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Barry County Initiates Technology Action Plan

Download the Barry County Technology Action Plan

Hastings, MI – The Barry County Broadband Team unveiled their Technology Action Plan Wednesday, at the Hastings Public Library, as part of the county's participation in Connect Michigan's Connected Community Engagement Program. Barry County enrolled in the program to promote increased access, adoption, and use of broadband.

Twenty-five Michigan communities are currently involved in some stage of the Connected program, and now Barry County has an action plan for using technology for quality of life enhancements and as a key for unlocking opportunities for economic development.

The Barry County Broadband Team was formed in December of 2011 and has been working on their assessment and action planning since early in 2012. Located between the metro areas of Grand Rapids, Lansing and Kalamazoo, Barry County is principally a rural, bedroom locality that prides itself on quality of life and a strong sense of community.

"With its proximity to urban areas, Barry County has surprisingly limited access to broadband for many of its residents with only 83% of households with availability to 3

Mbps service," said Eric Frederick, state program manager for Connect Michigan. "Barry is also constrained by an insufficient presence of Internet service providers—only 68% of households have the option of choosing from more than one provider."

The Barry County Broadband Team's key focus, going forward, will be to attract and work with more providers to increase broadband coverage in the county and to identify specific communities and neighborhoods that are currently underserved.

Developing the plan involved participating in an extensive assessment of the county's overall broadband and technology infrastructure. The Technology Action Plan sets general community-wide broadband connectivity goals to work toward with step-by-step action items to achieve those objectives.

The Connected Community Engagement Program supports the development of a comprehensive strategy for building a "connected" community by reviewing the technology landscape, developing regional partnerships, establishing local teams, and conducting a thorough community assessment of the broadband infrastructure.

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CONNECTED℠ Community Engagement Program Connected Nation developed the Connected Community Engagement Program to help guide a community through an assessment of its overall broadband and technology status. Connected certified communities have measurably demonstrated their proficiency for effective Access, Adoption, and Use of broadband-supported technologies. Connected Nation through its partners provides a national platform for recognizing those communities that excel across these important benchmarks. Funded by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), this effort is part of the State Broadband Initiative. http://www.connectednation.org/get-connected

About Connect Michigan: As the designated entity for broadband mapping and planning in the state of Michigan, Connect Michigan is a public-private partnership

between the Michigan Public Service Commission and Connected Nation to work with local governments, businesses, and citizens in the goal of increasing broadband service in the Michigan's underserved areas. For more information about what Connect Michigan is doing to accelerate technology in Michigan's communities, visit www.connectmi.org.

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