Lincoln County Board Presentation

Broadband:
The Economics and Relationships Needed for "the Fix"

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Chair of the Governor's Task Force on Broadband

Brittany Beyer

- Director of Grow North: overseeing 8 counties and 3 Tribal Nations in the Northwoods (one of the 9 regions of economic development in state)

- Blue Ribbon Commission on Rural Prosperity

- Governor's Task Force on Broadband

What is Grow North?

GROW NORTH
Regional Economic Development Corporation

North-Central Wisconsin Career Pathways

- Mission: Grow North is a catalyst for economic prosperity in the Northwoods region

- 2021 areas of focus:
  - Workforce Cultivation (see Pathways)
  - Housing (primarily for workforce needs)
  - Broadband

- NWCP / DPI Pathways Grant
  - Manufacturing, Healthcare (2020/ 21 school year)
  - Construction (2021/22)

Governor's Task Force on Broadband

- Named in July 2020 via executive order by the Governor. Report due to the legislature. Delivered June 30, 2021

- Governor Evers named 2021 "Year of Broadband Access"

- 25 members met August 2020-May 2021. Work to resume in the fall 2021

    - subcommittees on policy, funding, mapping and data, community network building, and digital access

Closing the Broadband Gap:

KEY ISSUES from first Report

- The 3 A's: ACCESS, AFFORDABILITY, ADOPTABILITY
- Speed goals, mapping improvements, and FUNDING
- NETWORK of collaborative efforts is being built NOW. You can be part of this!

Report can be read here

Closing the Broadband Gap:

The 3 "A's"

- **ACCESS**: infrastructure is absent or cost of connection is unaffordable or does not deliver speeds necessary

- **AFFORDABILITY**: cost is too high because of income OR cost of expensive connection

- **ADOPTION**: lack of access and training on equipment to use without issue

Solutions for Closing the Gap (Urban and Rural) in Broadband: the 3 "A's"

ACCESS

- Grants need to be available to make the private investment work
- Needs new NETWORKS of support to address this on a local level
- Blessing of COVID- understood as cross-cutting need to enter 21st Century equitably

AFFORDABILIY

- Emergency Broadband Benefit- available right now (FCC)
- More competitive with choice between providers (absent in some places)
- Department of Public Instruction and other agencies will continue to rise to the occasion

