Pre-Engineering/Feasibility Study 6. $10,000 to BLAEDC for Hackathon 7. $15,000 Pre-Engineering/Feasibility Study Long Lake Township 8. *New:* $15,000 WCTA and Todd Wadena Electric Cooperative for Pre-Engineering Study *New:* **$10,500** (final installment of the $75,000 BBC grant) **to CTC to work with Vantage Point Solutions (VPS)** to: 1) Review Broadband Impact Studies and 2) Survey Impact Households ó the households and businesses who became new customers with the MN DEED Office of **Broadband Development Phase I** grant (the first round of State of MN funding). This project evolved from the original community visioning sessions and continued to percolate as a primary need to provide the region and MN Office of Broadband Development with data regarding the impact from the state, regional and local fiber investments ó both in terms of õsubscriptionö and the impact that is having on all sectors (public, provide, nonprofit and philanthropic) as well as on the ability for the region to expand in the areas of economic development, telework, telehealth, online learning, efficiency and effectiveness of government ó and quality of life for all. Vantage Point Solutions (VPS) is a customer-focused, technology-driven engineering and consulting firm serving the telecommunications and financial industries. The first phase of the study ó email surveys to CTC customers has been completed. The next step will be follow-up reminders and then telephone surveys.
How are you working with any of the other RR Theme areas?	
Many Resilient Region Champions continue to write letters of support for State Broadband grants. Thank you!!	
List any Goals or Recommendations within the plan that your team are struggling to address?	
How to truly serve the needs of the region and make sure that the system is sustainable and scale-able.	

Project Summaries:

Resilient Region Fiber Reports:
CTC Phase I: Project Update: Fiber Build for Fairview Township and Fort Ripley. õPhase I has been completed and was so successful. Thank you for the impact The Resilient Region Champions and Blandin Broadband Community Steering Committee have made to these customers and to CTC. We are very proud of how it all turned out.ö Kristi Westbrock, COO, CTC
CTC Phase II: Project Update: õOn Fort Ripley Phase II, we have been awaiting environmental approvals. Yesterday we received those approvals from MNSHPO and will be starting to plow Fort Ripley Phase II by June 15, 2016. Onward and upwards!ö Kristi Westbrock, COO, CTC
WCTA PHASE I: Project Update: Technical work is progressing. Construct is underway; various stages of construction and customer installation. Report by: Chad Bullock, CEO

Resilient Region BBC Reports:
March 11, 2015 Final Report **Project Name** õLearn How to Add Telehealth to your Healthcare Settingö **Report Submitted by:** Maureen Ideker, Director of Telehealth, Essentia Health **Project Description**: Five Central MN Counties located in the õResilient Region 5 Developmentö area were offered education sessions on the basics of Telehealth and how to implement services.

March 16, 2015 Final Report **Project Name** Early Childhood Project **Report Submitted by:** Kristi Westbrock, Chief Operations Officers, Consolidated Telephone Company (CTC) **Project Description**: The youngest learners in the ISD 181 school district are utilizing the SMART boards that were installed on August 11, 2015. The 4 SMART boards were installed with projectors for the ECFE program. All 8 teachers were trained on SMART board and trainings and teacher collaboration regarding the implementation of the SMART board in the classroom will continue.

June 2016 Final Report **Project Name:** õWhat the Tech?ö **Report Submitted by:** Janet Johnson, Instructor, M-State Wadena College Foundation. **Project Description:** Minnesota State Community and Technical College hosted a one-day tech expo event in Wadena that will combine active learning by MNSCU students and displays and seminars for the general public as part of the Broadband Program in rural Minnesota.

June 2016 Quarterly Report **Project Name:** The PCs for People Youth Project @ TheShop
Submitted by: Cindy Moore, Director, The BBYC Shop **Project Description:** The PCøs for People (PC4P) Youth Project @ TheShop creates a pathway for at risk youth to develop IT literacy skills. **Project Status:** 25% Complete.

June 2016 Quarterly Report **Project Name -** Video Conferencing System in CTC Technology Room at the BLAEDC/Chamber Facility **Report Submitted by:** Sheila Haverkamp, Executive Director, and Megan Rehbein, Office Administrator, Brainerd Lakes Area Economic Development Corporation **Original Project Description:** This project will enhance the õCTC Technology Roomö at the BLAEDC/Chamber offices by bringing video conferencing, face to face connectivity, and remote presentation capabilities connecting key rural business entities and their members. **Project Status:** 99% Complete.

