

Madden's on Gull Lake – Brainerd, MN
October 25-26, 2017

[#mnbroadband](#)



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Welcome!

“Energy and Persistence Conquer All Things,” said Benjamin Franklin.

You’re sure to get a good dose of both Energy and Persistence at our 2017 conference, *Border to Border Broadband: Bridging the Gaps - Expanding the Impact*. This year’s theme reminds us that our work is never done. Old injustices nag. New challenges emerge. It’s still up to us to build the future our grandchildren deserve.

You’ll find plenty to inspire and instruct you along your way at this conference in this beautiful setting.

We invite you to review this conference program and get acquainted with the names, faces and inspiring work you’ll have a chance to hear about:

- Teams from eight communities that received state broadband grants are here to describe what’s happening as a result and what difference it’s making.
- Blandin Foundation will share the results of original case study research conducted this summer to assess the impact of broadband investments.
- Tech vendors are here to help you understand the technology choices that your community will need to make as it moves ahead.
- A digital literacy show-and-tell will feature creative programs underway across the state for helping communities and community members make better use of broadband – from computer refurbishment and redistribution programs to virtual reality gadgets to tech training for new Americans.
- And more - good conversation, good food, a chance to ask questions, listen, build your team.

In sum: We hope you take full advantage of this chance to **Connect. Learn. Recharge.**

We’re in this for the long haul. Better together.

~Bernadine Joselyn

Director of Public Policy & Engagement, Blandin Foundation

On behalf of the conference planning team



Blandin Foundation™
STRENGTHENING RURAL MINNESOTA



Agenda at a Glance

Wednesday, October 25

Town Hall

9:00 am Registration Opens

10:00 Concurrent Sessions

- **Broadband 101** (Pillsbury)
- **Digital Inclusion Showcase** (Ballroom A)

12:00 pm Lunch (Ballroom B)

Town Hall Ballroom A

1:00 ***Better Together: Cooperation as a Strategy for Bridging Broadband Gaps*** by Bernadine Joselyn, Kevin Edberg and Laura Withers

3:00 Free time / Hotel Check-in

Wilson Bay

5:00 Exhibit Hall Opens / Welcome Reception

6:30 Dinner

7:15 Evening Program - ***Breaking Bandwidth: How Rural Broadband Can Change Lives*** with Aaron Brown and Heidi Holtan

8:00 Social Time

Thursday, October 26

Wilson Bay

7:45 am Breakfast Buffet / Exhibit Hall

Town Hall Ballroom A

9:00 Welcome and Opening Remarks

9:30 Morning Keynote – *Is Minnesota Poised for the Digital Age* by Roberto Gallardo

10:30 Break

10:45 Understanding the Community Impact of Investment in Rural Broadband by Ann Treacy; panel response

11:45 Break

Wilson Bay

12:00 pm Lunch

1:45 Break

Town Hall

2:00 Bridging the Gaps – Expanding the Impact through Community-Provider Partnerships Eight Broadband Learning Stations featuring stories of partnerships and perseverance that define the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program participants.

3:15 Break

Town Hall Ballroom A

3:30 Closing Reflections

4:00 Adjourn

Program

Wednesday, October 25

9:00 Registration Opens

10:00-Noon -- Concurrent Preconference Sessions

Broadband 101 (*Town Hall lower level - Pillsbury Room*)

This session will improve community leaders' ability to make smart decisions and create partnerships to deliver wired and wireless broadband technologies.

Facilitated by Bill Coleman, Community Technology Advisors

Speakers: Tom Johnson, Nobles County

Albert Kangas, Palmer Wireless

Diane Kruse, NEO Connect

Mark Mrla, Finley Engineering



Bill Coleman helps communities make the connection between telecommunications and economic development. As owner of Community Technology Advisors since 2000, he assists community, foundation and corporate clients to develop and implement programs of broadband policy, infrastructure and market development. Earlier in his career, Bill managed Onvoy's (now Zayo) Integrated Community Network rural market development efforts and staffed the MN Department of Trade and Economic Development Star City and Business Retention and Expansion Programs.

Bill participates in his own community by leading TEDxMahtomedi, serving on the board of the nonprofit PCs for People and as a member of the Mahtomedi Community Education Advisory Council.

Tom Johnson is Administrator for Nobles County. Tom spent more than 15 years in private industry before entering local government where he has served nearly 12 years. He has an undergraduate degree in Industrial Engineering and a master's degree in Manufacturing Engineering. He has traveled the world completing projects for a large manufacturing company and visited 49 of our United States. He became very involved in broadband expansion almost four years ago and is currently working with LISMORE Cooperative Telephone Company to complete a major fiber installation.





Albert Kangas started his career in wireless communications in 1990 with Pacific Telecom Cellular in Appleton WI and subsequently became Director of Network Engineering and Operations at St. Cloud Wireless Holdings. Under his leadership, the company expanded from a single employee and eight wireless sites to 30 employees and over 400 wireless sites throughout Minnesota and North Dakota. Today, Albert is the COO of NewCore Wireless based in St. Cloud MN. NewCore Wireless is a full service hosted switching company that performs 2G, 3G and 4G switching functions for wireless carriers that do not own and operate their own switching platform. It is responsible for over 24 different networks covering 18 states supporting networks ranging from a single site to networks with 150 sites. Mr. Kangas was instrumental in the overall business concept for NewCore after

recognizing the need for a cost-effective carrier grade hosted switching solution for rural America. The solution that is in place provides small rural carriers the ability to offer similar services as the larger Tier1 carriers while distributing the cost across multiple operators - a strategy allows the rural communities to retain strong local companies for their communications provider.

Albert and his wife Laura own and operate Palmer Wireless, a wireless and fiber based provider in central Minnesota that serves over 3,000 broadband customers. The wireless network utilizes a combination of licensed and unlicensed spectrum and a variety of technology solutions, complimented by 25 miles of main line fiber.

Diane Kruse is a thought-leader in the ever-changing broadband industry. As the CEO of NEO Connect, she consults with electric companies and local governments on feasibility, strategy, design and financial impacts of Gigabit broadband networks. She has founded four successful telecommunication companies and has 35 years of telecommunications and energy industry experience, the last 25 years as an entrepreneur starting and managing several telecommunication companies. Prior to NEO, she was the CEO of Zoomy, a leading firm in the FTTH industry that specialized in FTTH design/engineering and construction for municipalities, rural telecom companies, and real estate developers. Kruse has served as Chairman of the Board for the FTTH Council and currently serves as one of the Chairmen of the Broadband Communities' Summit.



