Technology Initiatives in Itasca County
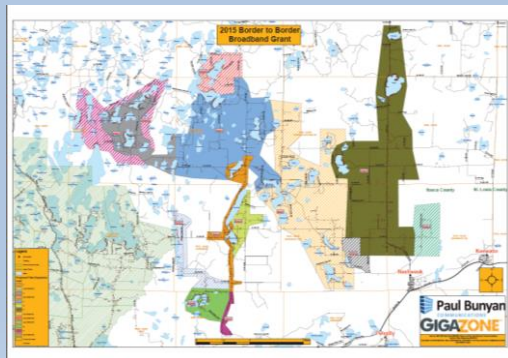

Mark Zimmerman, President
Itasca Economic Development Corporation (IEDC)

Itasca Area BBC Steering Committee

Sustainable Community Initiatives
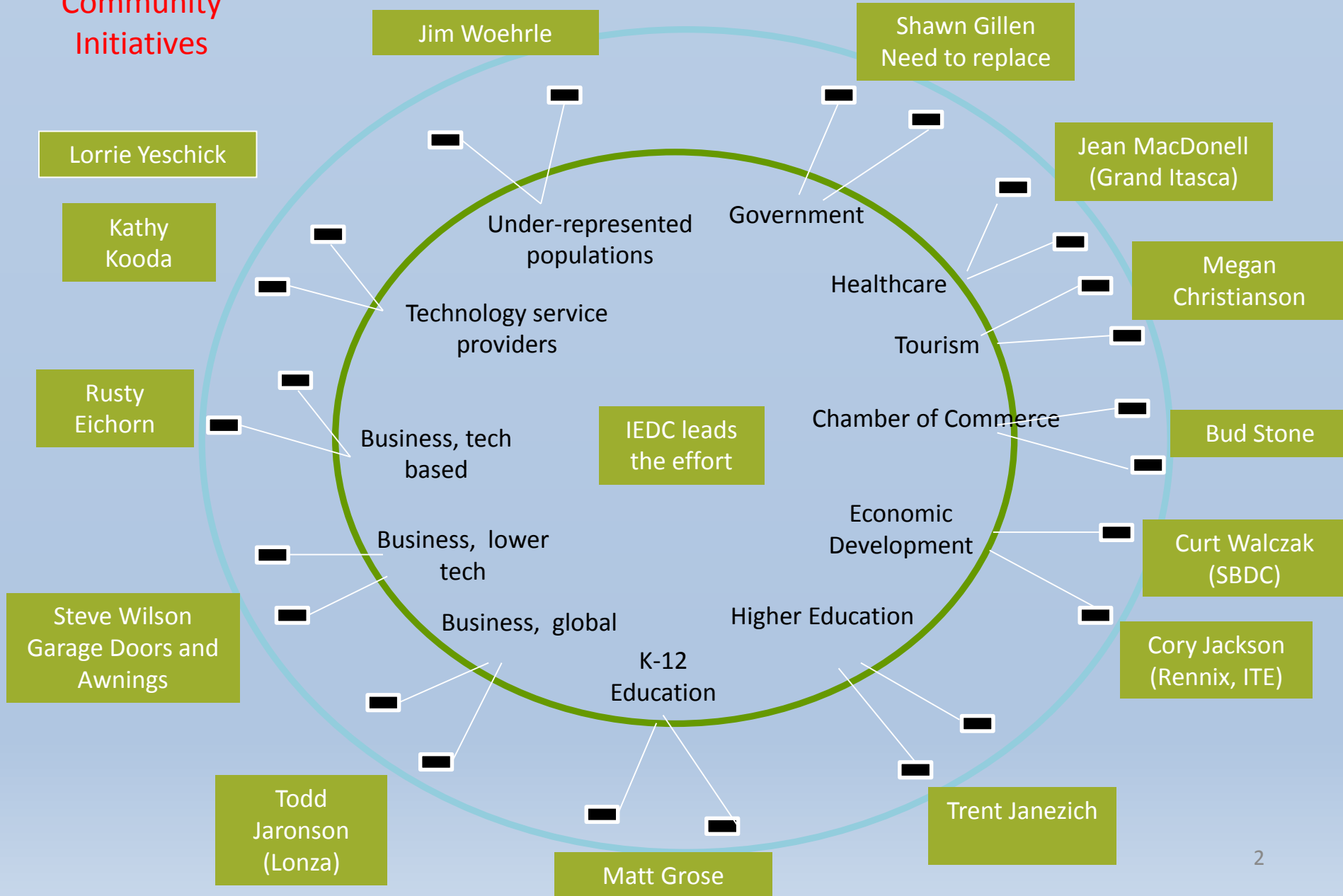
Community Meeting
March, 2013

Purpose

Leverage key partners and resources within our community: plan, organize and execute multiple sustainable projects focused on the "availability" and "use" of technology that result in business growth, economic vitality, and improved quality of life.

