

2019 Annual Minnesota Broadband Profiles | Otter Tail County

Rank: 82 (out of 87) for broadband speeds of 100/20 megabits per second (Mbps)

Background

Every year since 2017 Blandin Foundation has contracted with Ann Treacy of Treacy Information Services to synthesize data from the Minnesota Office of Broadband Development and broadband news from communities across the state to gauge progress toward the state broadband goals (2022: 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up and 2026: 100 Mbps down and 20 Mbps up).

Leaders can use this information to plan and act to improve broadband access and use in their communities.

Otter Tail County: data and community action

Otter Tail County may be poised to meet broadband speed goals for 2022 but not for 2026. They have received several state broadband grants; one issue may be that the networks built with those grants didn't necessarily get households to the 2026 speeds. The good news is that the community recognizes the need, but they need to act on it to make a difference.

Percentage of Served Population by Speed and Date			
	2019	2018	2017
100/20 (2026 goal)	35.34	2.36	1.75
25/3 (2022 goal)	92.93	89.56	55.43

Otter Tail has benefited from several state broadband grants:

- 2017 - Arvig - Pelican Rapids rural non-ACAM – GRANT \$633,642**
Serving 546 unserved households and 60 unserved businesses in the Pelican Rapids rural area of Otter Tail County with service levels to at least 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload.
- 2017 - Otter Tail Telcom LLC - Red Oak Drive – GRANT \$173,683**
Serving 7 unserved households and 2 unserved businesses, and 29 underserved households and 2 underserved businesses north of the city of Fergus Falls in Otter Tail County with service levels to 25/3 Mbps.
- 2017 - WCTA (West Central Telephone Association) - Wadena Rural Phase III – GRANT \$874,581**
Serving 189 unserved households and 13 unserved businesses within Compton Township in Otter Tail County as well as portions of Wadena Township in Wadena County and in Stowe Prairie Township in Todd County with service levels to 1 Gbps.
- 2016 - OTTER TAIL TELCOM BATTLE LAKE - GRANT: \$ 238,170**
Serving 62 unserved households in the Clitherall and Battle Lake areas in Otter Tail County with service of at least 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps.



- **2016 - OTTER TAIL TELCOM FERGUS FALLS AREA - GRANT: \$ 279,271**
Serving 79 unserved households near Elizabeth, MN, and in rural Fergus Falls in Ottertail County, MN with services at least 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload.
- **2016 - WCTA WADENA RURAL NORTH -- GRANT: \$718,850**
Serving 174 unserved households, 13 unserved businesses, and 2 community anchor institutions in Otter Tail County with service levels to 1 Gigabit.
- **2015 - Otter Tail Telcom Fergus Falls 864 - Hwy 59**
Grant award: \$295,432
Serving 63 locations, including 56 households and 7 businesses and one cell tower in the vicinity of Fergus Falls near Hwy 59.
- **2015 - Otter Tail Telcom Hwy 59/94 PRT to POM-- Grant award: \$164,207**
Serving 21 households and multiple community institutions. Areas north and south of Elizabeth, MN along Hwy 59 are included.
- **2014 - Otter Tail Telcom, Stuart Lake**
Award: \$105,364. Total project cost: \$210,729. Impact: service to 47 unserved locations near Stuart Lake, just north of State Highway 210 and east of Fergus Falls.
- **2014 - Otter Tail Telcom, 245th**
Award: \$108,553. Total project cost: \$217,105. Impact: service to 39 unserved locations.

Last year, Otter Tail County [ranked dead last¹](#) for 100/20 Mbps broadband access; they are in much better shape for access to 25/3 Mbps – but that won't build to the future. At the end of 2018, with support from the Blandin Foundation, they looked [at their situation and²](#) have been working to make it better. In early 2019, Otter Tail County officials [spoke to Minnesota legislators³](#) about the need for better broadband...

The Association of Minnesota Counties Legislative Conference was a successful event for Otter Tail County. Otter Tail County officials had the opportunity to meet with Representative Nornes, Representative Green, Representative Franson, Senator Ingebrigtsen, DNR Commissioner Strommen, and Representative Mary Murphy, Minnesota House Bonding Chair," said Rick West, Otter Tail County Public Works Director. "These meetings provided us the ability to engage in constructive one to one conversation on legislative priorities that are important to Minnesota counties and more specifically important to Otter Tail County during this legislative session such as broadband, multi-modal transportation funding, mental health initiatives among others."

Otter Tail County could benefit from future grants. In 2019, Meeker Coop and Otter Tail Telecom applied to upgrade service in Otter Tail. (That doesn't mean they will get the grant; they have only applied.)

Checklist:

- 100/20 ranking: 82
- 25/3 ranking: 25

¹ <https://blandinonbroadband.org/2018/10/23/otter-tail-county-broadband-profile-current-ranking-87/>

² <https://blandinonbroadband.org/2018/10/27/otter-tail-county-assesses-their-broadband-future/>

³ <https://blandinonbroadband.org/2019/02/26/otter-tail-county-officials-talk-to-legislators-about-broadband-and-other-priorities/>

- Has worked with Blandin: yes
- Has received a MN Broadband grant: yes
- Household density: 10.8
- Number of providers: 11

Details:

- Find more articles on broadband in Otter Tail County (<http://tinyurl.com/jkqhb9h>)
- Districts: CD 7
Senate: 02, 08
House: 02B, 08A, 08B
- [Find your reps⁴](#)

Analysis: Code Red

- Red (yikes)
- Yellow (warning)
- Green (good shape)

⁴ <https://www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/>