Mark Mrla joined Finley Engineering Company in 2008 and works out of the Slayton, MN office. He currently serves as Business Unit Manager responsible for business development and various aspects of project management, engineering, budgeting, scheduling and client relations. Mark also coordinates teams and processes for client loan and grant applications for various government programs. Prior to joining Finley, Mark served in various management and technical positions at MidAmerican Energy Company, Gateway, Inc., and owned and operated a private technology consulting company.

Mark holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering from the University of Iowa and has served in numerous leadership positions on various community and professional boards of directors and committees. Mark is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) and is a registered Professional Engineer (PE) in 13 states.

Digital Inclusion Showcase (Town Hall Ballroom A)

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 from a variety of organizations and projects from around the state.

Facilitated by Ann Treacy, Treacy Information Services

Show and Tell Sessions:

- **Arrowhead Telepresence Coalition** <http://www.arrowheadhealthalliance.org/telepresence/>
The ATC is a virtual collaborative focused on developing and expanding an integrated behavioral health network that connects community behavioral health providers with schools, jails, rural hospitals, law enforcement, tribal providers, and others to better serve its community members. *Ric Schaefer* Ric.Schaefer@arrowheadhealthalliance.org
- **Business Training/Assessments**
Before joining the Blandin Foundation full time, Alie worked with Itasca Economic Development Corporation to develop business digital use surveys and design training and advising opportunities to help get local businesses to make better use of technology. *Alie McInerney* ammcinerney@blandinfoundation.org
- **Community Technology Empowerment Project** <https://www.spnn.org/watch/channels/ctep>
While CTEP AmeriCorps members mostly teach basic digital literacy like Microsoft Word and Basic Computers, AmeriCorps members also dream up and deploy digital literacy projects in and around the Twin Cities. Projects have included creating digital scavenger hunts, computer giveaways, teaching kids to do video production, and blogging about social issues. *Lisa Peterson-de la Cueva* peterson.delacueva@spnn.org
- **Facebook for Civic/Public Meetings**
While following broadband stories for the Blandin on Broadband blog, Ann has been livestreaming public meetings. It's a low cost way to make it easy for citizens to see what's happening now and have a record for later. *Ann Treacy* atreacy@treacyinfo.com
- **Online Gaming Contest** <https://gigazonegaming.com/>
Paul Bunyan is hosting their second annual GigaZone Gaming Championship. Participants compete in online tournaments for real money. Games include Overwatch 3x3, Madden 18, Super Smash Brothers, Mario Kart 8, Street Fighter 5 and more. *Leo Anderson* leo@paulbunyan.net
- **PCs for People** <https://www.pcsforpeople.com>
PCs for People refurbishes donated computers to distribute to low income households. They also offer affordable tech support and Internet access (where available). In a partnership with the Blandin Foundation, PCs for People has been working with rural communities around Minnesota. *Sam Drong* sdrong@pcsforpeople.org
- **Project FINE** <http://www.projectfine.org>
Project FINE focuses on integrating new Americans to their new home in Winona. They offer a range of classes and services including technology training from the ground up in multiple languages and opportunities for kids to learn how to code. *Fatima Said* FSaid@Co.Winona.MN.US

- **Red Wing Ignite** (from Coder Dojo to Ignite Cup) <http://www.redwingignite.org/>
Red Wing Ignite is helping their town capitalize on their Gig access by fostering innovation by supporting students, entrepreneurs and businesses. This includes such things as contests that challenge and reward local innovators, a CoderDojo for students, local tech internship projects and more. *Neela Mollgaard* neela@redwingignite.org & *Shannan Harris* shannan@redwingignite.org
- **Visual** <http://www.visualisgood.com>
“Virtual Reality is Here.” Learn how this new medium opens up a world of new experiences with your smartphone. And here about how Chuck has used it for a wide range of purposes – music videos, promotions and social justice. *Chuck Olsen* chuck@visualisgood.com



Town Hall

12:00 **Lunch** (*Ballroom B*)

1:00

Building Bridges: Expanding the Impact with Cooperation (*Ballroom A*)

Bernadine Joselyn, Blandin Foundation

Kevin Edberg, Cooperative Development Services

Laura Withers, 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. At this session you’ll hear three perspectives on community-provider collaboration and then have a chance to talk with others about implications for Minnesota efforts bridge the gaps and expand the impact of broadband.



Bernadine Joselyn directs Blandin Foundation’s Public Policy and Engagement program, leading efforts to catalyze community action that advances community goals. A native of Minnesota, Bernadine spent the first 15 years of her professional life in Soviet (and then post-Soviet) Affairs. She served seven years as a diplomat with the U.S. Department of State, where — after an initial tour in New Delhi, India — she was assigned to Moscow, Russia, and Washington, D.C., focused on the U.S.-Soviet/Russian relationship. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Bernadine left the diplomatic corps to work on international academic and cultural exchange programs with the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) and subsequently the Eurasia Foundation, overseeing a \$5 million annual grant program.

In 2000 Bernadine returned to Minnesota to complete a master’s degree in public affairs at the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey Institute. She also earned a master’s degree in international security policy and certificate in advanced studies from Columbia University.

Kevin Edberg is the Executive Director of Cooperative Development Services, a nonprofit organization providing organizational and business development support to new and existing co-ops in the Upper Midwest.

Kevin believes passionately in the ability of people to address important personal and community issues through shared action. Over the past 17 years his work has increasingly focused on innovative approaches that effectively use the cooperative model as a tool for community-based economic development. He has provided leadership to a number of boards in the non-profit, cooperative and public sectors, including CooperationWorks; the MSC Fund of the Cooperative Development Foundation; Food Alliance; and 28 years of elected service on the school board and city council in his home town of White Bear Lake, Minnesota.



Laura Withers is director of communications for NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association. She oversees communication of association messages including NTCA’s legislative and regulatory policy positions, publications, website, marketing, social media, video program and public relations. Since joining NTCA in 2012, she has led the association’s efforts to promote small, rural telecom companies as technology solution providers delivering the broadband future for rural America. She helped create the industry’s first certification program recognizing NTCA member networks that provide Internet speeds of up to 1 Gigabit per second and serves as the communications lead for a coalition of rural associations, lenders and software vendors building web tools to promote collaboration among telcos, electric coops and municipalities to bring broadband to unserved rural Americans.

Prior to joining NTCA, Withers worked in PR for a trade association supporting the auto industry and was a news reporter and editor.



3:00 Break / Hotel check-in



Wilson Bay

5:00 Exhibit Hall Opens / Welcome Reception

6:30 Dinner

7:15

Evening Program - Breaking Bandwidth: How Rural Broadband Can Change Lives

Aaron Brown, Minnesota Brown

Heidi Holtan, Northern Community Radio

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.