Itasca County, area of focus
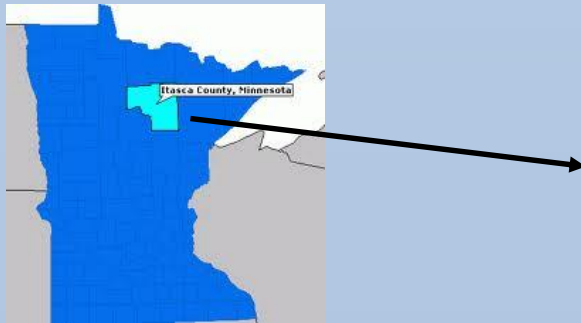
- Population: >45,000
- # Households: >18,000
- Area: 2,928 Square miles
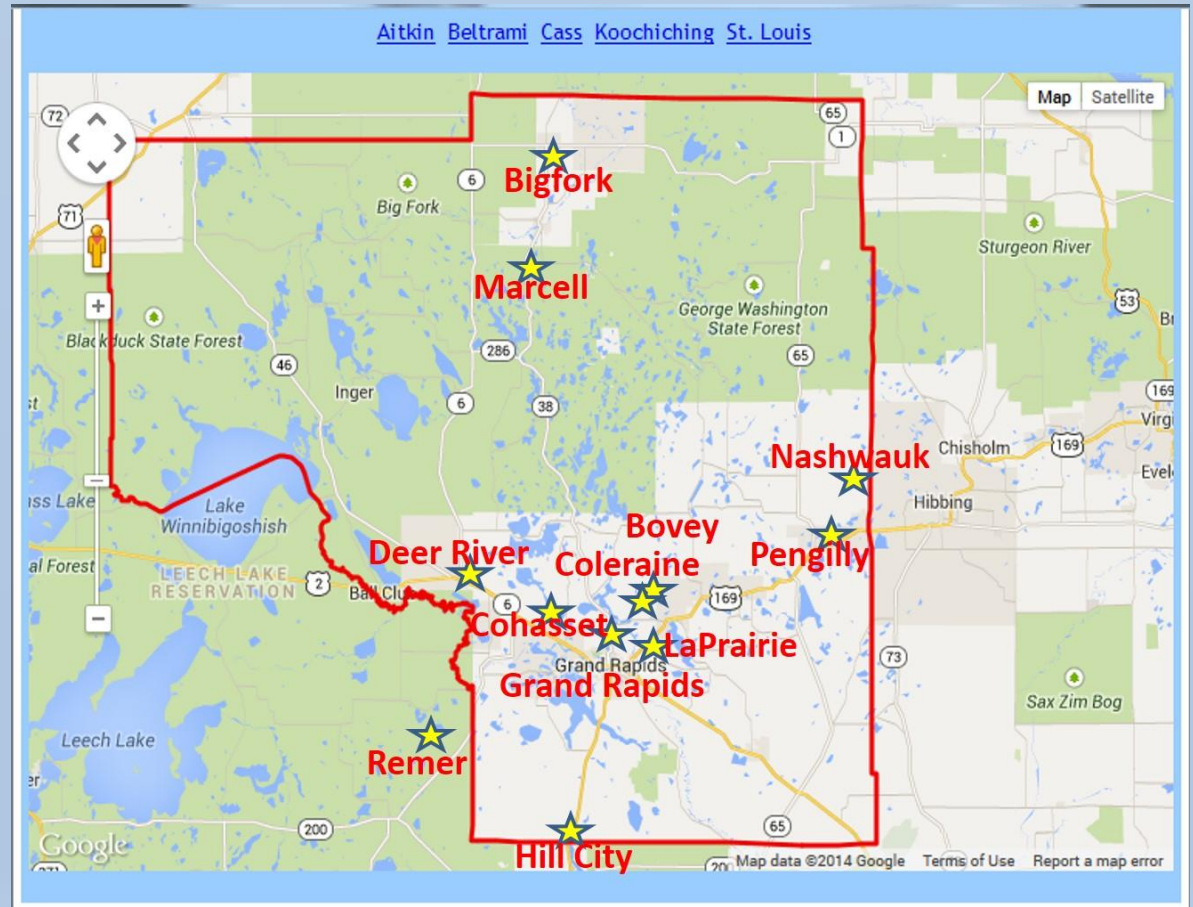
Goals for our Community

Increase social media knowledge and use

Support sustainable & measureable projects

Make technology more mainstream for BUSINESSES in Itasca County

Leverage or create partnerships to maximize results

Improve web presence and online marketing

And Have Fun!

