

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[Connect Iowa](#), in partnership with Gov. Terry Branstad and the [Iowa Economic Development Authority](#) (IEDA), is a non-profit organization tasked with facilitating broadband and technology expansion across the Hawkeye State. Since launching in 2009, Connect Iowa has served as the state's designated entity for broadband infrastructure mapping, technical assistance, capacity building, and local technology planning. Connect Iowa 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.

*It (broadband) is hugely significant whether it's economics or healthcare, or education or just people trying to get help. ...So I think our overarching goal is to connect every area that isn't able to get broadband today and encourage the folks who access but aren't using it to subscribe.*

**Robert von Wolffradt**  
Director and Chief Information  
Officer  
State of Iowa

At the direction of the Iowa Utilities Board and later the IEDA, and through funding from a U.S. Department of Commerce grant that closed in January 2015, Connect Iowa has assessed Iowa's broadband landscape and opportunities for growth through widespread provider outreach; data collection, integration, and validation; comprehensive broadband infrastructure mapping; unprecedented and Iowa-specific research; and policy advice and support to the Iowa Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Board Broadband Advisory Board. Through its unique local community engagement program known as Connected, Connect Iowa convenes community broadband teams to establish specific goals, action plans, and solutions for Iowa and its communities.

Broadband is a powerful, enabling technology that is rapidly becoming a key engine of economic growth in urban and rural Iowa. Connect

Iowa's efforts to stimulate broadband access, adoption, and use have directly impacted Iowa's global competitiveness and strengthened Iowa's workforce. Connect Iowa estimates that a one percentage point increase in broadband penetration could create or save approximately 3,700 jobs statewide each year.<sup>1</sup> However, with 24% of residents and 19% of businesses in Iowa still on the wrong side of the digital divide, this work is far from complete. Iowa's economic goals, particularly for its rural residents and businesses, are dependent not only upon robust broadband infrastructure, but also on the ability of its businesses and individuals to fully leverage technology.

In this capstone report for its work through the federal State Broadband Initiatives program, Connect Iowa presents the progress that Iowa has made in broadband access, adoption, and use since 2009, and highlights areas where gaps persist.

*Connect Iowa's community outreach and education programs, policy analysis, and broadband availability data have proven to be highly effective tools in Iowa's continued strides toward more broadband connectivity, our state's economic prosperity, and our effort to become the most connected state in the Midwest.*

**Kip Ladage**  
Bremer County Iowa  
Broadband Champion

<sup>1</sup> Based on calculations used in Connected Nation's report, "The Economic Impact of Stimulating Broadband Nationally." [https://www.connectednation.org/sites/default/files/the\\_economic\\_impact\\_of\\_stimulating\\_broadband\\_nationally\\_-\\_full\\_version.pdf](https://www.connectednation.org/sites/default/files/the_economic_impact_of_stimulating_broadband_nationally_-_full_version.pdf)