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St. Clair County Gains Certification in Connected Community Program

Technology Assessment Results Presented

Port Huron, MI – Connect Michigan applauds the efforts of St. Clair County in becoming the sixth community in the nation to achieve certification under Connected Nation’s Connected Community Engagement Program.



Results from a 14-month community technology assessment, undertaken by the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission, along with strategies for broadband expansion, were released today at the St. Clair County Administrative Office Building in Port Huron.

“St. Clair County joins an elite group of communities that are working to expand broadband access, adoption, and use,” said Eric Frederick, program manager, Connect Michigan. “This collaborative effort will help St. Clair County residents, business, and institutions develop the access, promote the desire, and acquire the know-how to sustain themselves in a technology-based economy.”

The Connected Community Engagement Program, facilitated by Connect Michigan, 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 technology assessment.

To obtain Connected certification, St. Clair County had to meet certain benchmark scores in the areas of broadband access, adoption, and use that signify it is a technologically advanced community.

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

“Our goal in St. Clair County is to expand affordable broadband coverage to our underserved communities,” said Lori Eschenburg, St. Clair County planner and team champion. “Access to affordable broadband service is critical to St. Clair County’s future, with implications for education, public safety, and economic development. We are excited to partner with Connect Michigan in this comprehensive program.

“Broadband proliferation along the I-69 corridor is a topic that is on our region’s agenda,” said Dan Casey, CEO, St. Clair County Economic Development Alliance. “We see the linkage of broadband to our industrial parks along the corridor as an asset that is as valuable as our transportation infrastructure.”

Other Michigan communities and organizations working to gain certification through this program include the Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning and Development Commission; the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission; and the counties of Barry, Clare, Delta, Gladwin, Livingston, Marquette, Mecosta, Osceola, Oscoda, and Wexford.

Last summer, Charlevoix County became the first Connected certified community in the nation.

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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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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.

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