Itasca Area Blandin Broadband Community
Integrated strategies to improve the use of Broadband

Expanding the USE of broadband technology for Itasca County business

Social Media Breakfasts

(Discover Social Media)

Business Technology Assessments & Loan Program (transform your web presence)

I.T. Professionals Network

(connecting I.T. resources)

Community Portal

(Community engagement)

Social Media training (improve knowledge and use)

Brief history of Itasca Area BBC events

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014

MIRC Project | **MIRC close-out**
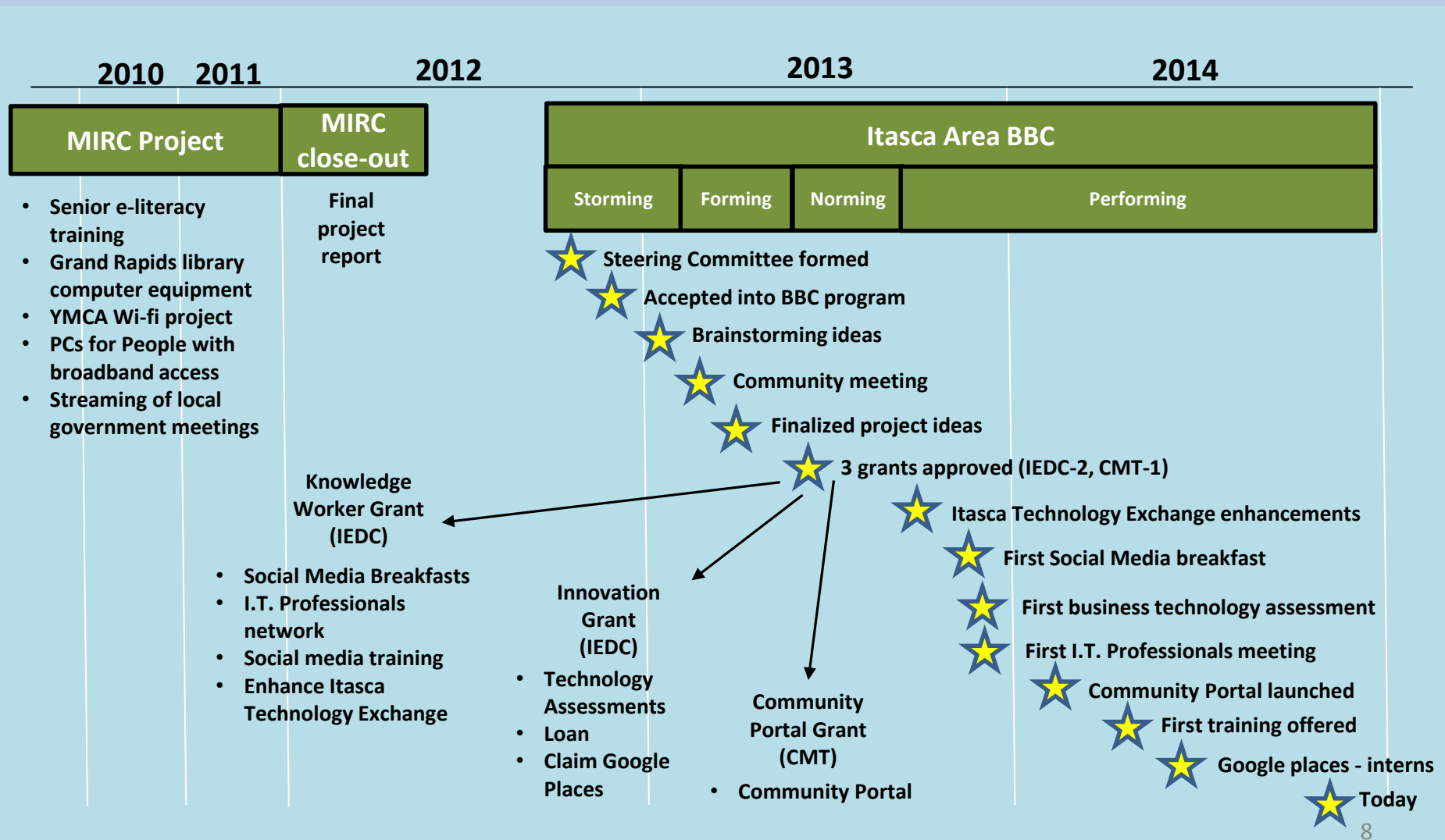
Itasca Area BBC

