



For immediate release

Nancy Hoffman named to Blandin Foundation Broadband Strategy Board

Joins Initiative to help inspire rural technology connectivity

Grand Rapids, Minn. (July 7, 2008) – Nancy Hoffman, Economic Development Director, Benton County, has been named to Blandin Foundation’s Broadband Initiative Strategy Board.

“I am honored to be appointed to this board,” Hoffman says. “The Broadband Initiative has been a major factor in upgrading the competitive edge for several rural communities in our state—including ours.

“By sharing my local experiences, I’ll be able to pay the board’s past good work forward and help other communities take advantage of the opportunities that broadband access offers.”

The Broadband Strategy Board was formed in 2003. With 17 members, representing public and private sectors, it charts the strategic direction and oversees progress of the Blandin Foundation’s Broadband Initiative.

“We have been successful because of the quality of the professionals who have agreed to serve on this Strategy Board,” says Bernadine Joselyn, director of Public Policy and Engagement for the Blandin Foundation. “With the pragmatism, experience and successes that Nancy brings to the board, we are well positioned to help rural communities establish the local leadership needed to create high-speed communication network accessibility that works for their schools, businesses, healthcare institutions, government offices and homes.”

Joselyn emphasizes that communities without broadband accessibility are economically sidelined. Those rural communities that invest in ultra high-speed communication networks, however, have the tools they need to attract and expand businesses, add jobs, strengthen health care capabilities, improve educational efficacy and overall increase the quality of life.

The Blandin Broadband Initiative vision, Joselyn says is “that to ensure a high quality of life and a globally competitive future for its citizens, business and communities, Minnesota is committed to making the necessary investment to become a world leader in the universal deployment and use of ultra high-speed next generation broadband.”

In addition to her responsibilities as Economic Development Director for Benton County, Hoffman acted as program coordinator for the ambitious Benton County “Get Broadband” program, called “Get Connected”, 2006-2007 (www.co.benton.mn.us), and is a board member of the Economic Development Association of Minnesota.

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Blandin Foundation

Blandin Foundation, Minnesota’s largest rural-based private foundation, is located in Grand Rapids, Minn. Its mission is to strengthen rural Minnesota communities, especially the Grand Rapids area, through grants, leadership development programs and public policy initiatives.

<http://www.blandinfoundation.org>