2019 Annual Minnesota Broadband Profiles | Renville County

Rank: 62 (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.

Renville County: data and community action

Despite a region-wide focus on broadband, Renville is unlikely to meet either the 2022 or 2026 Minnesota speed goals. But the region-wide focus on broadband access and adoption will keep the vision alive.

Percentage of Served Population by Speed and Date			
	2019	**2018**	**2017**
100/20 (2026 goal)	59.06	51.78	50.43
25/3 (2022 goal)	61.90	55.06	53.10

Renville County has benefited from three state grants:

- **2016 - RENVILLE COUNTY HBC & RS FIBER - GRANT: $807,966**
  Serving 193 unserved households, 99 unserved businesses, and 3 community anchor institutions in portions of Preston Lake, Boon Lake, Brookfield, Osecola, Kingman, Winfield, Crooks, Erickson, Sacred Heart (North), Emmet, Flora, Henryville, Norfolk, Birch Cooley, Camp, and Cairo Townships in Renville County with service to 1 Gigabit.
- **2015 - MVTV Wireless Middle Mile -- Grant award: $808,080**
  This project is a Middle Mile broadband infrastructure buildout to upgrade backhaul capacity between site locations within 20 southwestern Minnesota counties: Blue Earth, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Lac Qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Meeker, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Pipestone, Rock, Redwood, Renville, Sibley Swift, Watonwan, and Yellow Medicine.
- **2014 - R-S Fiber Cooperative, FTTH Project**
  Award: $1 million. Total project cost: $3.32 million. Impact: Service to 62 unserved and 536 underserved locations in Sibley and Renville counties. The project is part of a larger cooperative project estimated at $38.46 million that will upgrade broadband services to several thousand locations in the region.

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Renville County (along with Sibley) is a community that has had a lot of ups and downs[1] in their broadband story. Ten years ago, residents were getting fed up with poor connectivity. To address the issue a joint Powers Board was formed that ultimately included all seven cities in Sibley county as well as the city of Fairfax in Renville County.

In 2010, Blandin Foundation awarded the group a feasibility study grant, and the JPB used the study results to educate the public about the need and opportunity for building a world-class network, and to seek financing.

In the fall of 2012, concerned about the project's plan for how to structure the project's debt service reserve fund, the Sibley Board of Commissioners, in a 3-2 vote, passed a resolution to withdraw from the JPB.

Undaunted, immediately following this vote, a group of farmers walked across the street and in an impromptu meeting, vowed to continue the effort by "going back to their roots" as one of them said, and form a coop.

RS Fiber[2] Coop hired Hiawatha Broadband Corporation (HBC) to build and operate the gigabit fiber-to-the-premise (FTTP) network when the project was launched, and in June of this year, RS Fiber announced the formation of a long-term operating relationship with HBC.

Renville County could benefit from future grants. In 2019, Minnesota Valley Tel. Co. (MVTC) and Midco applied to upgrade service in Renville. (That doesn't mean they will get the grant; they have only applied.)

Checklist:

- 100/20 ranking: 62
- 25/3 ranking: 81
- Has worked with Blandin: yes
- Has received a MN Broadband grant: yes
- Household density: 6.6
- Number of providers: 14

Details:

- RS Fiber has worked with the Blandin Foundation
- Find more articles on broadband in Renville County (http://tinyurl.com/hfazdvf)
- Districts: CD 7
  Senate: 16, 17
  House: 16B, 17A
- Find your reps[3]

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[1] https://ilsr.org/report-mn-rural-fiber/
[2] https://blandinonbroadband.org/2016/09/27/blandin-broadband-community-tour-rs-fiber-build-innovation-through-schools-training-and-center/
[3] https://www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/

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Analysis: Code Red

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

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