

## **13Q3\_Supplemental Answers\_Minnesota**

**Connected Nation, Inc.**

**Grant Number 27-50-M09043**

**Reporting Period End Date 09-30-13**

### **14 a\_Project Attachment\_Data Collection**

#### **2. Describe any additional project milestones that have been accomplished over this reporting period (Exp: updates to state broadband maps and websites, map outreach activities).**

The semi-annual update submission was presented to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) under the State Broadband Initiative (SBI) grant program. The update included datasets for 97.56% of the Minnesota provider community. There were 116 participating providers and 4 additional non-participating providers whose estimated coverage areas have been submitted. Of the 116 participating providers, 41 supplied an update to their network or coverage area(s), while 67 have reported no change. The remaining 8 represent providers who previously supplied data but were non-responsive in the current update effort; therefore, their previous dataset was submitted.

Connect Minnesota continues to maintain the interactive mapping web application, called My ConnectView. The application is housed in a highly available, monitored, and managed environment. My ConnectView is publicly available on the program website (<http://www.connectmn.org/interactive-map>). There were a total of 171 visits to the interactive map between July 1, 2013 and September 30, 2013.

During this quarter, the project received a total of two broadband inquiries. Additional information received through e-mail from consumers that can also be used for verification purposes totaled five for the quarter. Users can also request non-confidential mapping data produced for the SBI program; three such data requests were received between July 1, 2013 and September 30, 2013.

For this reporting period, 196 field verification tests were conducted. From program initiation through this reporting period, field validation testing has been completed against 105 companies (out of a universe of 123 viable providers) totaling 85.37 percent within the state of Minnesota.

Based on the release of information by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) related to the Connect America Fund (CAF), a statewide map was developed to visualize proposed areas for subsidized build-out under CAF Phase I, 2013. This map is available online at [www.connectednation.org/fcc-maps](http://www.connectednation.org/fcc-maps).

#### **4. Provide any other information or statistics that you think would be useful to NTIA as it assesses your broadband data collection, validation, and publication activities.**

Engineering and Technical Services (ETS) staff has two main objectives in validating a provider's broadband service: 1) confirm the provider's presence in the target testing area, and 2) confirm that the provider's Internet service meets or exceeds the required minimum broadband speed.

Over the past three years, attempts to use any of our tailored validation techniques for satellite validation proved futile as the basic tools for validating other platforms do not exist for satellite. For example, residential satellite equipment for broadband is difficult to distinguish from satellite video gear as viewed from the street. Further, a satellite installer can serve several counties, and may not have a retail presence. As a result, confirming the presence of a specific satellite provider in any targeted community has been challenging. In trying to confirm broadband speeds, historically slow speeds and high latency on the satellite services have also prevented this level of validation.

The ETS team recently devised an approach to confirm both presence and speed by deepening the desk-top research in advance of field validation, accessing controlled use of satellite testing equipment, and leveraging Connected Nation's rich database of broadband inquiries. This new approach will commence next quarter and we hope to report successes from the effort.

Program staff continues to work closely with the state partner to engage sector leaders to capture comprehensive data records. This has resulted in a new relationship with a sector-leader in K-12 schools that is working to gather regional data from K-12 schools.

## **14 b\_Project Attachment\_Capacity Building**

**2. Describe your progress meeting each major activity/milestone approved in the Project Plan for this project; any challenges or obstacles encountered and mitigation strategies you have employed; planned major activities for the next quarter; and any additional project milestones or information.**

*Capacity Building Milestones Year 4, Quarter 3 per approved Project Plan:*

### **Milestone: Year 4, Quarter 3 Connect Minnesota Office Administration and Task Force support**

This milestone was met. The program office in St. Paul is fully staffed and interacting with stakeholders, broadband providers, and other representatives in the state of Minnesota. Program staff continues to support the Minnesota Governor's Task Force on Broadband by serving as a reference point for all mapping and research related data and other reference material.

Additional support provided by program staff this quarter included scheduling, planning (preparing invitations, creating agendas and sending meeting information), and facilitating Task Force meetings at locations throughout the state. Other activities included creation of project status reports delivered to the Minnesota Department of Commerce (MDC) and other stakeholders. Results of research and analyses continued to be shared with stakeholders through the release of detailed broadband adoption data as well as the planned distribution of a white paper on mobile Internet usage in the Minnesota business community. Program staff continued to provide administrative oversight to milestones included within the project plan by managing workflow and timeline demands to ensure the highest quality of service is provided to the state of Minnesota.

Program representatives maintain attendance at various stakeholder events and continue to document meetings with key stakeholders influencing increasing levels of broadband adoption, access, and use throughout the state. Lastly, the program continues to serve as an invaluable resource to the state of Minnesota on issues related to broadband access, adoption, and use.

