

Mason County, MI – Connect Michigan applauds the efforts of Mason County, Michigan, for achieving certification under Connected Nation’s Connected Community Engagement Program. Today, Connect Michigan presented Mason County’s certification and its Technology Action Plan before the Mason County Growth Alliance. The release of this plan follows months of extensive analysis of the community’s broadband and technology standing and understanding its technology goals. The Technology Action Plan gives step-by-step action items to ensure Mason County reaches those technology goals.

Mason County has been working with Connect Michigan, a program of Connected Nation, on the Connected Community Engagement Program. This initiative assesses the local broadband landscape, identifies connectivity gaps, and establishes technology-driven goals and objectives to increase broadband access, adoption, and use for families, organizations, and businesses throughout the community. Mason County joins more than 50 communities throughout the Great Lakes State that are engaged in the Connected program.

“We are very excited about our county’s participation in Connect Michigan’s Connected Program and look forward to implementing the items identified in our Technology Action Plan,” said Spence Riggs, Economic Development Coordinator for Mason County Growth Alliance. “Increasing access, adoption, and use of broadband in our community is a critical element in moving our county forward. This is an initiative that has the potential to positively impact not only our business community, but it will greatly benefit the residents and institutions of our county, as well.”

The Mason County Technology Action Plan sets general, community-wide broadband connectivity goals to work toward that will support and further enhance economic development and residential quality of life. Mason County’s top goals from the new plan include:

Perform an analysis of local policies and ordinances in Mason County to ensure that local policies are conducive to broadband expansion

Identify, map, and validate broadband demand in order to develop a business case for further expansion of broadband in Mason County

- Develop public/private partnerships to deploy broadband service
- Create local jobs via teleworking/remote work opportunities
- Develop or identify a broadband training and awareness program for the small and medium size businesses of Mason County
- Facilitate Internet safety classes

The plan encompasses support for future broadband expansion and programs that will ensure the community maintains widespread Internet access, adoption, and use, and continues to advance its technology standing in the digital economy. Technology in Mason County will be reassessed in 2017.

“In order to compete in the digital economy, access, adoption, and use of broadband are critical elements of development for communities,” said Eric Frederick, Executive Director for Connect

Michigan. “An Internet connection opens innumerable opportunities, allowing families to pursue greater educational prospects, businesses to expand their markets, and institutions to provide global services in any community.”

For questions about the Connected Community Engagement Program in Michigan, please contact [info@connectmi.org](mailto:info@connectmi.org).

About Connect Michigan: [Connect Michigan](#), in partnership with the Michigan Public Service Commission and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, 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](http://www.connectmi.org)  
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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.