



Connect Iowa Joins Forces With Iowa Association of Regional Councils to Improve High-Speed Internet Access, Adoption, & Use Across the State

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Local Leaders Seek to Enlist Community Participation in Achieving Broadband Expansion

Des Moines, IA – Today, Connect Iowa and the Iowa Association of Regional Councils (IARC) announced a new partnership to launch a statewide “Connected” community engagement program aimed at increasing broadband access, adoption, and use. High-speed Internet is the key to attracting quality jobs, improving education, putting people in touch with government services, and building an all-around better quality of life. In collaboration with Connect Iowa, members of the Iowa Association of Regional Councils are taking charge of expanding broadband’s reach in their communities.

Last week, staff of regional Council of Governments (COGs) from all over the state took an intensive weeklong Connect Iowa training and began forming teams of local leaders who want to help create the plan for broadband expansion in their community. These leaders arrived back home this week with a critical new mission: revive their communities through broadband expansion.

“Getting all of Iowa connected to quality broadband is vital to the economic development of our state. Iowa’s Councils of Governments, in conjunction with IARC, will be the driving force in getting the Connect Iowa initiative up and running in each of their regions,” says Iowa Association of Regional Councils Executive Director Nichole Warren. “They’ll be reaching out to their community leaders and asking them to join the local planning teams.”

Last week, Connect Iowa [announced](#) the formation of a new broadband advisory committee that will help guide and oversee this new initiative.

“We are thrilled to be joining forces with IARC to begin working in the local communities,” says Connect Iowa Program Manager Amy Kuhlers. “Change happens at the local level and by drawing in our relationships with the providers and local leaders and combining that with the intelligence we’ve gathered through our maps and research, we can identify solutions that best fit the community.”

Connected is a community-based initiative to accelerate broadband access, adoption, and use. The certification process benefits communities through a process of assessment, benchmarking, and planning by helping participants identify their community’s technological strengths and weaknesses and helping community partners match up with local opportunities.

“Connect Iowa’s Connected community program is an amazing opportunity for towns and regions across the state to assess their broadband needs and find real solutions,” says Kuhlers. “The aim is to put the tools in the hands of the community, help them do a detailed assessment of what the true local needs are, and then construct an informed plan to get the community connected in the most efficient way possible. It could be updating a school’s network or getting access to an unserved community, but the best part is that each plan will be custom-tailored to each region’s own specific needs and landscape.”

Anyone with an interest in bringing better broadband to local homes and businesses is encouraged to join in the community planning effort. For more information on how to get involved, please contact Kuhlers at akuhlers@connectiowa.org or 515-421-2561.

Local COG leaders are listed below.

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About Connect Iowa: Connect Iowa is a subsidiary of Connected Nation and operates as a nonprofit in the state of Iowa to promote broadband access, adoption, and use. The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) is leading the initiative to increase broadband Internet access throughout rural Iowa. Connect Iowa was commissioned by the state to work with all broadband providers in Iowa to create detailed maps of broadband coverage and develop a statewide plan for the deployment and adoption of broadband. For more information visit: www.connectiowa.org.

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Agency/ COG	Contact	Address	Phone	Email	Counties
Area 15 Regional Planning Commission	Matt Bauman	P. O. Box 1110 Ottumwa, Iowa 52501	(641) 684-6551	matt.bauman@indianhills.edu	Davis, Keokuk, Jefferson, Mahaska, Van Buren, Wappello
Bi-State Regional Commission	Doug DeLille	1504 Third Avenue P.O. Box 3368 Rock Island, Illinois 61204-3368	(309) 793-6300	ddelille@bistateonline.org	Muscatine, Scott
East Central Intergovernmental Association	Kelsey McElroy Anderson	7600 Commerce Park Dubuque, Iowa 52002	(563) 556-4166	kmcelroy@ecia.org	Cedar, Clinton Delaware, Dubuque Jackson
East Central Iowa Council of Governments	Tracy DeKoter & Hilary Copeland	700 16th Street NE, Suite 301 Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402	(319) 365-9941	tracy.dekoter@ecicog.org hilary.copeland@ecicog.org	Benton, Iowa, Johnson, Jones Linn, Washington
Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments	Kyle Durant	229 E. Park Avenue Waterloo, Iowa 50703	(319) 235-0311	kdurant@inrcog.org	Black Hawk, Bremer Buchanan, Butler Chickasaw, Grundy
Metropolitan Area Planning Agency	Clint Sloss	2222 Cuming Street Omaha, NE 68102	(402) 444-6866	csloss@mapacog.org	Mills, Pottawattamie
MIDAS Council of Governments	Carissa Miller	602 First Avenue South Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501	(515) 576-7183	cmiller@midascog.net	Calhoun, Hamilton Humboldt, Pocahontas, Webster Wright, Boone
North Iowa Area Council of Governments	Dan Schroeder & Dana Heimbuch	525 Sixth St. S.W. Mason City, Iowa 50401	(641) 423-0491	dschroeder@niacog.org	Cerro Gordo, Floyd Franklin, Hancock Kossuth, Mitchell Winnebago, Worth
Northwest Iowa Planning and Development Commission	Aaron Sedey	217 W. Fifth Street, P. O. Box 1493 Spencer, Iowa 51301	(712) 262-7225	aaron.sedey@nwipdc.org	Buena Vista, Clay Dickinson, Emmet Lyon, O'Brien Osceola, Palo Alto Sioux
Region 6 Planning Commission	Donna Sampson	903 E. Main Street Marshalltown, Iowa 50158	(641) 752-0717	dsampson@region6planning.org	Hardin, Marshall Poweshiek, Tama
Region XII Council of Governments	Stacy Lentsch	1009 East Anthony Street P.O. Box 768 Carroll, Iowa 51401	(712) 792-9914	slentsch@region12cog.org	Audubon, Carroll Crawford, Greene Guthrie, Sac Dallas
Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission	Justin Bushong	211 N. Gear Avenue, Suite 100 West Burlington, IA 52655	(319) 753- 5107	jbushong@seirpc.com	Des Moines, Henry Lee County, Louisa
Southern Iowa Council of Governments	Andrew Collings	101 East Montgomery Street Creston, Iowa 50801-0102	(641) 782-8491	collings@sicog.com	Adair, Adams, Clarke Decatur, Madison Ringgold , Taylor Union
Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council	Andrea Westergard	1122 Pierce Street P.O. Box 1077 Sioux City, Iowa 51102	(712) 279-6286	awestergard@simpco.org	Cherokee, Ida Plymouth, Woodbury
Southwest Iowa Planning Council	John McCurdy	1501 S.W. Seventh Street Atlantic, Iowa 50022	(712) 243-4196	john.mccurdy@swipco.org	Cass, Fremont Harrison, Montgomery, Page Shelby
Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission	Casey Mai	325 Washington St., Suite A Decorah, Iowa 52101	(563) 382-6171	cmmai@uerpc.org	Allamakee , Clayton Fayette, Howard Winneshiek
IARC	Nichole Warren	1123 Sandalwood Ct. SW Altoona, IA 50009	(515)554-3210	iarcdirector@live.com	Polk, Jasper, Story, Warren, Marion, Lucas, Appanoose, Monroe & Wayne