**Milestone: Year 4, Quarter 3 Task Force Meetings**

This milestone was met. The program serves a variety of roles in supporting the activities of the Task Force. Together with our state partner staff of the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Connect Minnesota's State Program Manager participates in the monthly Task Force meetings and frequent member conference calls. In addition, the program provides data, mapping, and research that assist the Task Force with their work.

In Q3 2013, three meetings of the Governor's Task Force on Broadband were held. Task Force meetings were held in Minneapolis as well as Red Wing and Alexandria. The Task Force heard presentations from a wide array of broadband stakeholders in Q3, including: the Minnesota State Library System, Red Wing Ignite, FTTH (Fiber-To-The-Home) Council's Gigabit Communities Race-to-the-Top Program, and others. A Task Force section is maintained on the program website, available to the public, that includes materials from all Task Force meetings, including presentations. In addition to the monthly Task Force meetings in Q3 2013, there were also more frequent subgroup meetings that focused on specific areas of broadband. The Task Force continues to work on analyzing the state of broadband in Minnesota and compiling quantitative and qualitative information that will be used to write a report to the Governor and the state, which is due in December 2013.

Each meeting of the Task Force involved reviewing action items, recommendations, and updates from previous Task Force meetings. Time was spent reviewing the meeting agendas and discussing the overall program status, as reported in status reports, along with a review of summit planning and execution. Task Force members also reviewed technology initiatives and documented recommendations as well as action items to be further communicated to other stakeholders and potentially used in the annual report provided to the Governor and other members of the Minnesota State Legislature. The Task Force, began preparations for completing their annual report to the governor and state this quarter. The State Program Manager along with our state partner staff will draft the report and work with Task Force members to complete the document. In addition, program data, mapping, and research will be included in the report and inform the Task Force as they decide on specific policy recommendations that might be included in the report.

***Capacity Building Major Activities for Next Quarter:***

- Year 4, Quarter 4 Connect Minnesota Office Administration and Task Force Support
- Conduct Year 4, Quarter 4 Task Force Meetings

**4. Provide any other information that you think would be useful to NTIA as it assesses this project's progress.**

During Q3 2013, the State Program Manager, joined by the manager of the telecommunications division for the Minnesota Department of Commerce, presented to an annual meeting of the Minnesota Cable Association. An overview of the project including an analysis of recent data and research was the center point of the presentation. In addition, staff responded to numerous broadband inquiries and provided state stakeholders with mapping and research data in response to requests.

Newly created Minnesota Office of Broadband Development will be located in the Department of Employment and Economic Development and away from the Minnesota Department of Commerce where the current Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) has been in force since the initial days of project work. The Minnesota Department of Commerce and Connect Minnesota have exchanged

documentation to assign the MOU to the Department of Employment and Economic Development. This change may bring about changes in reporting structure and add stakeholders to the project.

The Office of Broadband Development plans to hire an Executive Director in Q4 at which time the program will move to be housed under this office. Our data, research, and mapping will provide the new Executive Director and other leadership in the Department of Employment and Economic Development with a foundation upon which they can begin to frame their work in the months ahead. Also, in Q4, the program will release the results of our 2013 business survey and the latest data on broadband access and availability – including where the state currently stands in progress toward reaching the state statutory broadband speed goal of minimum 10 Megabits per second (Mbps) download and a minimum 5 Mbps upload.

One of the assets Connect Minnesota brings to the state client and stakeholders across the state is the program's research and survey analysis and the resulting white papers released throughout the year. In Q3 2013, Connect Minnesota released two white papers: "Digital Literacy: A Critical Skill for All Minnesotans" and "Mobile Internet Use by Minnesota Businesses." The release of these papers resulted in media coverage and interest from stakeholders and government officials. Both of these papers have been included within the Technical Assistance section of the "13Q3\_Project Attachment\_Question 5" document.

In Q3 2013 Connect Minnesota continued to work with Minnesota Department of Commerce to respond to broadband inquiries from citizens across the state. The manager of the telecommunications division of Minnesota Department of Commerce works with program staff and other assets, including mapping and engineering, to respond to these inquiries by providing to citizens details about what broadband is available to them and how to contact providers. In addition, the program team will work with providers as needed to discover additional information that would be beneficial in responding to inquiries. Often, a citizen will mention they had visited the Connect Minnesota website and maps in advance of making an inquiry.

