



Champion Report Theme Area: Connectivity

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REPORTING PERIOD:

September 13-December 13, 2016

What NEW success have you had in moving your theme goals forward over the reporting period?

BBC Steering Committee Update: The BBC Steering Committee met with Blandin Foundation for a final site visit. The team is interested in becoming a BBC Alumni. According to Bill Coleman, final budget decisions at Blandin Foundation are underway and they will let us know about the alumni program in the near future.

WCTA Infrastructure Update by Chad Bullock:

We are now preparing to activate customers in the next few weeks as part of our 2016 grant project. The wet weather gave us a fair amount of delay this summer with construction, but we should have all customers activated by early 2017. The residents are very excited, as are we to be able to provide access to quality Broadband.

We have worked with Todd Wadena Electric Cooperative to develop a feasibility study for the unserved areas of their membership territory. TWEC has a vast territory and the study has provided much needed insight into what is required to close the gap for those unserved residents. We continue to work with TWEC on their efforts.

A portion of this unserved area is included in our next DEED grant application which we have once again partnered with R5DC and NJPA in our submission. This is a phase II grant for more unserved territory adjacent to our 2016 project. We are hopeful that we will see a grant award for 2017 to continue the broadband expansion. The territory is very rural area and will not likely see broadband coverage without grant support.

We are very appreciative of the support of our partners and hope to continue to build to unserved areas of our region.

CTC Infrastructure Update by Kristi Westbrook.

Our Fort Ripley Phase II project was completed this summer and we continue to turn up new customers. We had a higher take rate for services than expected so the project will be slightly over budget.

In the Spring of 2017 CTC will build the city of Long Prairie in conjunction with the City. CTC has started working with business customers on orders to get them set up for services ASAP.

We applied for Fort Ripley Phase III and are currently responding to challenge questions from the State. Century Link submitted the challenge.

Initial discussions with Region 5 and WCTA on a wireless to school bus deployment.

How are you working with any of the other RR Theme areas?

We continue to value the letters of support provided by the Resilient Region Champions for our various proposals. Thank you All!!!

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.

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.

Action Step 1A

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.

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