



Champion Report Template

Theme Area: Connectivity

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What success have you had in moving your theme goals forward over the past year?	
Goal #1	Connectivity Issue Goal Connectivity: The number of households in the region served by high-speed internet-services rises from the current level of 40% to 95% served. The (region/rural areas) community is willing to invest to increase coverage. This will include both public and private investment in service.
	Actions Taken on Our Recommendations
1 2 5	Rural Broadband Policy. Virtual Highway White Paper is helping to inform state and national public policy regarding barriers to expansion of broadband infrastructure in rural places. Senator Paul Galzelka has forwarded a message to his colleagues to focus on 2 priority issues: a) access to the armer towers and b) reimbursement for telehealth. http://www.resilientregion.org/cms/files/Presenting_the_Virtual_Highway_Project_September_13_2013_new_logo.pdf
3C 4A	Anchor Tenant Broadband Assessment was distributed. As of December 2, 2013, there were 30 organizations who responded: 17 schools, 2 medical centers, 8 cities and 3 counties. This needs assessment used items from the Minnesota Connect survey. They have asked for our database.
1,2,5	Innovative Public/Private Partnerships. WTCA, CTC, Todd County Broadband Task Force, and the Leech Lake Telecommunications are beginning to work together to share information and to pursue strategies to reach the last mile in the five-county area. One example may be found at http://mcrecord.com/2013/12/30/fiber-optics-is-coming-to-little-falls/
1 3A	WTCA was recognized as a Smart Rural Community , providing opportunities to promote our region to attract high-tech companies. They will be launching pilot projects to demonstrate the value of access to fiber. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5oHPpr-tHU8&feature=youtu.be
4A 2 5	Grants funded by Blandin Foundation: PC for People program which collects donated computers, refurbishes them with volunteers and distributes them to low income families without. R5DC is transitioning this program to The Shop in Brainerd who administrate the program. Blandin Foundation Lightspeed Grant -- Also a program to put technology into 11 fire departments for shared training sessions that allows the fire fighters to share the cost of instructors and stay in their own communities.

What are you excited about around your theme for the coming year?	
Goal # 1	Seeking \$\$ now for tele-health, tele-work and online learning improved access, addressing policy issues (we have been invited to meet with new statewide broadband director, Danna MacKenzie), identifying demonstration projects to illustrate the power of fiber, and supporting The Shop as it takes over the PC for People program.

Connectivity

Connectivity Issue

Connectivity: Extending high-speed internet access to the entire region increases telecommuting opportunities, provides greater access to customers and markets for businesses, and allows all residents access to civic resources and commerce.

Connectivity Issue Goal

Connectivity: The number of households in the region served by high-speed internet-services rises from the current level of 40% to 95% served. The (region/rural areas) community is willing to invest to increase coverage. This will include both public and private investment in service.

Recommendation 1

Access across the region: Ensure all households in the region have high-speed internet access which meets common state standards.

Action Step 1A

Access: Promote, support and develop high-speed internet access throughout region for telecommuting, educational benefits, and supporting business activity.

Recommendation 2

Efficiency: Local units of governments will work across political boundaries to share equipment costs/facilities for more efficient delivery of high-speed internet.

Action Step 2A

Efficiency in installation: Lay conduit for fiber optics when upgrading sewer and water or digging trench.

Recommendation 3

Access for entrepreneurs: Provide access to technology needs and support to retain businesses and encourage potential entrepreneurs

Action Step 3A

Economic development: Determine the compatibility and interface between communications, smart grid technologies, and internet systems. Develop a recruiting initiative encouraging technology-oriented companies to explore opportunities offered in non-urban spaces.

Action Step 3B

Telecommuting: Create a business plan that facilitates legitimate telecommuting jobs and promotes high-speed internet connection in the region. Upgrade and expand high-speed internet infrastructure in housing so residents may work from home.

Action Step 3C

Map of access sites: Develop map or list of accessible sites within region to conduct web-type meetings, free Wi-Fi etc.

Recommendation 4

Access for children: All school aged children will have access to a computer with high-speed internet capabilities.

Action Step 4A

Support sites: Make available sites providing educational, internet, support, financial resources, etc.

Recommendation 5

Funding: Identify and pursue state, federal, and philanthropic grants to fund connectivity recommendations.