June 6, 2016 Quarterly Report: **Project Name -** Enhanced Marketing of Our Technology Sector **Report Submitted by:** Sheila Haverkamp, Executive Director, and Megan Rehbein, Office Administrator, Brainerd Lakes Area Economic Development Corporation **Project Description:** This proposed project will continue developing and implementing our Tech Services marketing plan with high priorities around awareness building and advertising. This grant would help us to market and enhance our website and to explore possibilities for billboards, articles, stories on a statewide level, and other avenues of marketing. **Project Status:** 10% Complete

June 14, 2016 **Project Name** LLBO Replication of the Shop PC 4 People project **Report Submitted by:** Sally Fineday, Wireless Telecommunications Business Manager, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe **Project Description**: The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe (LLBO) has responded to the lack of affordable broadband capacity in the tribal lands by developing and implementing its own telecommunications company in 2013. The company provides fixed wireless internet to citizens residing in the tribal lands. The Leech Lake Band of Ojibweøs (LLBO) telecommunications company has been successful with its model in the cities of Cass Lake and Bena in meeting the needs of low income household in the tribal lands. **Project Status:** 50% Complete

IN GREATER DETAIL
STATUS UPDATE CTC AND WCTA FIBER PROJECTS

JUNE 2016 REPORT:

CTC PHASE I & II

Report by: Kristi Westbrock, COO, CTC

We have now closed out Phase I of the Fairview Fort Ripley project. This is the accomplishment:

- 100%   Percentage of project completeness based on project schedule

- 716 Number of households, establishments passed, since the beginning of the project

- $5,665 cost per establishment passed (for project overall)

- 108.14 miles Number of miles/feet of fiber installed overall, if applicable, since beginning of the project

- $37,512 cost per fiber mile (for project overall)

- 337 Total number of customers connected to state speed goal service and above (10 Mbps download & 5 Mbps upload) thus far.

- Number of Households connected: 315

- Number of businesses connected: 19

- Number of community institutions connected: 3 (schools, township halls, fire stations, etc.)

- 47.1%   Current take rate out of possible target customer base in grant project area

We are now working on Phase II and construction is underway!

õPhase I was so successful. Thank you for the impact The Resilient Region Champions and Blandin Broadband Community Steering Committee have made to these customers and to CTC. We are very proud of how it all turned out.ö Kristi Westbrock, COO, CTC

õOn Fort Ripley Phase II, we have been awaiting environmental approvals. Yesterday we received those approvals from MNSHPO and will be starting to plow Fort Ripley Phase II by June 15, 2016. Onward and upwards!ö Kristi Westbrock, COO, CTC

WCTA PHASE I

Report by: Chad Bullock, CEO

1. **Projects Elements Completed:**
   - Prepared detailed maps
   - Began route review for right-of-way to determine existing easements and permits.
   - Consultation with underground contractors about timelines, rates, material orders
   - Obtain property descriptions to prepare private property easements needed
   - Transmit environmental notifications to appropriate organizations, hire additional review as required
   - Obtain PE certifications on design, budget and scalability of system
   - Complete environmental study
   - Prepare detailed staking sheets with unit designations.

2. **Project Elements in Progress:**
   - Obtain permits from DNR, MN DOT, County Highway agencies
   - Obtain easements from private landowners
   - Assemble materials list and schedules for construction with route priorities
   - Order fiber optic cables, splicing material and pedestals for construction
   - Meet with Engineer and contractors
   - Contact prospective customers along construction routes for services
   - Construct underway; various stages of construction and customer installation

20% Percentage of project completeness

RESILIENT REGION BLANDIN BROADBAND COMMUNITY REPORT
Quarterly Narrative Report

Reports are due by the last day of each calendar quarter (March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 31).

