2019 Annual Minnesota Broadband Profiles | St. Louis County

Rank: 43 (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.

St. Louis County: data and community action

St. Louis County has seen great progress toward reaching the Minnesota broadband goals for 2022 and 2026 but they will need to make a concerted effort to reach them.

Percentage of Served Population by Speed and Date			
	2019	**2018**	**2017**
100/20 (2026 goal)	78.20	41.20	38.78
25/3 (2022 goal)	86.23	83.47	82.33

In 2010, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding brought fiber to St Louis County's neighbor Cook County. And ARRA brought middle mile coverage to the Northeast Service Cooperative (NESC) which brings middle mile service to parts of St. Louis County. But large swaths of the county remain unserved and underserved.

St Louis County has benefited from several grants that have helped bring last mile to the NESC middle mile:

- **2017 - CenturyLink - Fredenberg Township FTTH Project – GRANT $1,809,312**
  Serving 835 unserved households and 17 unserved businesses with fiber-to-the-home in Fredenberg Township near Duluth in St. Louis County with service levels to 1 Gbps.
- **2017 - Paul Bunyan Communications - North Central Fiber – GRANT $802,620**
  Serving 657 unserved households, 29 unserved businesses, and 5 unserved community institutions, and 130 underserved households, 13 underserved businesses, and 1 underserved community institution near the communities of Park Rapids, Bigfork, and Side Lake, MN, to locations in St. Louis, Itasca, and Hubbard Counties with Gigabit service.
- **2017 - MEDIACOM FAYAL TOWNSHIP – GRANT: $263,345**
  Serving 167 unserved households, 3 unserved businesses, and 92 underserved households in Fayal Township, south of Eveleth in St. Louis with service levels to 100 Mbps download by 20 Mbps up.

- **2014 - Mediacom, Pintar Road**
  Award: $137,848. Total project cost: $275,697. Impact: Service to 122 unserved homes and businesses on the southwest edge of the city limits of Hibbing.
- **2014 - Northeast Service Cooperative – Frontier Communications Corp., Border to Border Phase I**
  Award: $1.96 million. Total project cost: $4.35 million. Impact: Service to 877 homes and businesses in St. Louis County, including areas in and around Crane Lake, Alborn, Meadowlands, Brookston, Forbes, Kelsey, Soudan, Kabetogama, Ely and Tower.

St Louis continues to work on broadband. They've had some issues with <u>Frontier Communications</u>[1]. They've had updates on various projects from <u>CenturyLink</u>[2] and <u>Paul Bunyan Telephone Company</u>[3]. In June they hosted a county-wide broadband summit. They heard from <u>farmers who benefit</u>[4] from fiber and <u>local business who needs</u>[5] it and armed with stories of <u>Blandin Foundation supported</u>[6] projects the area, they spoke about the need for county intervention to make broadband happen.

St Louis County could benefit from future grants. In 2019, CenturyLink and Cooperative Light and Power (CLP) applied to upgrade service in St Louis. (That doesn't mean they will get the grant; they have only applied.)

Checklist:

- 100/20 ranking: 38 (up from 82)
- 25/3 ranking: 43
- Has worked with Blandin: yes
- Has received a MN Broadband grant: yes
- Household density: 12.4
- Number of providers: 19

Details:

- Find more articles on broadband in St Louis County (<u>http://tinyurl.com/jnm9jah</u>)
- Districts: CD 8
  Senate: 03, 06, 07, 11
  House: 03A, 03B, 06A, 06B, 07A, 07B, 11A
- <u>Find your reps</u>[7]

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[1] <u>https://blandinonbroadband.org/2017/11/27/st-louis-county-experiencing-problems-with-frontier-communications/</u>
[2] <u>https://blandinonbroadband.org/2017/12/03/more-on-mn-broadband-grant-in-st-louis-county/</u>
[3] <u>https://blandinonbroadband.org/2019/04/22/better-broadband-comes-to-side-lake-st-louis-county/</u>
[4] <u>https://blandinonbroadband.org/2019/06/24/fiber-to-the-farm-means-food-to-the-people-in-st-louis-county/</u>
[5] <u>https://blandinonbroadband.org/2019/06/26/i-need-better-internet-period-says-local-business-in-st-louis-county-mn/</u>
[6] <u>https://blandinonbroadband.org/2019/06/26/st-louis-county-broadband-meeting-make-partners-help-providers-work-with-you-think-feasibility-studies/</u>
[7] <u>https://www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/</u>

Analysis: Code Red

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