Broadband and Counties 101

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County Role: to provide infrastructure and support

- A fiber backbone is an investment in infrastructure that can easily be shared and will last for decades

Two models: Scott County and Lac qui Parle
Scott County – owns infrastructure, private provider offers the service

Growing operational needs -- for big broadband connections – governmental and commercial

Increasing expense – despite declining rates the overall expense (due to increased capacity needs) is increasing
Disparate access and options among communities within the county’s borders and the fundamental belief in a need to work towards leveling the playing field

Limiting integration and collaboration – costs and bandwidth needs were stifling integration and many creative efforts – progress fails as projects never get past bandwidth and cost discussions and limitations

Limited cooperation or options from private providers – many would not discuss or disclose their fiber routes or capacities
County Board partnered with local provider to fund a feasibility study.

Ultimately recipients of a Blandin Lightspeed Grant.

Farmers Mutual Telephone/ LqP Partnership awarded $9.6 million.
Educational Sessions Offered:
• Roadside Advertising in a Digital World
• Online Marketing
• Website Development
• Using Technology to Improve Your Business
• What is E-Commerce?
• Internet & Global Marketing
• Is Your Business E-Commerce Ready?
• Basic Search Engine Optimization
• Using Your Website to Improve Customer Service
FTTP spread to every home and business

- Service is available to anyone interested in subscribing to the service
- Current Project Subscription Rates: 320 Residential Sites & 50 Business Sites
- Current take rate is at 21.7% overall
Challenges

• Bonding authority
• Relationships with private industry
AMC Legislative Positions

- AMC supports identifying and implementing actions to achieve by 2015 the goal of statewide deployment of advanced broadband networks and symmetrical high-speed capacity.

- AMC supports initiatives to make it easier for cities, municipal utilities, schools, libraries, and other public sector entities to collaborate and deploy broadband infrastructure and services at the local and regional level.

- AMC supports public/private collaboration to achieve state broadband goals, including partnerships and cooperation in providing broadband services and infrastructure.

- AMC supports removing barriers to the exercise of local authority to provide such services, including repeal of Minn. Stat. § 237.19, that requires a supermajority voter approval for the provision of local phone service by a local unit of government.
AMC Legislative Positions

• AMC supports offering incentives to private sector service providers to respond to local or regional needs and to collaborate with cities and counties to deploy broadband infrastructure capable of delivering sufficient bandwidth and capacity to meet immediate and future local needs.

• AMC supports completely and continuously updating comprehensive statewide maps of broadband services to identify underserved areas and connectivity issues.

• AMC opposes the prohibition of public money to be spent on broadband infrastructure projects.
2014 Legislative Action

- **Border to Border Broadband Development Grant Program**
  
  The Legislature established a grant program that would encourage access to high-quality broadband throughout the state called the Border to Border Broadband Development Grant Program. This program is available to partnerships, businesses, political subdivisions, Indian tribes, non-profits, co-ops, or LLCs pursuing acquisition and installation of middle-mile and last-mile infrastructure that supports broadband service of at least 100 mbps upload/download. It gives weight to projects in unserved or underserved areas. The grant program was funded with $20M to award grants and loans, or to supplement revenues raised by bonds sold by local units of government.
2014 Legislative Action

- **Broadband Mapping**
  A request of $450,000 was made to fund broadband service mapping. The goal was to collect deployment data from Minnesota providers, verify accuracy, and create state and county wide maps available to the public showing availability of broadband internet at various upload and download speeds, analyze the deployment data to help inform future investments in broadband infrastructure, and conduct business and residential surveys that measure broadband adoption and use in the state. The stand-alone appropriation survived through several versions of the appropriation bill, but was eventually incorporated into the $20 million appropriation for the Border to Border Broadband Development Grant Program.

- **Broadband Bonding Authority**
  AMC worked with other local government groups on a bill amendment that would clarify bonding authority for local governments for broadband infrastructure. Unfortunately, an agreement could not be met and the amendment was pulled. **Status: Did not pass.**
• **AMC webpage**
  http://www.mncounties.org/Committees/AdvisoryTaskforces/broadband.html

• **Office of Broadband Development**
  http://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/grant-program/index.jsp

• **Blandin Foundation/ Blandin on Broadband Blog**
  http://blandinonbroadband.org/
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Internet at Life-Speed
At home.
In business.
In the classroom.
Or on the go - anywhere, anytime.

Making High-Speed a High Priority

Border-to-border high-speed Internet access is the goal throughout Minnesota. The Office of Broadband Development helps Minnesota residents understand broadband options available.

What We Do
Learn about the role of the office in broadband activities throughout the state.

Broadband Task Force
Learn about the purpose and goals of this governor-appointed task force.

Broadband Grant Program
Learn about the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program.
Lincoln County

Posted by: Ann Treacy | March 26, 2015

Broadband 2014 Update: Need the help they are getting from the MN Broadband Fund

I'm working on a County-by-County look at the State of Broadband in MN. My hope is to feature a county a day (in alphabetical order). In
Contact Information

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