Organization Name: Resilient Region Connectivity/Virtual Highway

Summary Report Completed By: Dr. Stacey Stockdill

Date Submitted: June 17, 2016

BLANDIN FOUNDATION-FUNDED COMMUNITY PROJECTS

March 11, 2015
Final Report
Project Name õLearn How to Add Telehealth to your Healthcare Settingö
Report Submitted by: Maureen Ideker, Director of Telehealth, Essentia Health

Project Description: Five Central MN Counties located in the õResilient Region 5 Developmentö area will be offered education sessions on the basics of Telehealth and how to implement services.

Grant Amount: $10,000
Current Status: % complete: 100%

Significant accomplishments this reporting period: This grant projectøs goals and objectives have been completed as of this report. The reconciliation of the budget needs to be completed yet and turned in to the Blandin Foundation. All 7 classes have been conducted at the five Resilient Region 5 counties and 64 attended. The interactions and collaboration remained at a very high level in all the classes. The evaluations were all positive and feedback for changes were incorporated into each upcoming class.

Challenges encountered during this reporting period and/or anticipated during the next period: The class sizes varied from 2 to 25 attendees. One class in Morrison County had no one sign-up and needed to be rescheduled; it ended up with 25 attendees. One challenging aspect of each class was working with the varying levels of audio-visual and videoconferencing capability. It all worked out in the end, but assistance was really necessary at each site. Volunteers from the specific sites were very helpful.

One challenge that was encountered was assembling the invitation list for each county. It required much more time and hands-on work than anticipated. To assure participation individual contacts were needed to recruit appropriate and targeted professionals. Professional relationships helped with this and many phone calls and e-mails contacts were needed.

Please comment on any ways in which Blandin staff/consultants might provide assistance or value to project implementation: Blandin was helpful in terms of communication on the Blog of upcoming classes. In looking back, a mailing list from Blandin might have helped. Instead, a Region 5 list was used, but it was very outdated.

Is there anything else about this project about which Blandin Foundation should be aware? Attendees did express appreciation for these classes and the Blandin sponsorship.

Please comment on anything you're learning that might impact project implementation or outcomes. Budget may not have reflected the time allocations correctly, main staff and preparation time was under-estimated.

BLANDIN FOUNDATION-FUNDED COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Project Name – Early Childhood Project
Report Submitted by: Kristi Westbrock, Chief Operations Officers, Consolidated Telephone Company (CTC)

Grant Amount: $5,000
Current Status: % complete: 100%

The Early Childhood Project (Update). The youngest learners in the ISD 181 school district are utilizing the SMART boards that were installed on August 11, 2015. The 4 SMART boards were installed with projectors for the ECFE program. All 8 teachers were trained on SMART board on August 24th for 3 hours by a district employee. Ongoing trainings and teacher collaboration regarding the implementation of the SMART board in the classroom will continue during teachers' professional learning communities. The district will also review how implementation is going and teacher comfort level to determine if future full group trainings are needed.

Teachers have learned how to create learning tools and lessons on the SMARTboard to allow students to manipulate and work on the screen. All SMARTboard classrooms have created check in procedures using the board as well as many other visual opportunities like picture schedules and visual timers that are very helpful for preschool aged children.

Six Mini ipads have arrived and need to be assigned out to teachers. ISD181 lead teacher, Tahnee Flowers, has worked with CTC to create specific training modules. CTC has created those videos which will be very helpful for teachers to review at their leisure and refer to as they work with the device. Ms. Flowers goal is to provide some optional after school times for teachers with ipads to gather together and explore on the ipads together.

Our goal is to continue to integrate learning opportunities using the SMARTboard and ipads and increase staff's comfort level with the technology throughout this school year.

Superintendent Bob Gross stopped by while the classroom was learning about the letter Bb so he wrote his name on the SMARTboard for everyone to see. The one of the boy drawing a person was an extension to the mat man create where they built it and then made their own person.