Aaron Brown grew up in a trailer house on his family’s junkyard on the Mesabi Iron Range. A sensitive boy and voracious reader, he fell into writing and radio to compensate for his lack of interest in transmissions. He has worked in Northern Minnesota media since he was 16, including stints at WEVE-Eveleth, KUWS-Wisconsin Public Radio in Superior, and the Hibbing Daily Tribune. Since 2001 he’s written a weekly column for the Hibbing Daily Tribune. In 2003 he began a relationship with Northern Community Radio, spending several years as a contributing producer for The Morning Show and Between You and Me. In 2011 he

founded the Great Northern Radio Show, the station’s traveling radio variety program that tells the stories of unique places through comedy, music and storytelling. In 2017 he joined the first original Northern Community Radio podcast Dig Deep, exploring modern political issues beyond the soundbites. A communication instructor at Hibbing Community College, Brown also writes the blog MinnesotaBrown.com, and is an occasional contributor to the Minneapolis Star Tribune, Business North, The Daily Yonder, and other publications. He is a well-known advocate for rural broadband and economic diversification in Northern Minnesota. He and wife Christina Brown live in Balsam Township with their three sons Henry, Douglas, and George.

Heidi Holtan is the News and Public Affairs Director at KAXE/KBXE – Northern Community Radio – an independent NPR affiliate serving northern Minnesota. KAXE/KBXE’s listening area includes many small towns that are unique but face similar issues when it comes to employment, lack of childcare, education, environmental concerns, energy usage and broadband.

Heidi has a background in research and media and can be found most mornings hosting Morning Edition from the KAXE/KBXE Grand Rapids studios. One of the newest segments on the Morning Show is Dig Deep – a monthly



segment and podcast featuring liberal Aaron Brown and conservative Chuck Marohn. Subjects have been the state of journalism, education, labor, infrastructure and many more. For almost 17 years Heidi has interviewed authors for Realgoodwords on KAXE/KBXE – guests over the years include Ray Bradbury, Anne Lamott, Cheryl Strayed, William Kent Krueger and Kate DiCamillo.

Heidi grew up in the Brainerd Lakes Area working in her family’s business of a resort and a telephone directory company. A graduate of the University of Minnesota with a focus in media and women’s studies, Heidi worked for 10 years at the MN Legislative Library. She lives in Grand Rapids with her husband Tom.

8:00 Social / Exhibit Time

9:00 Adjourn



Thursday, October 26

Wilson Bay

7:45 Breakfast Buffet / Exhibits

8:45 Break



Town Hall Ballroom A

9:00 Welcome

Bernadine Joselyn, Blandin Foundation

Kevin McKinnon, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Tyler Glynn, Brainerd Lakes Area Economic Development Corporation



Kevin McKinnon was appointed Deputy Commissioner of Economic Development at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) in November, 2014. McKinnon, who has 15 years of economic development experience, joined DEED’s Business and Community Development division as director of business development in 2006 and was named executive director of the division in 2012.

As Deputy Commissioner, he oversees DEED’s Business Development, Business Finance, and Community Finance departments, as well as the Minnesota Trade Office and the Office of Broadband Development. Altogether, these departments are responsible for more than two dozen programs at the agency, leading our state’s work of attracting, retaining, and expanding businesses and

creating jobs; cultivating entrepreneurs; stabilizing and stimulating the economy through benefit payments; and helping communities thrive.

McKinnon has served on various committees and boards, including the Economic Development Association of Minnesota and the International Economic Development Council, and is a member of economic development and corporate real estate associations. He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks and lives with his family in Eagan, where he is a volunteer coach for numerous sports teams.



Tyler Glynn is the newest addition to the Brainerd Lakes Area Economic Development Corp. (BLAEDC) team. Tyler joins BLAEDC with 20 plus years of experience in commercial banking, marketing and sales, as the new Economic Development Officer. Tyler will lead BLAEDC's new initiative, the BLAEDC Unified Fund. He will also take the lead in BLAEDC's Business Retention and Expansion Program, which will bring him face to face with the business leaders in Crow Wing County.

Tyler has a bachelor's degree from Hamline University where he majored in Economics and participated in both football and baseball. He serves as the tournament director for the annual Central Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge Golf event and also volunteers at Nisswa Elementary.

9:30

Keynote Presentation – Is Rural Minnesota Poised for the Digital Age?

Presentation by Roberto Gallardo, Purdue Center for Regional Development, Purdue University
Facilitated by Danna MacKenzie, Minnesota Office of Broadband Development

The digital age is transforming the current socioeconomic landscape. Urban and rural communities alike need to transition to a digital mindset in order to adapt and prosper. But what is a digital mindset? This presentation will provide digital age-related trends, discuss a community economic development model based on the Intelligent Community concept, and showcase small steps communities can take. The objective is to help rural communities transition to, plan for, and prosper in the digital age. In addition, the latest research on broadband impact's and the digital divide for the state of Minnesota will be shared.

Roberto Gallardo is Assistant Director and Community & Regional Economics Specialist at the Purdue Center for Regional Development at Purdue University. He holds an electronics engineering undergraduate degree, a master's in economic development, and a Ph.D. in Public Policy and Administration. He has worked with rural communities over the past decade conducting local & regional community economic development, including use of technology for development.

Roberto has authored more than 70 articles including peer-reviewed and news-related regarding rural trends, socioeconomic analysis, industrial clusters, the digital divide, and leveraging broadband applications for community economic development. He is also the



author of the book “Responsive Countryside: The Digital Age & Rural Communities”, which highlights a 21st century community development model that helps rural communities transition to, plan for, and prosper in the digital age. He lives in West Lafayette with his wife and two daughters.



Danna MacKenzie heads the Minnesota Office of Broadband Development, which is housed within the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development. As Executive Director, Danna leads broadband strategy and program development efforts within the state, and provides support to both the Governor’s Subcabinet on Broadband and the Governor’s Task Force on Broadband. A large part of what the Office is responsible for is administering the state’s Border-to-Border Broadband Infrastructure Incentive fund that is now in its fourth year.

Prior to joining the Office, Danna served as technology director for Cook County, Minnesota for 17 years. One of the roles she held there was administrator for the Cook County Broadband Commission, which was instrumental in bringing fiber to the home to rural Cook County. During these years she also served as a member of the Blandin Foundation Broadband Strategy Board, focusing on connectivity and broadband use throughout rural Minnesota.



10:30 Break



10:45

Understanding the Community Impact of Investment in Rural Broadband

Presentation by Ann Treacy, Treacy Information Services

Facilitated by Bill Coleman, Community Technology Advisors

Panelists: Mike Bjerkness, Brainerd Lakes Area Economic Development Corporation

Mark Erickson, City of Winthrop

Dave Hengel, Greater Bemidji, Inc.

