



October 25-26, 2017

Madden's on Gull Lake

Brainerd, Minnesota

#mnbroadband

AGENDA

Wednesday, October 25

9:00 am **Registration Opens** (Location: Town Hall)

10:00 **Concurrent Preconference Sessions** (*pick one!*)

Broadband 101

This session will improve community leaders' ability to make smart decisions and create partnerships to deliver wired and wireless broadband technologies. Panelists include Diane Kruse of NEO Connect, Albert Kangas of Palmer Wireless, Tom Johnson of Nobles County, Mark Mrla of Finley Engineering, and Bill Coleman of Community Technology Advisors.

Digital Inclusion Showcase

There are two essential parts of a broadband plan – having it and using it. Hear from folks around Minnesota who have been creative about getting their community to make better use of broadband. See demonstrations and hear stories about:

- PCs for People
- Project FINE
- Community Technology Empowerment Project
- Business training/assessments
- Online gaming contest
- Facebook for civic/public meetings
- Visual (virtual reality)
- Red Wing Ignite
- Arrowhead Telepresence Coalition

12:00 pm **Lunch**

1:00 ***Building Bridges: Expanding the Impact with Cooperation***

Bernadine Joselyn, Public Policy & Engagement Director, Blandin Foundation
Kevin Edberg, Executive Director, Cooperative Development Services
Laura Withers, Director of Communications, NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association

In Minnesota, *Community Leadership + a Willing Provider Partner + Public Investment* has been a winning formula for many rural communities seeking better broadband. Some communities have a provider partner to dance with and some... not so much. A community's dance steps

will depend on its dance card: discerning the best path forward depends on understanding the options you have given the provider environment you've been dealt. Hear about best practices for communities seeking to claim their own broadband-enabled future, and talk with others about implications for Minnesota efforts bridge the gaps and expand the impact of broadband.

3:00 **Hotel Check-in / Free Time** (Location: Wilson Bay)

5:00 **Reception / Exhibit Hall**

6:30 **Dinner**

7:15 ***Breaking Bandwidth: How Rural Broadband Can Change Lives***

Northern Community Radio News Director Heidi Holtan interviews Iron Range storyteller and broadband advocate Aaron Brown about the ups and downs from 15 years of advocating for faster internet in Northern Minnesota. From the moment he saw “the internet” wheeled into his Iron Range high school on a dolly to broadcasting live from his yard in the woods, Brown uses humor and two decades of experience in Northern Minnesota media to highlight the challenges and benefits of rural broadband.

8:00 **Social Time**

Thursday, October 26

7:45 am **Registration / Breakfast Buffet / Exhibit Hall** (Wilson Bay)

9:00 **Welcome and Opening Remarks** (Town Hall)

9:30 **Keynote Presentation: *Is Rural Minnesota Poised for the Digital Age?***

Roberto Gallardo, Assistant Director/CED Specialist, Purdue Center for Regional Development

The Digital Economy is growing exponentially. Communities that are prepared will soar; those that aren't will fall farther and farther behind. Roberto Gallardo has been watching this growth and the impact on rural areas. He understands the connection between broadband, digital inclusion and economic vitality at the community and individual level. He will share his most recent research on the impact of broadband on rural areas with a real focus on Minnesota, giving us insights on how we compare with other states – information we can use to inspire community leaders, policymakers and providers.

10:30 **Break**

10:45 ***Understanding the Community Impact of Investment in Rural Broadband***

In the Summer of 2017, Blandin Foundation visited five rural Minnesota counties to learn about the community impact of investment in rural broadband. Our goal was to determine the value of that broadband, based on impact to community residents and businesses. We looked at demographics and other data, applied established formulas to compare public investment to collective economic benefit, and collected stories. In this presentation, Ann Treacy will

present the results of this work, compare public investment inputs to community benefit in each county, and describe what conditions and attributes enable community success. Broadband champions from participating counties will share their perspectives on the findings. Their stories showcase the tremendous potential being unleashed from investments in rural broadband.

12:00 pm Lunch / Exhibit Time (Wilson Bay)

2:00 *Bridging the Gaps – Expanding the Impact through Community-Provider Partnerships* (Town Hall)

Broadband Learning Stations featuring stories of partnerships and perseverance that define the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program participants. All sessions highlight what it takes for community success. Featured projects include:

Learning Station
1. Woodstock Communications – Westbrook FTTP
2. InvisiMax, Nextera Communications and MVTW Wireless – Fixed Wireless Projects
3. Wikstrom Telephone – Rural Alvarado Broadband
4. Rock County Broadband Alliance – Rock County, MN
5. Palmer Wireless – Big Lake Industrial Park
6. Renville County – Renville County Broadband
7. Mediacom Minnesota – Harris Township Broadband Build
8. Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative – MLEC Phase I FTTP in Aitkin County

3:15 Break

3:30 Closing Reflections

Bernadine Joselyn, Public Policy & Engagement Director, Blandin Foundation
 Roberto Gallardo, Assistant Director/CED Specialist, Purdue Center for Regional Development
 Shannon Heim, Attorney, Moss & Barnett

4:00 Adjourn



With support from:



Platinum sponsor: Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB)

Gold sponsors: Calix, Consolidated Telecommunications Company (CTC), Finley Engineering, Great River Energy, Initiative Foundation, Northland Foundation, Northwest Minnesota Foundation, Resilient Region, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, Southwest Initiative Foundation, and West Central Initiative

Exhibit-level sponsors: ADTRAN, Best Buy Foundation, and Graybar Electric