Teachers have continued to seek funding to upgrade technology in their classrooms.
http://www.brainerddispatch.com/news/3743532-grants-boost-technology-isd-181-classrooms

An updated report regarding the value of this program came from Tahnee Flowers, Early Childhood Coordinator, and Brainerd Public Schools:

> *Things are going very well with the new technology! Devices are working great. We have had more training from our district technology team around implementation and integration.*

> *Since our Blandin grant we have also secured a Brainerd Public Schools Foundation grant as well as a personal donation to purchase additional ipads so that every teacher now has an iPad. We also purchased blue tooth speakers and 2 apple TV devices. Blandin was the catalyst that has helped us accomplish some of our long term technology goals in early childhood. We are excited to continue our implementation using what we have learned and experienced using the devices purchased with your generous grant dollars.*

> *Here are a couple of recent classroom stories using the technology:*
> *One preschool room spend time learning the "3 little pigs" story. They learned about props and characters of a story. They developed the props and practiced acting out the play. The teachers were able to record the students acting out the play using the iPad from the Blandin grant and email it to the parents. They also had a "movie showing" on their classroom SMARTboard so that the class could watch themselves acting out the play. The children and parents loved it!*

> *One preschool class was talking about building towers etc. and the conversation came up about a wrecking ball. Many of the children did not know what a wrecking ball was. The teacher used her SMARTboard to show the class videos of a wrecking ball in action. The kids loved it and wanted to make their own wrecking ball. So they got a ball and a string and made their own wrecking ball. During station time groups of kids worked together to build towers and buildings and use the wrecking ball to crash them down.*

> *These are a couple stories of many great things happening in our classrooms using technology to expand on the learning going on.*

BLANDIN FOUNDATION-FUNDED COMMUNITY PROJECTS

June 2016
Final Report

Grantee Name: M State Wadena College Foundation
Project Name: What the Tech? Technology Expo
Grant # G-2015-0554

Project Name: õWhat the Tech?ö
Project Description: Minnesota State Community and Technical College is hosting a one-day tech expo event in Wadena that will combine active learning by MNSCU students and displays and seminars for the general public as part of the Broadband Program in rural Minnesota
Grant Amount: $9950.00
Percent Complete: 100%

What was accomplished with the grant?
The grant allowed Minnesota State Community and Technical College ó Wadena (M State) campus and College Foundation to host a technology expo. M State met the goal of 15 exhibitors coordinating with 22 businesses within Region V who were very receptive to sharing new technologies they were using to improve their business or technologies to help improve everyday living. Considering today we are entering a technology era of õThe Internet of Thingsö (IoT), with hundreds of personal and household gadgets connecting to the Internet, M State and the exhibitors were able to connect and demonstrate some of these technologies. Exhibitor information was shared with members of Region V.

Here is a sample of some of the exhibits:

- M State HVAC program thermostat with an iPhone app to control a household HVAC system.
- West Central Telephone Association demonstrated a "secure" house including video surveillance, motion detection for light controls, intruder alerts, all controlled through a phone app.
- The Maszlowski Wellness and Research Center with the help of M State students connected tools such as a **Fitbit** and fitness apps on the iPad.
- Lakewood Health Systems demonstrated a **telemedicine** doctor's visit.
- Joey's PC demonstrated backup and recovery
- Friendly Rider showed their new website that uses GPS tracking to show bus location and enables riders to schedule a pickup and order gift certificates.
- Todd Wadena Electric and Wadena City Water and Light demonstrated technologies to **manage energy usage** and how they are working to **develop smart grid technologies**

Another important accomplishment was the expo met the goal of providing M State networking students the opportunity to design, test and build a network responding to the needs of the exhibitors and complying with the security requirements of MNSCU. The students were involved in all aspects of the project ó creating Google Docs surveys, contacting exhibitors, working on the marketing, equipment pricing and selection, network design/build, expo set-up,

tech support. It was exciting to watch the students working together with the exhibitors to connect all of the technologies. Two halls of the campus were technology as far as the eye could see. The exhibitors commented in the survey they were very impressed with the customer service and technical support received ó quote, õStaff was wonderful.ö

The third accomplishment was hearing comments from the students and community members attending the expo regarding how much they were learning about the new technologies. The expo had roughly 100 attendees and provided approximately 170 plates for lunch when counting exhibitors. The number of attendees did not meet the goal of 200, but cold calling to area businesses brought more individuals to the event. Many exhibitors commented for the first year of an event the attendance was as expected and exhibitor survey results indicate they are all willing to return. The expo provided an opportunity for business to connect with the community and allowed different business groups to connect and share ideas with each other. There were training seminars scheduled throughout the expo topics included: wireless networking, network-how it works, identify theft, secure online banking, backup and recovery, IMS systems beyond the classroom, technology in the classroom.