Storming	Forming	Norming	Performing

- Senior e-literacy training
- Grand Rapids library computer equipment
- YMCA Wi-fi project
- PCs for People with broadband access
- Streaming of local government meetings

Final project report

⭐ Steering Committee formed

⭐ Accepted into BBC program

⭐ Brainstorming ideas

⭐ Community meeting

⭐ Finalized project ideas

⭐ 3 grants approved (IEDC-2, CMT-1)

⭐ Itasca Technology Exchange enhancements

⭐ First Social Media breakfast

⭐ First business technology assessment

⭐ First I.T. Professionals meeting

⭐ Community Portal launched

⭐ First training offered

⭐ Google places - interns

⭐ Today

Knowledge Worker Grant (IEDC)

- Social Media Breakfasts
- I.T. Professionals network
- Social media training
- Enhance Itasca Technology Exchange

Innovation Grant (IEDC)

- Technology Assessments
- Loan
- Claim Google Places

Community Portal Grant (CMT)

- Community Portal

8

Social Media Breakfasts for businesses

Same day every month

- Experienced speakers

- Interactive and engaging – generate ideas on use of social media

- Attendance ranging from 20-45 per meeting, even when it's 30 below!

Social Media
Breakfast
Itasca Area

Social Media Training for businesses

Partnered with web / social media company to create classes -

We offered >12 classes including:

- Facebook Basics for Business

- Marketing with Twitter

- Understanding Google Analytics

- Advanced Facebook

- Social Media Strategy
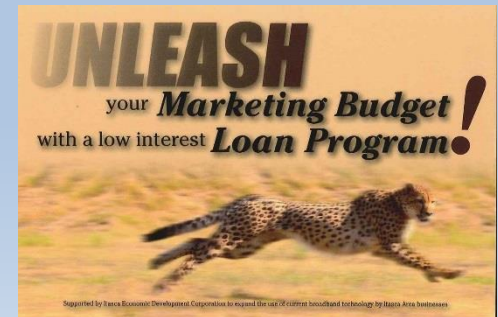
- Blogging for Business

- Making Money Online

Provided eBook, video and worksheet resources

Helped
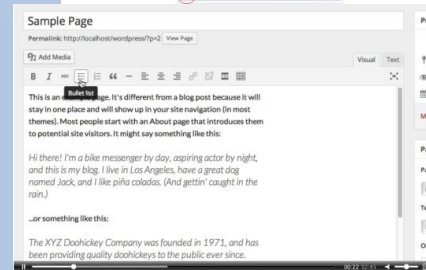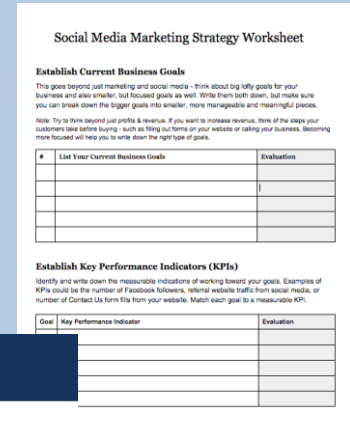
Technology Assessments

Goal: Improve the use of broadband technology in the business community

Business Technology Assessments
What businesses are saying…

"We have a more organized approach to improve our online and social media marketing."

"Nice to have an objective look at our strategies and tools. It's hard to evaluate something effectively when you look at it every day."

"Fabulous input – very helpful. They understand the small business challenges of implementing effective Social Media advertising."

"Through this process, I was encouraged to think about my logo and how it might be limiting my growth."

Nice to have hands-on help for social media "crisis management." If we have a glitch, it's nice to know you're there.

I.T. Professionals Network

PURPOSE:

To provide an organized resource and structure for IT professionals in Itasca County for