Neela Mollgaard, Red Wing Ignite

In the Summer of 2017, Blandin Foundation visited five rural Minnesota counties to learn about the community impact of investment in rural broadband. Our goal was to determine the value of that broadband, based on impact to community residents and businesses. We looked at demographics and other data, applied established formulas to compare public investment to collective economic benefit, and collected stories. In this presentation, Ann Treacy will present the results of this work, compare public investment inputs to community benefit in each county, and describe what conditions and attributes enable community success. Broadband champions from participating counties will share their perspectives on the findings. Their stories showcase the tremendous potential being unleashed from investments in rural broadband.



Ann Treacy authors and manages the Blandin on Broadband blog. She has worked on broadband issues since 1994 – both supporting deployment of broadband and helping people and businesses better use broadband through digital inclusion training and online marketing consulting. Ann has a Master’s degree in Library and Information Science as well as a Master’s in Literature. You can learn more at www.byteoftheweek.com.

Mike Bjerkness is a Brainerd native and the lead in BLAEDC’s Key Recruitment Program. Mike has been working in workforce development and recruiting for the Brainerd Lakes Area for the past 10 years. He

specializes in several industries including but not limited to Information Technology, Manufacturing, Healthcare, Construction, Engineering, Banking, and the list goes on. His wide range of knowledge in multiple industries along with personal relationship makes him dedicated to hiring the best talent for the businesses of the Crow Wing County area.



Mike’s Professional Affiliates/Memberships include: 2014 Graduate of the Lakes Area Leadership Group; Brainerd Rotary Club-Current Membership Chair; Brainerd Lakes Chamber-Past Chair, Ambassador Committee; Lakes Area Networking Group-Past President; Central Lakes College Business Education Committee; and Lakes Area Manufacturing Alliance



Mark Erickson is Economic Development Authority Director for the city of Winthrop, Minnesota. He also served as city administrator from 2008 to 2014 and worked closely with the RS Fiber Cooperative project in Sibley, Renville, Nicollet and McLeod counties in West Central Minnesota. Prior to Winthrop he was employed by Hiawatha Broadband Communications in Winona, Minnesota, working with communities interested in building Fiber-To-The-Home networks.

Mark graduated with majors in journalism and economics from the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho in 1980 and worked at the Pacific Daily News on Guam and the Sioux Falls Argus Leader in Sioux Falls, SD. He was also co-owner of the Lakefield Standard in Lakefield, Minnesota before going to work for Hiawatha Broadband. He

currently serves on the RS Fiber Cooperative Board of Directors, the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association Board of Directors and chairs the League of Minnesota Cities Telecommunications Task Force. He is a former member of the Blandin Foundation’s Broadband Strategy Board.

Dave Hengel has a 29- year history of economic development work in northern Minnesota. He is currently the Executive Director of Greater Bemidji, Inc. In that role, he serves as the lead in north-central Minnesota’s efforts to drive economic development and create prosperity. Several recent projects were completed in the region under Dave’s leadership, including the creation of the LaunchPad, Greater Bemidji’s means to provide the broadband, talent, connections, space and resources entrepreneurs in northern Minnesota need to succeed; piloting a “Start-Up in a Day” initiative that commits to developers in the city of Bemidji will have easy, online accessibility for all permits and licenses, response to permit and license requests within one business day, and access to



a “navigator” to help developers work through the requirements; and the creation of a training center under Greater Bemidji’s umbrella. Greater Bemidji’s Minnesota Innovation Institute (MI2) provides skill training and recruitment for companies throughout northern Minnesota.

Dave is a strong advocate for a new vision for economic development, one that focuses on building talent, entrepreneurship and innovation, as well as for the need for the re-emergence of civic stewardship. Dave was a recent recipient of the State of Minnesota’s Vision Award, has received the National Association of Development Organization’s Innovation Award and was a previous recipient of Minnesota’s “Ten Outstanding Young Minnesotans” recognition.



Neela Mollgaard is the Executive Director of Red Wing Ignite. Red Wing Ignite is a non-profit advancing innovation, technology and entrepreneurship. When Red Wing became a partner of US Ignite, Neela was part of a dedicated group that developed and launched the non-profit.

Neela has over 20 years of experience in corporate and non-profit organizations. She has led the creation of initiatives in both the business sector and within communities. She is founder and chair of Women Cents, a non-profit that serves children and families. Neela also serves on the Jones Family Foundation Board of Directors and the Governor’s Broadband Task Force.

11:45 Break



Wilson Bay

12:00 pm Lunch / Exhibits

1:45 Break



Town Hall

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. *See page 18 for Learning Station Profiles.*

Session I: 2:05 - 2:25

Session II: 2:30 - 2:50

Session III: 2:55 - 3:15

| Learning Station | Room |
|--|-----------------|
| <i>Upstairs</i> | |
| 1. Woodstock Communications – Westbrook FTTP | Ballroom A |
| 2. InvisiMax, Nextera Communications and MVTV Wireless – Fixed Wireless Projects | Ballroom B |
| <i>Downstairs</i> | |
| 3. Wikstrom Telephone – Rural Alvarado Broadband | Anderson F |
| 4. Rock County Broadband Alliance – Rock County, MN | Anderson G |
| 5. Palmer Wireless – Big Lake Industrial Park | Olson Boardroom |
| 6. Renville County – Renville County Broadband | Pillsbury |
| 7. Mediacom Minnesota – Harris Township Broadband Build | Ramsey |
| 8. Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative – MLEC Phase I FTTP in Aitkin County | Sibley |

3:15 Break

Town Hall Ballroom A

3:30 Closing Reflections

Bernadine Joselyn, Blandin Foundation

Roberto Gallardo, Purdue Center for Regional Development, Purdue University

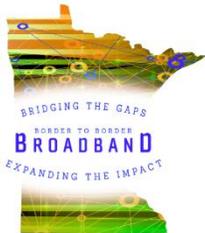
Shannon Heim, Moss & Barnett



Shannon Heim focuses her practice on the needs of companies doing business in the telecommunications and energy industries. She has advised telecom and energy companies on a full range of regulatory issues and has represented her clients before both state and federal regulatory bodies and courts. Shannon also advises companies, cooperatives, and trade associations on the negotiation of commercial contracts involving complex and contentious issues of business and law. She works with companies to improve rural broadband connectivity for communities in the hard to reach areas of Minnesota.

Shannon provides extensive counseling to Alaska companies and companies exploring business opportunities in Alaska. She serves on the Governor’s Broadband Task Force.

