



**October 25-26, 2017**

**Madden's on Gull Lake**

Brainerd, Minnesota

**#mnbroadband**

## **PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

### **Wednesday, October 25**

**9:00 am Registration Opens**

**10:00 Concurrent Preconference Sessions (*pick one!*)**

#### ***Broadband 101***

This session will improve community leaders' ability to make smart decisions and create partnerships to deliver wired and wireless broadband technologies. Panelists include Diane Kruse of NEO Connect, Albert Kangas of Palmer Wireless, Tom Johnson of Nobles County, Mark Mrla of Finley Engineering, and Bill Coleman of Community Technology Advisors.

#### ***Digital Inclusion Showcase***

There are two essential parts of a broadband plan – having it and using it. Hear from folks around Minnesota who have been creative about getting their community to make better use of broadband. See demonstrations and hear stories about:

- PCs for People
- Project FINE
- Community Technology Empowerment Project
- Business training/assessments
- Online gaming contest
- Facebook for civic/public meetings
- Visual (virtual reality)
- Red Wing Ignite
- Arrowhead Telepresence Coalition

**12:00 pm Lunch**

**1:00 *Building Bridges: Expanding the Impact with Cooperation***

Bernadine Joselyn, Public Policy & Engagement Director, Blandin Foundation

Kevin Edberg, Executive Director, Cooperative Development Services

Laura Withers, Director of Communications, NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association

In Minnesota, *Community Leadership + a Willing Provider Partner + Public Investment* has been a winning formula for many rural communities seeking better broadband. Some communities have a provider partner to dance with and some... not so much. A community's dance steps

will depend on its dance card: discerning the best path forward depends on understanding the options you have given the provider environment you've been dealt. Hear about best practices for communities seeking to claim their own broadband-enabled future, and talk with others about implications for Minnesota efforts bridge the gaps and expand the impact of broadband.

**3:00 Hotel Check-in / Free Time**

**5:00 Reception / Exhibit Hall / Dinner**

**7:00 *Breaking Bandwidth: How Rural Broadband Can Change Lives***

Northern Community Radio News Director Heidi Holtan interviews Iron Range storyteller and broadband advocate Aaron Brown about the ups and downs from 15 years of advocating for faster internet in Northern Minnesota. From the moment he saw "the internet" wheeled into his Iron Range high school on a dolly to broadcasting live from his yard in the woods, Brown uses humor and two decades of experience in Northern Minnesota media to highlight the challenges and benefits of rural broadband.

**8:00 Social Time**

## **Thursday, October 26**

**7:45 am Registration / Breakfast Buffet / Exhibit Hall**

**9:00 Welcome and Opening Remarks**

**9:30 Keynote Presentation: *Is Rural Minnesota Poised for the Digital Age?***

Roberto Gallardo, Assistant Director/CED Specialist, Purdue Center for Regional Development

The Digital Economy is growing exponentially. Communities that are prepared will soar; those that aren't will fall farther and farther behind. Roberto Gallardo has been watching this growth and the impact on rural areas. He understands the connection between broadband, digital inclusion and economic vitality at the community and individual level. He will share his most recent research on the impact of broadband on rural areas with a real focus on Minnesota, giving us insights on how we compare with other states – information we can use to inspire community leaders, policymakers and providers.

**10:30 Break**

**10:45 *Minnesota Rural Broadband: Case Studies in Success***

Hear about five rural Minnesota communities that are using world-class, ubiquitous high-speed broadband to make a difference in their communities. Learn what the researchers have observed – on site and through data – about the positive things happening in connected Greater Minnesota. A panel of community leaders will share stories that will inspire others to continue their pursuit of advanced technology adoption over robust broadband networks. These stories showcase the tremendous potential being unleashed from investments in rural broadband that go well beyond the balance sheets of telecommunications providers.

**12:00 pm Lunch / Exhibit Time**

**2:00 *Bridging the Gaps – Expanding the Impact through Community-Provider Partnerships***

Broadband Learning Stations featuring stories of partnerships and perseverance that define the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program participants. All sessions highlight what it takes for community success. Featured projects include:

- Rural Alvarado, BEAMCO & Wikstrom Telephone
- Westbrook & Woodstock Telephone Company
- Rock County Broadband Alliance
- Renville County – RSFiber & HBC
- Palmer Wireless – Big Lake Industrial Park
- Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative & CTC
- Fayal & Harris Townships – Mediacom
- Fixed Wireless stories with MVTV & Rural/Metro MN colleagues

**3:15 Break**

**3:30 Closing Reflections**

Bernadine Joselyn, Public Policy & Engagement Director, Blandin Foundation

Roberto Gallardo, Assistant Director/CED Specialist, Purdue Center for Regional Development

Shannon Heim, Attorney, Moss & Barnett

**4:00 Adjourn**



*With support from:*



**Platinum sponsor:** Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB)

**Gold sponsors:** Calix, Consolidated Telecommunications Company (CTC), Finley Engineering, Great River Energy, Initiative Foundation, Northland Foundation, Northwest Minnesota Foundation, Resilient Region, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, Southwest Initiative Foundation, and West Central Initiative

**Exhibit-level sponsors:** ADTRAN, Best Buy Foundation, and Graybar Electric