- Networking

- Education

- Training

- Knowledge Sharing

- Community Benefit

Google Places – Student Interns

Lead organizations

Itasca Economic Development Corporation

Melissa Flatley – Intern, ICC

Max Chamberlain – Intern, UMD

Outcomes from Technology Initiatives 2013 - 2014

Business technology initiatives - includes Blandin Broadband Community (BBC)				
Item	**Goal**	**Actual**	**% of Goal**	**Comments**
Outcome - Overall BBC program success rate	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Outcome - BBC Budget	$75,000	$ 75,000	100%	
Outcome - Social media breakfasts completed	15	13	87%	Includes November
Outcome - Business technology assessments completed	36	31	86%	Loans made to businesses: 1
a.) Businesses receiving $600 grant	N/A	12	N/A	
Outcome - Business representatives trained	120	120	100%	29 businesses, multiple classes, multiple people from the businesses; includes November
Outcome - Business claiming or enhancing their Google Places	100	15	15%	122 businesses visited; 15 assisted; many more helped to be documented in October
Outcome - I.T. Professional Network meetings	6	4	67%	One scheduled for December 2014/cancelled
Outcome - Programs being managed by community stakeholders	Yes	Yes	Yes	IEDC still helps organize
Outcome - 2015 / 2016 grant applied for and accepted	Yes	Yes	Yes	Towards the end of 2014
Impact - Increase the culture of use and business knowledge for web marketing and social media technologies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Incrementally

2015 – 2016 BBC activites

- IEDC was an Alumni BBC participant
- Continued initiatives forward
  - Business technology assessments
  - Social Media Breakfasts
  - Training
  - I.T. Professionals
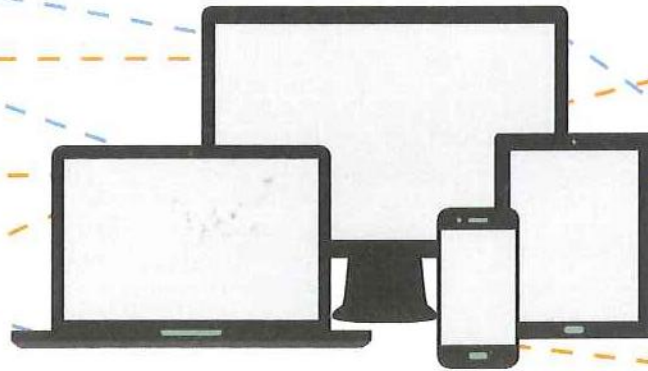- Performed initiative evaluations and made some changes

2013 – 2016 Technology Initiatives

- **Social Media Breakfasts** – 29 completed plus the first Tactical summit for businesses
- **Business Technology assessments** – 40 businesses assisted
- **Social media training** – 247 business representatives trained
- **I.T. Professionals Network** – 8 meetings and networking events

Tactical social media summit for Businesses

"TACTICAL SOCIAL MEDIA SUMMIT FOR BUSINESS"

Thursday, September 29th , 10:00 – 2:00 | Registration begins at 9:30
Timberlake Lodge, 144 SE 17th St, Grand Rapids
Lunch is provided | Cost is $15 (plus $1.42 registration fee)

IEDC
helping create quality jobs

AIMCLEAR® MARKETING AGENCY

artunlimited
brings life to marketing

Register and pay on Eventbrite
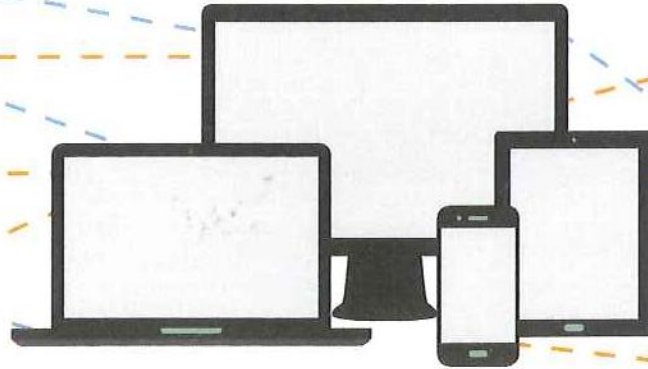http://bit.ly/tacticalsocialmediasummit

Lessons Learned

- Find a technology champion to help organize and lead overall set of initiatives
- It takes a village – proactive partnerships (public and private) is key!
- Each initiative had a leadership team to help shape and make these sustainable initiatives
- Work with your ISPs – they want to expand too
- This was not expensive to accomplish – overhead costs were manageable

19

Tactical social media summit for Businesses

Connect Itasca Project

Mission:

- To provide broadband access to all Itasca County residents and businesses at speeds meeting or exceeding Minnesota's state broadband goals of 10–20 Mbps download and 5-10 Mbps upload.

