

## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

From education and government, to healthcare and community development, the global marketplace is becoming increasingly technology-centric. Michigan stands at the door of opportunity to work with private and public entities to secure our place and competitiveness in the twenty-first century digital economy. In order to do so, the need for improved broadband in Michigan will continue.

### **Connect Michigan remains committed and poised to support efforts to improve broadband access in Michigan and connect all Michiganders to meaningful technology.**

Since its inception in 2009, Connect Michigan, in partnership with the Michigan Public Service Commission, has become an integral component of Michigan's broadband ecosystem and a single point of contact for all things broadband- and technology-related in the state.

Connect Michigan provides statewide technology leadership and advocacy through robust, public-private partnerships that expand broadband access and enhance technology adoption and use to grow economies, retain and attract talent, and create jobs. Fueled by unprecedented data and research, Connect Michigan's ability to facilitate and organize a diverse cross-section of stakeholders has resulted in numerous efforts across the state to expand the life-changing benefits of broadband to all.

While Connect Michigan's impact has been substantial, the need for ongoing improvement in broadband access and adoption remains. The Federal Communications Commission's recent announcement of its new (January 2015) "advanced broadband" benchmark of 25 Mbps download/3 Mbps upload has ignited a renewed urgency to both meet this target and exceed those speeds in order to solidify Michigan's stance in the cutting-edge interconnected economy.

In the coming months, Connect Michigan looks forward to continuing our work to connect communities across the state with the information, resources, and support necessary for meaningful access to and utilization of high-speed broadband. We especially look forward to **CONNECTING MICHIGAN** through our continued partnership with the Michigan Public Service Commission.

The following report is designed to memorialize the efforts of Connect Michigan as well as showcase examples of the thousands of stakeholders impacted by our work to date. By evaluating the technology status of our past, we can better plan for our connected future.



Eric Frederick, AICP, LEED AP  
Executive Director  
Connect Michigan

## BACKGROUND

Connect Michigan, in partnership with the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC), is a non-profit organization tasked with facilitating broadband and technology expansion across the Great Lakes State. Since launching in 2009, Connect Michigan has served as the state's designated entity for broadband infrastructure mapping, technical assistance, capacity building, and local technology planning. Connect Michigan is a subsidiary of Connected Nation, a national non-profit organization with a mission to expand broadband access, adoption, and use to enhance quality of life.

At the direction of the MPSC and through funding from a U.S. Department of Commerce grant that closed in January 2015, Connect Michigan has assessed Michigan's broadband landscape and opportunities for growth through widespread provider outreach; data collection, integration, and validation; comprehensive broadband infrastructure mapping; and unprecedented research. Through its unique local community engagement program known as Connected, Connect Michigan convenes community broadband teams to establish specific goals, action plans, and solutions for Michigan and its communities.

Broadband is a powerful, enabling technology that is rapidly becoming a key engine of economic growth. Connect Michigan's efforts to stimulate broadband access, adoption, and use have directly impacted Michigan's global competitiveness and strengthened Michigan's workforce. Connect Michigan estimates that a one percentage point increase in broadband penetration could create or

save approximately 12,388 jobs statewide.<sup>1</sup> However, with 25% of residents and 20% of businesses in Michigan still on the wrong side of the digital divide, this work is far from complete. Michigan's economic future is dependent not only upon robust broadband infrastructure, but also on the ability of its businesses and individuals to fully leverage technology.

*Connect Michigan's community outreach and education programs, policy analysis, and broadband mapping initiatives have proven to be highly effective tools in Michigan's continued strides toward more broadband connectivity and ultimately our state's economic prosperity.*

-Bob Pero  
Senior VP and General Manager  
Frontier Communications

<sup>1</sup>[http://www.connectmi.org/sites/default/files/connected-nation/Michigan/files/mi\\_economic\\_impact\\_final.pdf](http://www.connectmi.org/sites/default/files/connected-nation/Michigan/files/mi_economic_impact_final.pdf).