What was learned?
We learned there are many businesses excited to exhibit their technology and yet many of the area businesses are just starting to look at upgrading their technology and did not feel ready to õshowö anything. We learned that many of the IoT devices are not capable of supporting 802.1x advanced security protection that requires user information in the authentication information. Another important lesson is you can market an event and personally reach out to the communities, but the number of attendees depends on individual interest, weather conditions and other factors outside our control. Many attendees hesitated approaching the exhibitors to ask questions and had to be convinced to complete the survey.

A Summary of how funds were expended
The budget for food, equipment and marketing was very close to the budgeted amount. The college offered students a free lunch preparing and serving the leftover food so it would not go to waste. We purchased Monitors, PCøs, Fitbit, power and lighting controls and security equipment, routers, switches and firewalls for the event. Students used over 1000øof cable making connections between the switches, routers and connecting devices. The marketing included Facebook posts, postcards, posters, flyers both hand- delivered and mailed to area businesses and schools plus newspaper ads in Rural Living magazine and the Todd Wadena courier. The students with support from our marketing department created and mailed a thank you flyer to all of the participating exhibitors. There were 13 stipends mailed to exhibitors for their organization ó exceeding the 10 budgeted.

Thank you for the opportunity.

Janet Johnson, Faculty Member
Denise Layman, Director M State Wadena College Foundation

BLANDIN FOUNDATION-FUNDED COMMUNITY PROJECTS

June 2016
1st Quarter Report

Project Name
The PCs for People Youth Project @ TheShop

Submitted May 22, 2016 by: Cindy Moore, Director, The BBYC Shop

Project Description:

The PC∮s for People (PC4P) Youth Project @ TheShop creates a pathway for at risk youth to develop IT literacy skills. Working within Microsoft Refurbishing Protocols youth learn through practical hands on competence training as donated computers are repaired and refurbished to distribute to low-income families and individuals. Youth learn all aspects of the project including donation, refurbishing, recycling, inventory, sales, customer service and repair. Additionally, we are building collaborations within our diverse community as we work to bring low cost internet service for low income families and individuals who struggle with reliable connectivity.

Grant Amount**: $5000.00**
Current Status: **25 % complete**

Significant accomplishments this reporting period:
Our project is moving on task with a new manager who will be building a curriculum for students over the summer months in prep for a new semester in the fall of 2016. He is a past student of the alternative school and a past employee working with Rural MN CEP Youth Services. Together with our advisor he has begun the work to develop curriculum guides for youth to follow. Given the educational challenges many of our youth face he is adjusting Microsoft Refurbishing Guides to fit into their needs.

Our VISTA, Matt Benjamin has recently made strides within the IT community as we continue our search for volunteers and geeks, offerings for post-secondary certifications and a higher quality of computer donations for the families we distribute to.

We have been fairly successful staying on task with changes that are happening with our parent company in St Paul. As they expand we are staying in synch with their new protocols.

As of April 1, 2016t the PCs for People Youth Project @ TheShop is now offering high speed Sprint 4G LTE internet service through Mobile Beacon for as low as $10 per month. Plans are prepaid with no credit check or hidden fees. Devices are shipped from our St Paul office in 3 to 5 business days. Income eligibility applies. Sign up on line or in our offices at: https://www.pcsrefurbished.com/internet/theshop

We have been collaborating with St Paul and are excited we have the ability to offer this program to our rural low-income families and individuals. We are doing what we can to close the digital divide for those who struggle the most to bring 21st century skill building assets into their homes.

Challenges encountered during this reporting period and/or anticipated during the next period:

Working with youth has been challenging with new õmanagementö needing to learn the process and new youth coming into the program in the middle of the semester. Such is the way with the Brainerd Learning Center and we would rather they are in school at any time than fit our scheduling!

Additionally, we are still seeing a lack of quality computers come through our donation cycles. Work on a computer that is 8 years old is different than one that is 4 years old. Technology changes happen and upgrades are costly. We take in all donations and recycle them to certified recyclers. We have a zero landfill policy and share this with many of our õdonationsö.

We firmly believe that poor people do not need poor computers. In this case something is not better than nothing if speeds are too slow to allow for office work, homework, networking, tele-health and social media to happen without stalling their computer. It happens and is frustrating for many of us. Imagine when it happens to an individual unfamiliar with computers because they have not had the opportunity to learn as we have.