4:00 Adjourn



Learning Stations: Bridging the Gaps – Expanding the Impact through Community-Provider Partnerships

Community Success Stories featuring projects funded through the Office of Broadband Development

“Cable provider and township partnerships”

Grantee: Mediacom Minnesota LLC

Project: Harris Township Broadband Build

Grant Award: \$224,369

Total project cost: \$773,686

Description: Build out broadband infrastructure in Harris Township including the University of Minnesota Research Farm to provide speeds that surpass the broadband service goal of 25/3 to 262 households and 6 businesses/community anchor institutions.

Key Partners: Mediacom Minnesota LLC and Harris Township together received numerous letters of support for this project along with many survey responses in favor of the proposed broadband project.

Community and Economic Development Impact: Harris Township is a large area with an estimated 3,400 residents. As a growing community Harris Township needs better internet service as some of the areas have no internet services currently being offered. Residents need internet to work, and to help draw new business to the area. Children need internet to do their homework. The school system (ISD318) has issued iPads to students in grades 7-12 to bring home, and most have homework to turn in online. With the slow and/or no service, a lot of students are falling behind.

Advice for people preparing a project application: Mediacom has found that working together with the cities/counties/townships, etc., on an application strengthens the impact on all unserved/underserved rural areas.

Key Learnings: Broadband is important to improve quality of life for residents and make businesses more competitive. Without grants and partnerships with the community, projects like Harris Township may not be possible.

For more information:

Jason Janesich, Senior Manager – Area Operations

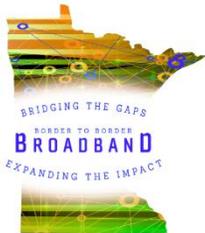
Direct 218-262-0005

jjanesich@mediacomcc.com

Mediacom Communications

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Hibbing, MN 55746



Learning Stations: Bridging the Gaps – Expanding the Impact through Community-Provider Partnerships

Community Success Stories featuring projects funded through the Office of Broadband Development

“Cooperatives Cooperating”

Grantee: Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative (MLEC)

Project: MLEC Phase I Fiber to the Premise in Aitkin County

Grant Award: \$1,757,640

Total project cost: \$3,515,280

Description: MLEC has partnered with CTC to bring fiber optic service to a significantly underserved area in Aitkin County. Not a typical partnership, but a unique arrangement to bring much need broadband to MLEC members.

Key Partners: CTC

50 percent local match provided by MLEC

Community and Economic Development Impact: This project is the first phase of what MLEC hopes to be a growing project to bring fiber optics to many of our members in Aitkin and Mille Lacs Counties. The project area is unserved rural areas primarily around lakes. The population is comprised of year-round residential and a significant seasonal population. MLEC hopes benefits of providing connectivity will improve the lives of those in the area through increased access for education, workforce development and lead to increased time seasonal residents spend in the region resulting in increased spending locally on goods and services.

Advice for people preparing a project application: Start the conversations early with your partners. Don't underestimate all the details that need to be discussed and clearly understood, along with the time to develop a healthy working team. Have a business plan in place or started and be open to changes. Having people say they want the service and getting commitment requires a lot of marketing. Develop a marketing plan that includes how and when you will reach out to potential customers. As a new fiber provider MLEC has relied on CTC for guidance in marketing but also has had to get creative with how to market to the area. The best piece we had were yard signs that stated Fiber was coming to a signed customer's home.

Key Learnings: Communication needs to be open. Keep asking questions, never assume the others knows something about the business or what you understand.

Work together to find solutions that work for each party, as in our case nothing was cookie cutter about our partnership.

For more information:

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Organization name: Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

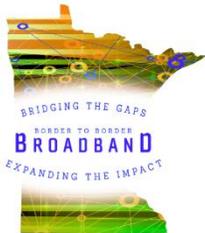
Mailing Address: PO Box 230, Aitkin MN 56431

Name: Joe Buttweiler

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Organization name: CTC



Learning Stations: Bridging the Gaps – Expanding the Impact through Community-Provider Partnerships

Community Success Stories featuring projects funded through the Office of Broadband Development

“Fixed Wireless: Key Part of Comprehensive Broadband Solutions for MN Vitality”

Presenters: MVTW Wireless

InvisiMax,

Nextera Communications

Description: Fixed Wireless is a broadband solution used by several current and past broadband grant awardees, as both a hybrid solution alongside wireline technologies and as a stand-alone solution, for improving broadband access, speeds, and capacity, especially in low population density rural areas of Minnesota. It’s also a solution in metro locations, especially for business needs. Learn more about this technology and how it is applied to community and business development opportunities.

Community and Economic Development Impact: Minnesota is home to a diversity of population densities, landscape features (rock, prairie, forests, lakes, and bluff country...), and diverse business and community development opportunities and challenges, for rural and metro areas alike. Fixed wireless broadband is a key part of the comprehensive package of broadband technologies that help meet those varied development environments, and in doing so, helps drive Minnesota’s economic and community vitality.

Advice for people preparing a project grant application that includes and/or features fixed wireless: Fixed wireless is a complimentary broadband technology implemented in whole or in part as a solution to meet the diverse needs of both consumers (business and residential) and providers. Considerations should be given to economic and social impacts as well as the viability of the services offered.

Fixed wireless technologies currently exceed **multi-Gigabit** speeds and are already being deployed in both metro and rural settings. Fixed wireless as a technology is reliable, mature, readily available and evolving more rapidly than any other broadband technology.

Key Learnings about Fixed Wireless: A snapshot of technologies from WiFi, WiMAX, 4G LTE and 5G; implementation, adaptation and viability.

For more information:

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InvisiMax got its start in the small town of Hallock, Minnesota in 1996. Recognizing a need for Internet access, four partners sought to connect their hometown to the World Wide Web.

By the end of 1996, we had 81 customers and zero full-time employees. That changed quickly when neighboring communities recognized the huge potential of the Internet. The company was soon growing exponentially.

In 1998, we pioneered high speed wireless Internet access, a technology so new that it was necessary for us to write all of our own software. This hard work paid off. In 2001 we officially became InvisiMax. Because of our founder's creativity, in 2002 we were awarded one of the nation's Top 10 providers of broadband wireless Internet access, by Broadband magazine. Our commitment to innovation is still intact, and outstanding customer service has become our trademark.

2017 our services include High Speed internet & Broadband services, Managed IT services including custom-made firewall protection, online back-up and much more. InvisiMax customers are able to use the Internet every day to overcome the limits that geography has traditionally placed on the Midwest. Businesses are reaching new markets, saving time and making money. Family and friends are enjoying the true entertainment and communication value of the web.