## **14 b\_Project Attachment\_Technical Assistance**

**2. Describe your progress meeting each major activity/milestone approved in the Project Plan for this project; any challenges or obstacles encountered and mitigation strategies you have employed; planned major activities for the next quarter; and any additional project milestones or information.**

*Technical Assistance Milestones Year 4, Quarter 3 per approved Project Plan:*

**Milestone: Facilitate 2013 Quarter 3 Minnesota Broadband Summit planning efforts.**

This milestone was met. Planning is underway for a broadband conference to be held on December 4, 2013. The event will bring together stakeholders and, through a series of panel discussions and presenters, will provide attendees an overview of the state of broadband in Minnesota. The goal is to attract more than 100 attendees for the summit.

The theme of the 2013 conference will be "Minnesota: The State of Broadband 2013" and is planned to be a five-hour event, including a number of panels and a keynote speech from Mr. Thomas Cohen, of the law firm of Kelley, Drye & Warren, LLP and legal counsel for the Fiber-To-The-Home (FTTH) Council.

The goals and objectives of the Conference are to provide an overview of the state of broadband (data, policy, and stakeholder activity, etc.) in Minnesota and to highlight the role of the SBI program in the state through participation on panels and presentation of data. The expected outcomes are to strengthen the perception of Connect Minnesota as an important resource for broadband-focused stakeholders in the state. The Blandin Foundation will lead the Blandin Foundation panel which will feature "Community-led approaches to increasing broadband adoption: Success Stories from Minnesota Main Streets."

**Milestone: Finalize and distribute 2013 statewide business survey research results**

This milestone was partially met. Even though the survey research results have been finalized, updates to the program website displaying the results was not completed. As a result, the public and media release documents were not finalized and disseminated. The 2013 business survey results are expected to be released in Q4 2013. The results will be displayed on the website in both graphical and written form. A media press release, blog posts, and social media announcements will be made at the time of public release.

**Milestone: Initiate 2013 residential survey research**

This milestone was met. The 2013 residential survey began in Q3 2013. The survey is designed to assess technology adoption of households in Minnesota. It is expected that this survey will be completed in the field and initial results provided to the state partner by the end of Q4 2013. The survey will be trended with previous residential surveys in 2010, 2011, and 2012 to measure the change in technology adoption and usage by race/ethnicity, income, age, and geography.

**Milestone: Initiate 2013 residential survey peer review**

This milestone was not met, as program staff has been unable to obtain a commitment from a suitable peer reviewer for the process. Once a mutual commitment has been obtained and the survey data collection has been completed, the peer review process will commence. It is anticipated that this milestone will be completed in Q4 2013.

*Outstanding Technical Assistance Milestones:*

**Year 4, Quarter 2 Milestone: Facilitate 2013 Quarter 2 Minnesota Broadband Summit planning efforts**

This milestone was met. The program is set to conduct a broadband conference on December 4, 2013. Arrangements have been finalized and the venue location, the Radisson Hotel located in Roseville, Minnesota, has been secured. Save-the-Date announcements were sent during Q3, and the conference signage was created. Conference outreach efforts were initiated in Q3 including e-mail and other publications using blogs and other forms of press releases to create awareness.

**Technical Assistance Major Activities for Next Quarter:**

- Analyze 2013 residential survey research results
- Commence development of the 2014 business survey script
- Peer review of 2013 survey research completed
- Execution of 2013 Connect Minnesota Annual Broadband Summit

**4. Provide any other information that you think would be useful to NTIA as it assesses this project's progress.**

Connect Minnesota released via website posting two separate technology adoption reports during Q3 2013. The first report released addressed the lack of digital literacy skills as a main barrier to home broadband adoption. Key findings of that report included more than one in ten non-adopters in Minnesota (13%) cite a lack of digital literacy skills as their main reason for not adopting home broadband. In addition, those citing digital literacy as a main barrier include approximately 15,000 adult Minnesotans who say that broadband and the Internet are too complicated, 50,000 who say that they do not know what broadband is or anything about it, 25,000 who cite fears about online security and their ability to avoid online fraud or identity theft, and 23,000 who do not feel comfortable using a computer. The median age of those citing digital literacy as the main barrier to home broadband adoption is 60, and the median household income is \$38,100.

The second report released by Connect Minnesota via website posting in Q3 2013 assessed the use of mobile Internet service among the state's business community. Highlights of that report included more than a third (34%) or approximately 49,000 businesses in Minnesota use mobile Internet service. Mobile Internet service is used most by businesses in the high tech sector, businesses that have 50 or more employees, and businesses located in non-rural areas. Communicating with current customers is the most used application through mobile Internet service. Finally, rural businesses are using mobile Internet to access a wider variety of applications than non-rural businesses.

Both of these reports have been included within the "13Q3\_Project Attachment\_Question 5" document.