Long term goals:

- Help Internet Service Providers (ISPs) deliver high speed internet to Itasca County through one at a time incremental expansion projects
- Leverage partnership between Itasca County, Blandin Foundation, and IEDC
- Show higher demand areas in Itasca County to help the ISPs see the potential
- Involve the residents and business community through a champions network

Connect Itasca / Paul Bunyan Project - 2015

- IEDC's involvement
  - Lead project along with Itasca County and the Blandin Foundation
  - Assisted in collecting 1,000 surveys (showing demand)
  - Spearheaded ISP discussions and interest for expansion
  - Lead grant response along with Paul Bunyan Communications (ISP)
  - Helped generate 36 letters of support (local businesses, 3 school districts, area hospitals, local legislators, relevant townships and residents)
  - Lead constituent outreach
- Value to Itasca County (area is currently unserved or under-served)
  - Provides **Gigabit fiber service** to each location
  - Connects at least **1,255 locations** including 1,200 homes, 50 businesses, and at least five community institutions. Could be upwards of 1,800 locations.
  - Connects approximately **3,500 people (almost 10% of Itasca County)**
  - Connects approximately **500 K-12 students** (3 school districts)
  - Connects **rural clinic for potential expanded** use
  - Helps with **high level of distress in the area**
  - All of the work will be completed by June, 2017

Connect Itasca / Paul Bunyan Project
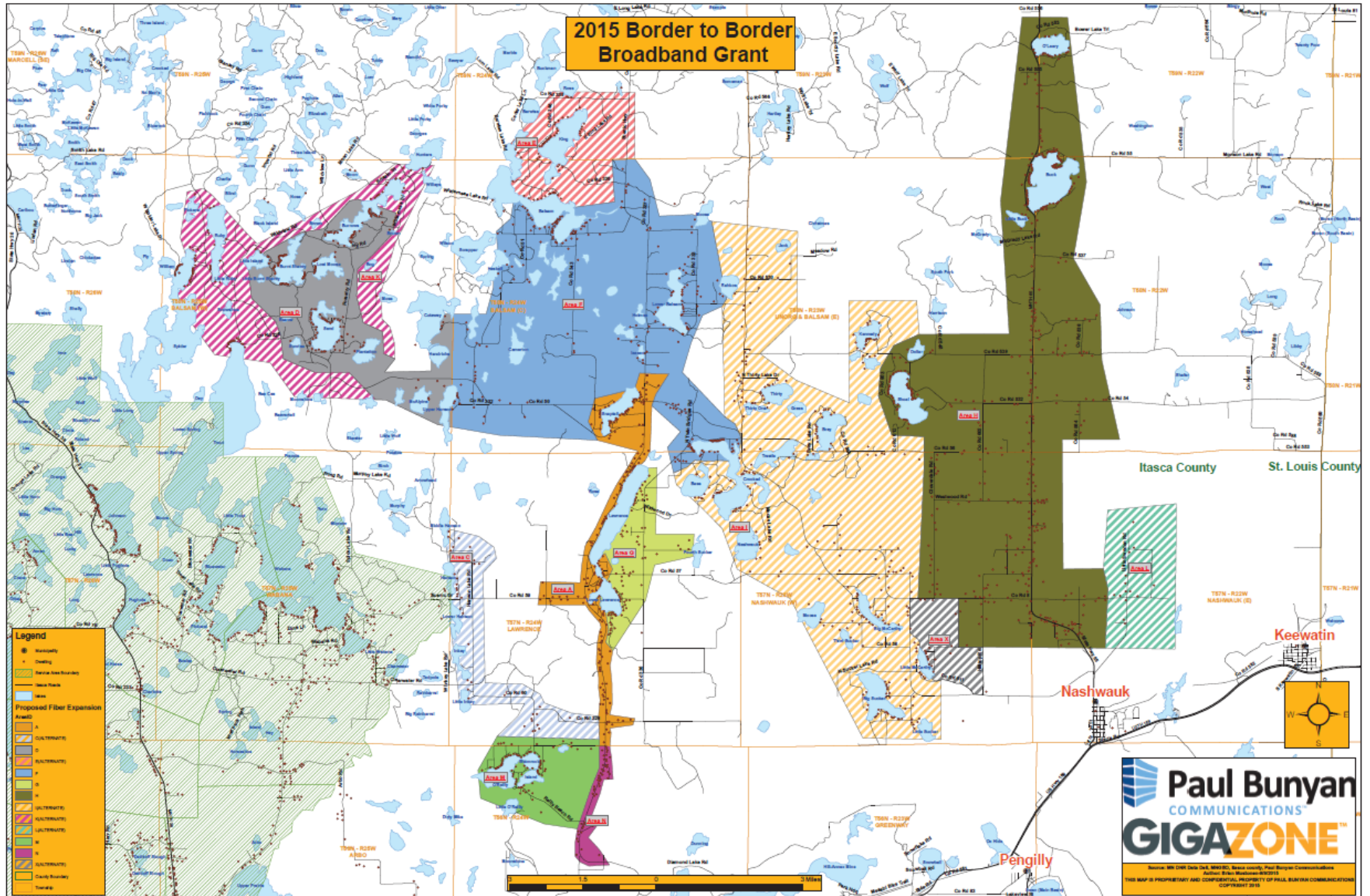
Broadband Expansion in Itasca County