Connecting People and Information

InvisiMax is constantly evolving as a service organization by 'Connecting People and Information' in new and exciting ways. From our foundation of internet expertise, our team continues to grow in abilities and responsibilities. Our team members and their families live and work in our local communities. We are a trusted business partner and we are committed to serving the people of our rural communities. We guide people and organizations by assisting and educating to change their business processes to accommodate digital change. Educate. Engage. Execute. We are you full service Managed Services partner.

Service Areas

75 towns and rural areas in NW Minnesota and NE North Dakota.



Transmitting a broadband wireless signal from our TV tower allowed MVTV to reach rural customers that couldn't otherwise have access to internet.

Since 1999, MVTV Wireless Broadband Internet Services have expanded to include over more than 25,000 square miles of Southwestern Minnesota. We continue to grow by providing fast, reliable Broadband Internet and digital TV services at the lowest possible cost to our members. MVTV continues to deploy and update its network with the most advanced wireless technology bringing ever increasing capacities and speeds. As a recipient of a Minnesota Border-to-Border grant, MVTV's most recent project enhanced service offerings to our members with speeds exceeding 25Mbps throughout its network.

Promoting the longevity and vitality of rural Minnesota

What exactly is a co-op? Cooperatives provide nearly every good and service imaginable, and they are a great choice for buying local and keeping jobs in the community. Chances are at least one Cooperative provides you with services necessary for daily living and business. Traditionally, Cooperatives have provided us with electricity and fuel. It may surprise you just how many of the services, products and jobs are associated with a Coop.

The Cooperative Difference: •Locally owned & operated – Owned and operated by member-owners (customers) and focuses on their needs and local priorities. •Member-owners are first – Members know they can trust their cooperative, because it was created not to make a profit, but simply to provide reliable electricity and service and affordable rates. •Responsive to local needs – Coops work hard to achieve a better quality of life and higher level of service for member-owners.

Service Areas

Serving areas within these 26 Minnesota Counties: Blue Earth, Brown, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, McLeod, Meeker, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Pipestone, Pope, Redwood, Renville, Rock, Sibley, Stearns, Swift, Watonwan, Yellow Medicine.

MVTV Wireless is a nonprofit, member-owned cooperative, incorporated in 1960 to provide UHF Television to the rural areas surrounding Granite Falls. In April, 1999, MVTV began providing Broadband Wireless Internet Service. Just like with the TV service, it started small.



Nextera Communications is a privately held Minnesota-based telecommunications company providing carrier-grade voice, data and Internet solutions to small, mid-sized and enterprise businesses across the state of Minnesota. Nextera provides converged Internet Protocol (IP) network services that combine voice, Internet access and private data networking delivered through a mix of wireless, fiber-based Ethernet and Ethernet over Copper (EoC).

A History of Innovation, Collaboration and Growth

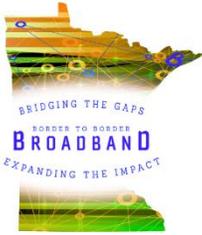
Nextera Communications offers a diverse platform of telecommunications products, including IP and traditional phone services as well as Internet and data services. Voice offerings include Hosted PBX, SIP Trunking, T-1, Business Lines, and Anywhere VoIP. Data offerings include DIA (Dedicated Internet Access), point-to-point transport, VPN networking, BGP, Load Balancing and Failover, Email and Web Hosting, plus Co-Location opportunities. Nextera owns the largest Fixed Wireless network within Minnesota in addition to utilizing other network delivery options such as fiber-based Ethernet and Ethernet over Copper (EoC).

As a Minnesota owned business, Nextera Communications participates in the communities it serves and supports organizations across the state that are making a positive impact. The company encourages and provides staff with opportunities to attend community events and volunteer their time.

Since Nextera's founding, the company has consistently grown its customer and employee base as it implements emerging telecom technologies. Nextera serves small to enterprise-sized businesses in diverse industries including healthcare, finance, transportation, education and engineering.

Service Areas

Nextera Communications is headquartered in Baxter, Minnesota, with additional offices in Minnetonka (Minneapolis-St. Paul Great Metro Area), Duluth and St. Cloud.



Learning Stations: Bridging the Gaps – Expanding the Impact through Community-Provider Partnerships

Community Success Stories featuring projects funded through the Office of Broadband Development

“Government and local companies making great things happen”

Grantee: Palmer Wireless

Project: Big Lake Industrial Park

Grant Award: \$90,988

Total Project Cost: \$211,600

Description: Palmer Wireless built a fiber network to approximately 18 businesses in the Big Lake Industrial Park. The businesses in the park were only receiving 25 Mbps or less speeds downloads and uploads of less than 5 Mbps with their current internet provider through Ethernet lines. Palmer Wireless has given the businesses a symmetrical fiber connection with options of 1 gigabit speeds.

Key Partners: Palmer Wireless, Sherburne County and the City of Big Lake and with a 43% match provided by the State of MN Border-to-Border Grant.

Community and Economic Development Impact: The City of Big Lake and Sherburne County were asking for broadband/internet providers to come to their aid and provide the desperately needed broadband in the Industrial Park. The current businesses were threatening to leave, and they were not able to attract any new businesses to their community with the lack of broadband to the 79-acre park. There are 25 acres still available for sale. The size and cost of the project in relation to the number of businesses wasn't financially possible for any provider to bring cost effective fiber to the park. The Broadband Grant from the State of Minnesota made it possible. Palmer Wireless was also able to bring fiber on their own to the schools and the police department, who also were thirsty for a fiber connection and were lacking viable broadband outside of the Industrial Park.

Advice for people preparing a project application: Palmer Wireless was able to meet with all of the businesses before applying for the grant to see what their needs were. Palmer worked directly with the City of Big Lake's Community Development Director to make sure all of the businesses in the park were contacted. Palmer Wireless also has developed a relationship with Sherburne County in bringing better broadband to our community. Palmer Wireless was one of a few providers to participate in Sherburne County's Sherband group and in the Blandin Broadband Communities group. It is important to get buy in from all the participants including the businesses, local government and the contractors that are performing the work. We used a local contractor that knew many of the businesses and that helped with the coordination of the installations.

Key Learnings: Fiber networks are vital to business growth and development in underserved areas. Broadband Providers need to work directly with communities, city and government leaders to ensure these state of the art broadband networks get built.