Please comment on any ways in which Blandin staff/consultants might provide assistance or value to project implementation:

We are just a little space mentoring youth and offering opportunity to close gaps common to the generational poverty found in our communities. We believe that working under the umbrella of the Brainerd Baxter Youth Center give us the ability to operate for $30,000 a year. Expansion remains a possibility yet today we are looking to develop a marketing plan to reach more people. This in turn õsellsö more computers and helps us build a sustainable project. Blandin assistance would be invaluable in this process of growth.

Is there anything else about this project about which Blandin Foundation should be aware?

We are excited to help in any way we can to close opportunity and achievement gaps for those who struggle financially. A hand up is what we offer.

Please comment on anything you're learning that might impact project implementation or outcomes.

Distribution of computers needs to increase. We see that and we are working on that as we are able. Additionally, we have not yet located a 3rd year VISTA (we have 3 more weeks though) and without that support we will need to rely on the volunteers we find in our community who may or may not have IT, networking computer skills to share with our PC4P.

BLANDIN FOUNDATION-FUNDED COMMUNITY PROJECTS:

June 6, 2016

Project Name - Video Conferencing System in CTC Technology Room at the BLAEDC/Chamber Facility

Report Submitted by: Sheila Haverkamp, Executive Director, and Megan Rehbein, Office Administrator, Brainerd Lakes Area Economic Development Corporation

Original Project Description:
This project will enhance the õCTC Technology Roomö at the BLAEDC/Chamber offices by bringing video conferencing, face to face connectivity, and remote presentation capabilities connecting key rural business entities and their members. This video conferencing initiative will allow access for one-on-one meetings, for daily business operations, or the opportunity for online presentations. The project will include the installation of two high definition pan and tilt cameras, a computer controlled meeting interface, a cloud based Managed Video Hosting, and a flexible audio system to accommodate small to large group meetings and presentations.

Grant Amount: $7,500
Current Status: 99% complete (We need to submit our final report)

Significant accomplishments this reporting period:
BLAEDC, the Brainerd Lakes Chamber, CTC and a Marco representative met on February 29, 2016 to review the plan of the Video Conferencing System installation. The Marco representative informed us that the system would work better in a smaller setting, and it was a decided that we move the system to the RiverWood Bank room. Sheila has since connected with Diana Daigle and Mary Magnuson to approve the change of location for the system. We have received approval for the change to the RiverWood Bank room as of March 11, 2016. The system was installed the week of May 9th and is now fully functional! We have not had anyone who has rented to room use the technology yet, but both the chamber and BLAEDC have used it and it works great!

Challenges encountered during this reporting period and/or anticipated during the next period:
The main challenge we encountered was realizing the system provided by Marco would not sufficiently meet the needs of the large CTC Training Room. Instead it was proposed that we move the system into the small RiverWood Bank Room. Other than that, everything went smoothly!

Please comment on any ways in which Blandin staff/consultants might provide assistance or value to project implementation:
We are finished with the project, so we should not need any assistance.

Is there anything else about this project about which Blandin Foundation should be aware?
Not at this time.
Please comment on anything you're learning that might impact project implementation or outcomes.

BLANDIN FOUNDATION-FUNDED COMMUNITY PROJECTS:

June 6, 2016

Project Name - Enhanced Marketing of Our Technology Sector

Report Submitted by: Sheila Haverkamp, Executive Director, and Megan Rehbein, Office Administrator, Brainerd Lakes Area Economic Development Corporation

Project Description:
      This proposed project will continue developing and implementing our Tech Services marketing plan with high priorities around awareness building and advertising. This grant would help us to market and enhance our website and to explore possibilities for billboards, articles, stories on a statewide level, and other avenues of marketing.

Grant Amount: $4,000
Current Status: 10% complete

Significant accomplishments this reporting period:
Sheila and Megan have met to review the Tech Services Marketing plan for 2016. Our marketing consultant had a family emergency which postponed our projects lightly. We will be meeting with him this week to update the Tech Services Marketing plan, as well as update our Tech Sector portion of the BLAEDC website with up-to-date, relevant information related to Tech Services. We have also been meeting with the Crosslake EDC and will be exploring ways we can highlight tech services specific to the Crosslake area.