- Two grant years
  - Paul Bunyan projects ($8.2M investment in Itasca County, approximately 2,100 locations representing at least 6,000 people)
  - Mediacom project ($773,000 investment in Itasca County, approximately 260 locations representing at least 900 people)
  - Most locations are currently unserved, a few are underserved
- Itasca County has shown great leadership and support – thank you
- Ongoing broadband expansion
  - Paul Bunyan has numerous Itasca County expansion plans for 2017 due to the leadership of the county and locations already committed to
  - Paul Bunyan with assistance from IEDC will be submitting a DEED broadband request for 2017
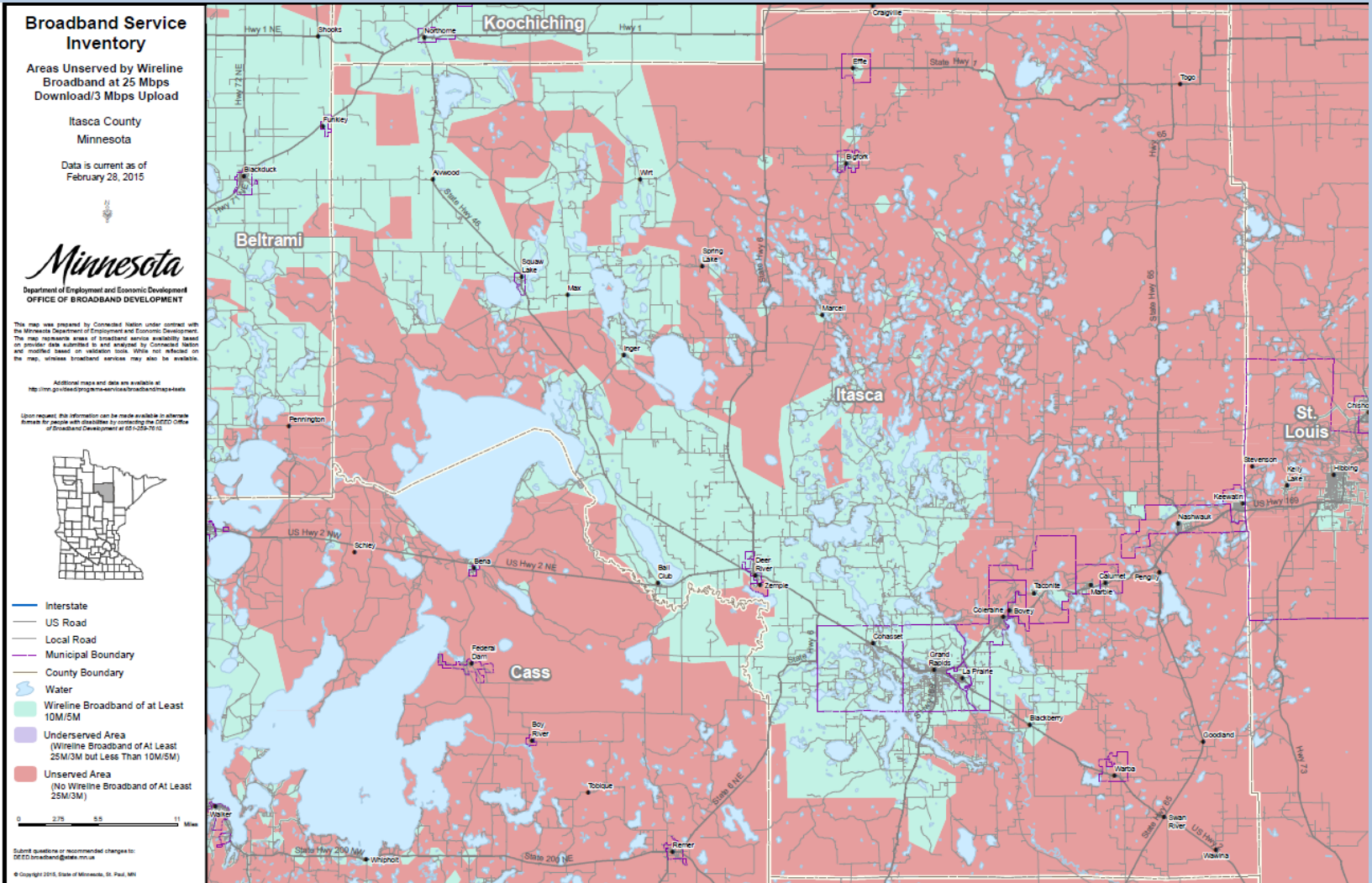 - IEDC to continue to lead with these efforts