For more information:

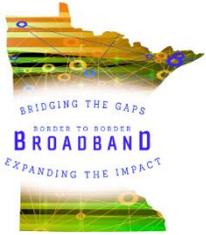
Name & Title: Laura Kangas, CFO & Albert Kangas, COO

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Email: Laura.kangas@palmerwireless.net

Organization name: Palmer Wireless

Mailing Address: 2848 2nd St. S., Suite 105, St. Cloud, MN 56303



Learning Stations: Bridging the Gaps – Expanding the Impact through Community-Provider Partnerships

Community Success Stories featuring projects funded through the Office of Broadband Development

“County commitment, building on neighboring success”

Grantee: Renville County

Project: Renville County Broadband

Grant Award: \$807,966

Total project cost: \$2,071,709

Description: Construct a fiber ring in Renville County and connect it to RS Fiber Cooperative’s existing system in Sibley County to provide broadband service to 193 households, and 102 businesses and community institutions. Without this initial fiber ring, extending broadband service to serve additional unserved and underserved areas in the county would not be feasible.

Key Partners: Hiawatha Broadband Communications (HBC), Renville-Sibley (RS) Fiber Cooperative, and Renville County. 61% local match provided by Renville County and HBC.

Community and Economic Development Impact: This project will benefit many unserved home and farm businesses, and it will help attract new businesses and compete for people and economic opportunities along the Minnesota River basin. Area farmers will be supplied with reliable, scalable surveillance and automation solutions, children will be able to complete homework from their homes, and healthcare institutions will be able to transmit electronic medical information faster than before – resulting in an improved quality of life for rural residents. Renville County has experienced a 25% reduction in population over the past 30 years. Broadband service will stimulate health outreach, educational attainment, business, and job and population growth.

Advice for people preparing a project application: Partnering on an application strengthens the impact on underserved rural areas. This project required collaboration amongst public sector, non-profit, and for-profit organizations, which resulted in greater resources and capacity.

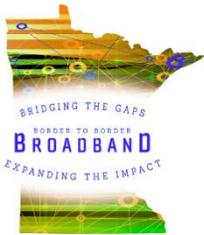
Key Learnings: The expansion of fiber networks into unserved and underserved areas always creates more opportunity. Quality of life improvements through fiber optic broadband availability always creates demand from the areas contiguous with existing fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) networks.

For more information:

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Learning Stations: Bridging the Gaps – Expanding the Impact through Community-Provider Partnerships

Community Success Stories featuring projects funded through the Office of Broadband Development

“Reality Rocks!”

Grantee: Rock County Broadband Alliance, LLC (RCBA)

Project: Rock County, MN

Grant Award: \$4.9 million

Total project cost: \$12.64 million

Description: Build out of fiber to Rock County in extreme southwest corner of MN. Project included all rural areas of the county and the rural towns of Jasper, Hardwick, Kenneth, Beaver Creek, Magnolia and Kanaranzi. The project passed just over 1100 locations with connected customers at the culmination of the grant period of just under 900. RCBA, LLC is a wholly owned commercial subsidiary of Alliance Communications Cooperative, Inc., a South Dakota company that serves 13,000 customers in the tristate area of SD-IA-MN.

Key Partners: Local match of \$1,000,000 from the county of Rock, MN.

Community and Economic Development Impact: The rural areas of Rock County were extremely underserved. The grant application included testimonials from businesses, families, schools, etc. regarding how the lack of affordable, reliable broadband service in the areas affect family life, restrict educational opportunities, prohibit rural telemedicine opportunities, among many other examples. Following the project completion, a tour was put together by the Rock County administrators to show the Broadband Task Force how much the addition of broadband service had already affected Rock County, MN. The tour included the local radio station, a confinement system builder, a feed mill operation and the rural consolidated school system. Testimonials were read to the group as well from local physicians that live in the rural areas of the county regarding their experience with the enhanced services. News of future economic development in the county already has leaders excited. A recent announcement of planned construction of a shrimp hatchery that will generate 330 construction jobs, \$14.5M of labor income, and long-term impact of \$23M annually and 124 new long-term jobs is great news for the county. Other economic development in the county is also under way.

Advice for people preparing a project application: Collaborating with county leaders has been a great experience for staff of RCBA, LLC. They have helped with everything from day one of the project and have been the projects biggest cheerleaders and advocates.

Key Learnings: This was RCBA’s first experience of building outside our current service area where we do not already know our customers that we will be serving with the new technology. Although people were excited for the new service, the company also had to not only bring the services to them, but also gain their trust before they would become our customers. Much of the work was contracted, but RCBA employees were also very involved in the process making sure the new customers were treated well and any issues were quickly resolved. The key to the success of the project was to have local support and to treat the customer right from day one.

For more information:

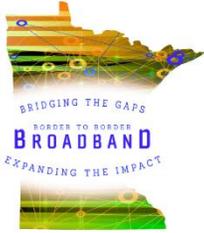
Name & Title: Kari J. Flanagan, CFO

Phone number: (605)594-8228

Email: karif@alliance.coop

Organization name: Rock County Broadband Alliance, LLC dba Alliance Communications

Mailing Address: PO Box 349, Garretson, SD 57030-0349



Learning Stations: Bridging the Gaps – Expanding the Impact through Community-Provider Partnerships

Community Success Stories featuring projects funded through the Office of Broadband Development

“Persistence and local marketing pay off”

Grantee: Woodstock Communications

Project: Westbrook FTTP

Grant award: \$412,319

Total project cost: \$916,424

Description: This is a complete fiber to the home project including the entire city limits of Westbrook. The city has 404 passings with 368 households, 29 businesses and 7 anchor institutions. Westbrook is a town that is currently served by Century Link with DSL.

Key Partners: Woodstock Communications asked for 45% grant from the State. The remainder of the funding (55%) will be provided by Woodstock Communications.

Community and Economic Development Impact: The community of Westbrook sent in numerous letters of support asking for better service for their town. Westbrook is a very aggressive community with great people and businesses, and offers a great place to raise a family. The only thing they lacked was adequate broadband to attract new businesses and families, and keep from losing the ones they have. Westbrook has a public school, assisted living, city hall, nursing home, public library, police station, community center, fire hall, ambulance department, and is the smallest city in Minnesota with a full hospital. The hospital is a division of Sanford Hospital in Sioux Falls and needed faster speeds and better reliability to stay competitive. The public school will now be able to hold the South West Regional Schools quarterly meeting in Westbrook because of the fiber build.

Advice for people preparing a project application: Working with and having the support of the community leaders is critical. Support is needed not only for the application but also to make the project a financial success. We attended city council meetings, Kiwanis meetings, ran articles in the local paper weekly and opened an office on Main Street for customers to come in and learn about us.

Key Learnings: We learned how critical broadband is to a community. Also, not only did this build bring fiber to the home to the town, it also enabled us to provide a wireless service to the rural community as well. We also have a better take rate than we had anticipated.