Challenges encountered during this reporting period and/or anticipated during the next period:
Our main challenge has been waiting for our consultant to be available. Now that things are back on track, we donøt foresee any other issues.

Please comment on any ways in which Blandin staff/consultants might provide assistance or value to project implementation:
We do not need assistance at this time.

Is there anything else about this project about which Blandin Foundation should be aware?
Not at this time.

Please comment on anything you're learning that might impact project implementation or outcomes.

BLANDIN FOUNDATION-FUNDED COMMUNITY PROJECTS:

June 14, 2016

Project Name – LLBO Replication of the Shop PC 4 People project
Report Submitted by: Sally Fineday, Wireless Telecommunications Business Manager, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe

Project Description: The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe (LLBO) has responded to the lack of affordable broadband capacity in the tribal lands by developing and implementing its own telecommunications company in 2013. The company provides fixed wireless internet to citizens residing in the tribal lands. The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe¢s (LLBO) telecommunications company has been successful with its model in the cities of Cass Lake and Bena in meeting the needs of low income household in the tribal lands.

This plan includes the LLBO¢s telecom company and the Tribal College Library. The Leech Lake Telecom already sells low cost fixed wireless broadband to low income families and will be the distributor of refurbished computers.   In addition, the Resilient Region Blandin Broadband Community had received a donation of 50 computers with their grant and have agreed to give the 50 computers to the LLBO broadband project.

Grant Amount: $10,000
Current Status: 50 % complete

Significant Accomplishments this Reporting Period:
The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe (LLBO) has an agreement with PCs for People as an affiliate member. PCs for People staff visited LLBO and setup the operations. The Leech Lake Telcom (LL Telcom) team were trained on the refurbishing.

The LL Telcom staff are professionals and have made the training very much easier. The Administrative staff of the Telcom will conduct the background paper work. The LL Tribal College has developed an assessment test and then an online testing mechanism. The low-income customers will receive a õfree of chargeö desk top via the donation of 50 computers from the Resilient Region.

Challenges encountered during this reporting period and/or anticipated during the next period:
The actual agreement is in flux, waiting on responses from the PCs for People attorneys to the LLBO attorney. Once the agreement is signed, an invoice for services from PCs for People will conclude our start up business.

Please comment on any ways in which Blandin staff/consultants might provide assistance or value to project implementation:
Bill Coleman has been an important resource.

Resilient Region Plan: Connectivity

Connectivity Issue

Connectivity: Extending high-speed internet access to the entire region increases telecommuting opportunities, provides greater access to customers and markets for businesses, and allows all residents access to civic resources and commerce.

Connectivity Issue Goal

Connectivity: The number of households in the region served by high-speed internet-services rises from the current level of 40% to 95% served. The (region/rural areas) community is willing to invest to increase coverage. This will include both public and private investment in service.

Access: Promote, support and develop high-speed internet access throughout region for telecommuting, educational benefits, and supporting business activity.

Recommendation 2

Efficiency: **Local units of governments will work across political boundaries to share equipment costs/facilities for more efficient delivery of high-speed internet.**

Action Step 2A

Efficiency in installation: Lay conduit for fiber optics when upgrading sewer and water or digging trench.

Recommendation 3

Access for entrepreneurs: **Provide access to technology needs and support to retain businesses and encourage potential entrepreneurs**

Action Step 3A

Economic development: Determine the compatibility and interface between communications, smart grid technologies, and internet systems. Develop a recruiting initiative encouraging technology-oriented companies to explore opportunities offered in non-urban spaces.

Telecommuting: Create a business plan that facilitates legitimate telecommuting jobs and promotes high-speed internet connection in the region. Upgrade and expand high-speed internet infrastructure in housing so residents may work from home.

Action Step 3C

Map of access sites: Develop map or list of accessible sites within region to conduct web-type meetings, free Wi-Fi etc.

Action Step 3B

Recommendation 4

Access for children: **All school aged children will have access to a computer with high-speed internet capabilities.**

Action Step 4A

Support sites: Make available sites providing educational, internet, support, financial resources, etc.

Recommendation 5

Funding: **Identify and pursue state, federal, and philanthropic grants to fund connectivity recommendations.**