IEDC
Itasca Economic Development Corporation
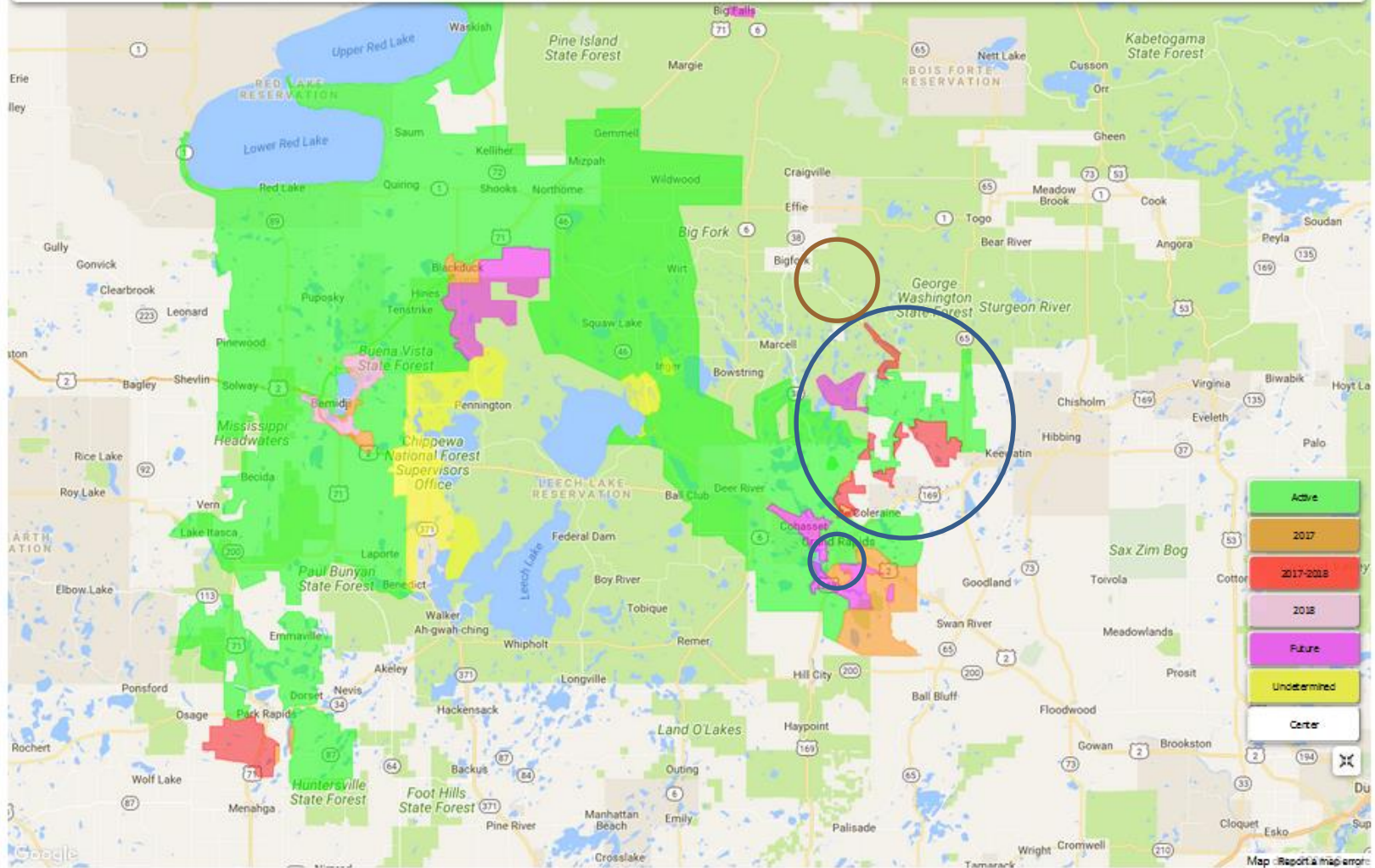
Itasca County unserved/underserved areas - 2015

Estimate of fixed non-mobile broadband
- \> 10 Mbps download / 5 Mbps upload: 69.8%
- Rural Minnesota average: 75%

Itasca County unserved/underserved areas

It takes a village – thank you!

tagxedo.com