For more information:

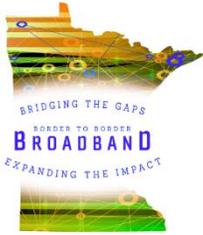
Name & Title: Terry Nelson---General Manager

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Email: terry.nelson@woodstocktel.net

Organization name: Woodstock Communications

Mailing Address: 337 Aetna St., Ruthton, MN 56170



Learning Stations: Bridging the Gaps – Expanding the Impact through Community-Provider Partnerships

Community Success Stories featuring projects funded through the Office of Broadband Development

“Truly inspiring -- businesses & neighbors working together”

Grantee: Wikstrom Telephone

Project: Rural Alvarado Broadband

Grant Award: \$43,481

Total project cost: \$95,240

Description: BEAMCO and Wikstrom Telephone partnered to build a Fiber to the Home network for farms and businesses in rural Alvarado, extending a new route to 12 customers over 6 miles. BEAMCO took the lead to sign up customers and get financial contributions from those in the project.

Wikstrom Telephone is the ISP and was responsible for the engineering, construction and operations of the network.

Key Partners: BEAMCO 16% percent local match provided by Beamco/customers
Wikstrom 34% percent local match by Wikstrom Telephone
OBD/DEED 50% Grant

Community and Economic Development Impact: The goal of Beamco was to bring Broadband to his rural Engineering and manufacturing facility, and connect all of the farmers and residents along the way. It provided the necessary infrastructure to keep employment at the Beamco plant and enhance the education and business needs of other farms. A key use for many rural farms is security, and process monitoring of agricultural operations.

Advice for people preparing a project application:

- Find a good partner with similar culture and goals
- Split up the work equitably and get commitments early
- Take the time to meet with people face to face

Key Learning's:

- Anything is possible with persistence and people with common goals.
- Having OBD/DEED available to connect partners should be utilized more!

For more information:

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Exhibitors

**Department of Employment & Economic Development (MN DEED)
Office of Broadband Development**

www.deed.gov

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The Office of Broadband Development at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (MN DEED) is the central broadband planning agency for the state. The office advises policy-makers on broadband related issues; measures and monitors broadband access statewide, including producing maps showing areas with and without access; administers the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program; tracks connectivity needs of community anchor institutions such as K-12 schools, libraries, and healthcare providers; helps to identify and remove barriers to broadband deployment; surveys digital literacy and inclusion issues and opportunities; monitors federal policies and programs that impact Minnesota; acts as a clearinghouse for information on broadband funding sources and other resources, works with communities to help find solutions to their identified gaps, and provides administrative support to the Governor’s Task Force on Broadband.

Calix

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Calix is the global leader in platform innovations for access networks. Its Intelligent Access systems portfolio combines AXOS, the revolutionary platform for access, with Calix Cloud, innovative cloud services for data analytics and experience assurance. Together, they enable service providers to transform their businesses and be the winners of tomorrow. Visit www.calix.com for more information.

ADTRAN

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ADTRAN is accelerating the delivery of premium broadband with rapidly deployable broadband solutions that leverage existing network infrastructure, speed time to market and reduce deployment costs.

Best Buy

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Best Buy will be a leader in helping underserved teens get the tech skills and training they need to be prepared for a successful career through our community outreach programs, Geek Squad Academy and Best Buy Teen Tech Centers.

Consolidated Telecommunications Company (CTC)

www.connectctc.com

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Consolidated Telecommunications Company (CTC) is a locally owned cooperative with offices in Brainerd, Baxter and Crosby. CTC offers high speed Internet, digital TV and local phone service to businesses and residents to the areas they serve.

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952-582-2913

Whether you're a rural electric cooperative, a municipality, telecommunications or another organization exploring fiber opportunities, your goal is the same: find the optimal way to bring high-speed broadband to your community, constituents or customers. When you partner with Finley, you'll experience an approach to network design and deployment that is as unique as your business. We don't prescribe "one size fits all" solutions because every customer, territory, network and business case is unique, layered and nuanced.

We take the time to ask questions and understand the entire landscape of your business needs and strategic direction, from your structure and tolerance for risk to unique requirements and expected outcomes. Then we work with you to find the best solution "fit" on all fronts: business, financial and technical.

For us, it's not just consulting. It's a partnership. We become a trusted extension of your team.

Graybar Electric

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Peter Hynes, Account Manager

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612-251-1617

Graybar is an American employee-owned corporation, based in Clayton, Missouri. It conducts a wholesale distribution business for electrical, communications and data networking products, and is a provider of related supply-chain management and logistics services. It is included on the Fortune 500 list of the largest United States corporations.

Minnesota Rural Health Association

www.MNRuralHealth.org

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Steve Gottwalt, Executive Director

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The MN Rural Health Association (MRHA) is "The Voice of Rural Health" for Greater Minnesota! MRHA is a statewide, private, non-profit membership organization missioned to strengthen the health and well-being of rural Minnesotans through leadership, education, advocacy and collaboration.

Minnesota Public Broadband Alliance

2192 Sunrise Lane; Detroit Lakes, MN 56501

JoAnne Johnson, Executive Director

joannecjohnson@broadbandventures.net

612-229-7173

The Minnesota Public Broadband Alliance is a group of broadband network providers who have some level of public funding in their infrastructure. Our members work together to make each of us stronger by sharing knowledge, resources, networks and banding together to be a stronger voice at the legislature. We welcome any community or group who is interested in broadband to join us whether or not their network is build and operational yet.

Conference Sponsors

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Blandin Foundation™
STRENGTHENING RURAL MINNESOTA

Blandin Foundation stands with rural Minnesota communities as they imagine and claim ambitious, vibrant futures. It is one of only a handful of foundations in the U.S. focused exclusively on rural communities and the largest rural-based private foundation in Minnesota.

Blandin Foundation believes that encouraging the use of broadband is a critical component for increasing the technological vitality of Minnesota's rural communities. The Blandin Community Broadband Program works in partnership with others to increase awareness about the value of broadband; increase business and residential use of broadband in rural communities; and increase public and private investment in rural broadband capacity. Learn more at <http://broadband.blandinfoundation.org>.

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**OFFICE OF BROADBAND
DEVELOPMENT**

The Office of Broadband Development at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (MN DEED) is the central broadband planning agency for the state. The office advises policy-makers on broadband related issues; measures and monitors broadband access state-wide, including producing maps showing areas with and without access; administers the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program; tracks connectivity needs of community anchor institutions such as K-12 schools, libraries, and healthcare providers; helps to identify and remove barriers to broadband deployment; surveys digital literacy and inclusion issues and opportunities; monitors federal policies and programs that impact Minnesota; acts as a clearinghouse for information on broadband funding sources and other resources, works with communities to help find solutions to their identified gaps, and provides administrative support to the Governor's Task Force on Broadband. <http://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/>