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Chippewa, Luce, Mackinac Counties Launch Technology Action Plans

Download the [Chippewa](#), [Luce](#) or [Mackinac](#) Technology Action Plan

Sault Ste. Marie, MI – Leaders of Mackinac, Luce, and Chippewa counties are implementing action plans to increase broadband access, adoption, and use in the area. The counties' Technology Action Plans were unveiled Wednesday, at the Regional Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting in Sault Ste. Marie, as part of their participation in Connect Michigan's Connected Community Engagement Program.

"The completion, and subsequent implementation, of the Technology Action Plans by the three counties of the Eastern Upper Peninsula are a shining example of regional cooperation and collaboration," said Eric Frederick, Connect Michigan state program manager. "Increasing broadband access, adoption, and use has sweeping implications for economic development in the region, particularly for those looking to export Michigan products to national and international markets."

"Fostering broadband adoption, education, and access is critical to addressing the challenges of bringing Internet services into a very rural area like Chippewa County and the Eastern UP Region," said Jeff Hagan, executive director, Eastern

Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development Commission. “Better broadband use and understanding are vital to so many facets of the broadband issue in Chippewa County and the EUP, whether it’s from a residential or economic development standpoint.”

The Technology Action Plan sets community-wide broadband connectivity goals that will support economic development and improved residential quality of life and includes step-by-step action items to make sure that the goals are met.

“Being a rural community and facing the challenges of bringing broadband Internet services to residents, the Luce County Technology Planning Team has partnered with Connect Michigan and the other members of the Eastern Upper Peninsula Community Planning Team,” said Carmen L. Pittenger, executive director of the Luce County Economic Development Corporation. “We are developing a Technology Action Plan to foster adoption and education for better broadband use and understanding in Luce County.”

The Technology Action Plans contain specific recommendations of projects to expand digital literacy, build awareness of the benefits of broadband, assist businesses with websites and social media, and improve the online presence of local governments, among others.

“Working with Connect Michigan has raised the awareness of the lack of Internet availability in areas of Mackinac County,” said Paula Ramelis, BTOP community outreach leader, Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District. “This has alerted consumers to push providers to bring service to the underserved areas and increase the connectivity in those areas that do receive Internet service.”

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 broadband access, adoption, and use.

“Initially I saw broadband technology as a way to help students succeed in school,” said Barb Light, BTOP project director, Eastern Upper Peninsula

Intermediate School District (EUPISD). “Due to our partnership with Connect Michigan and the work of the EUPISD BTOP Grant, I have met people who see the potential of broadband to improve our communities in other ways. The work we have started is a tremendous step in a great direction!”

Photo captions, from left:

Chippewa County

Jeff Hagan, executive director, Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development Commission; Tom Stephenson, community technology advisor, Connect Michigan.

Luce County

Tom Stephenson, community technology advisor, Connect Michigan; Carmen Pittenger, executive director, Luce County Economic Development Corporation.

Mackinac County

Jason Kronemeyer, information technology director, Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District; Tom Stephenson, community technology advisor, Connect Michigan; Paula Ramelis, BTOP outreach leader, Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District; Barb Light , project director, Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District.

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CONNECTEDSM
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 state'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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