



Marquette County Recognized as Certified Connected Community

Marquette County completes technology plan aimed at bridging technology gap, boosting economy, paving the way for improved quality of life

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[View the Technology Action Plan](#)

Marquette County, MI – Marquette County is now the first certified Connected community in the Upper Peninsula and the 11th in the state. The Marquette County Broadband Initiative (MCBI) team worked with Connect Michigan to identify gaps in the local broadband landscape and establish goals for increasing high-speed Internet access, adoption, and use. It achieved the new certification through Connected Nation's [Connected Community Engagement Program](#).

Representatives of three community organizations led the MCBI collaboration with Connect Michigan: Robert Eslinger, director of Northern Michigan University's Center for Rural Community and Economic Development; Caralee Swanberg, director of business development for the Lake Superior Community Partnership; and Thyra Karlstrom, Marquette County senior planner. Steve Arwood, CEO of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, was the keynote speaker.

"Marquette County's location, size, natural landscape, and scattered development pattern make it different from other counties," said Karlstrom. "Those characteristics are also challenges to increasing high-speed Internet access, adoption, and use. Our community has a history of working together to stretch limited resources to their fullest potential. This certification is a symbol of our community's hard work and dedication to improve our future."

"Broadband has been recognized for a long time as something that we need to improve," said Eslinger. "This recognition demonstrates how a lot of people have been working on the issue in their own ways and really how those small pieces can fit together to make a big difference."

Swanberg added, "Broadband affects every aspect of our business and personal lives, making it a key priority in economic development. This certification is a great honor and tribute to our fantastic partners throughout the county who have been working on this issue for years."

The new Technology Action Plan sets general, community-wide broadband connectivity goals that will support economic development and residential quality of life. It also provides step-by-step action projects to ensure the goals are met. Marquette County's top priorities are to

improve education through digital learning, establish programs supporting schools' new technology initiatives, develop a business case for further broadband expansion, and promote telemedicine in remote areas of the county.

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About Connect Michigan: Connect Michigan, in partnership with the Michigan Public Service Commission, is working to ensure that all Michiganders can experience the benefits of broadband. Technology, especially widespread access, adoption, and use, improves quality of life. More at www.connectmi.org.

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CONNECTED™ 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. Visit <http://connectmycommunity.org> for more on the Connected program.