ADOPTABILITY

- Create a Digital opportunity fund (room for philanthropy to amplify funds)
- Digital navigators- some grass roots orgs are already doing this. Can we make this statewide?
- Clear racial, equity, and inclusion issue. ALL Wisconsinites need access and to be able to use Broadband
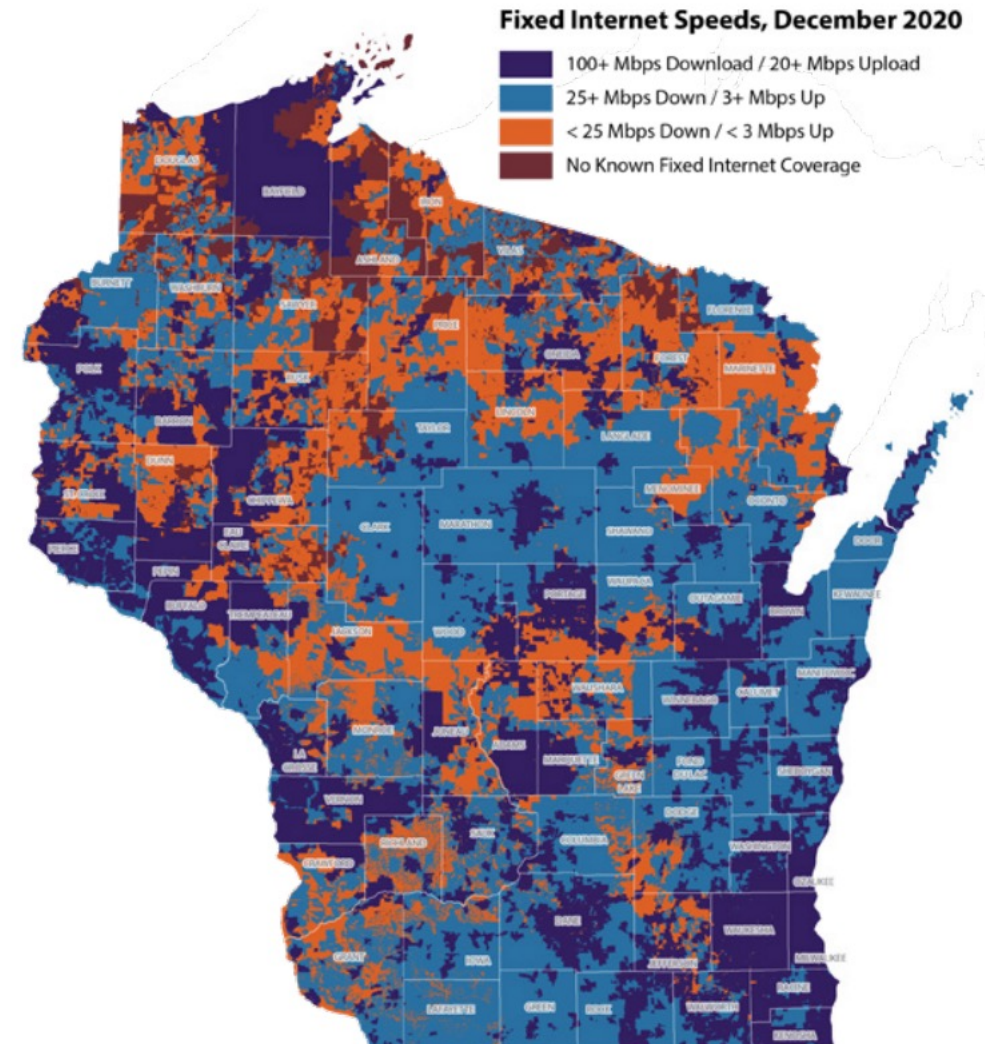
Closing the Broadband Gap:

Proposed Speed Goals

- Acceptable **base level** of Broadband speed received:
  - **By 2025**, **25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload (Governor's goal)**
  - **By 2028**, **50 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload**
  - **By 2031, 100 Mbps download and 50 Mbps upload**
- In near future, 1Gbps+ is necessary
  - **Currently: 17.7% of state has access to 1Gbps**
  - **By 2025, 50% of the state has access to 1Gbps**
  - **By 2030, 90% of the state has access to 1Gbps**

Closing the Rural Broadband Gap: Mapping

- FCC maps allow for a provider to claim full census blocks if ONE residence is served

- Census blocks in rural areas are much larger

- Mechanisms for verifying speeds noted by providers are not in place

Fixed Internet Speeds, December 2020

- 100+ Mbps Download / 20+ Mbps Upload
- 25+ Mbps Down / 3+ Mbps Up
- < 25 Mbps Down / < 3 Mbps Up
- No Known Fixed Internet Coverage

Wisconsin Broadband Office, Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, June 2021
Data derived from ISPs, the FCC, and the U.S. Census Bureau.

Closing the Broadband Gap: MAPPING


Body of Water
25+ Mbps Down / 3+ Mbps Up
10 Mbps Down / 1 Mbps Up
3 Mbps Down / .768 Mbps Up
Less than 3 Mbps Down / .768 Mbps Up
Unserved for Fixed Internet Access

0   1.75   3.5   7 Miles

Broadband Expansion Grants
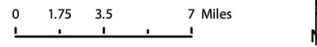
Grant recipients impacting Lincoln County

(Project Name, Fiscal Year of Award, Award Total)

neida County EDC (Phase 2), 2017, $180,566
neida County EDC (Phase 4), 2018R2, $100,000
neida County EDC (Phase 5), 2019, $117,500
wn of King (Charter), 2019, $372,223

broadband forward! Community

Certified communities impacting Lincoln County
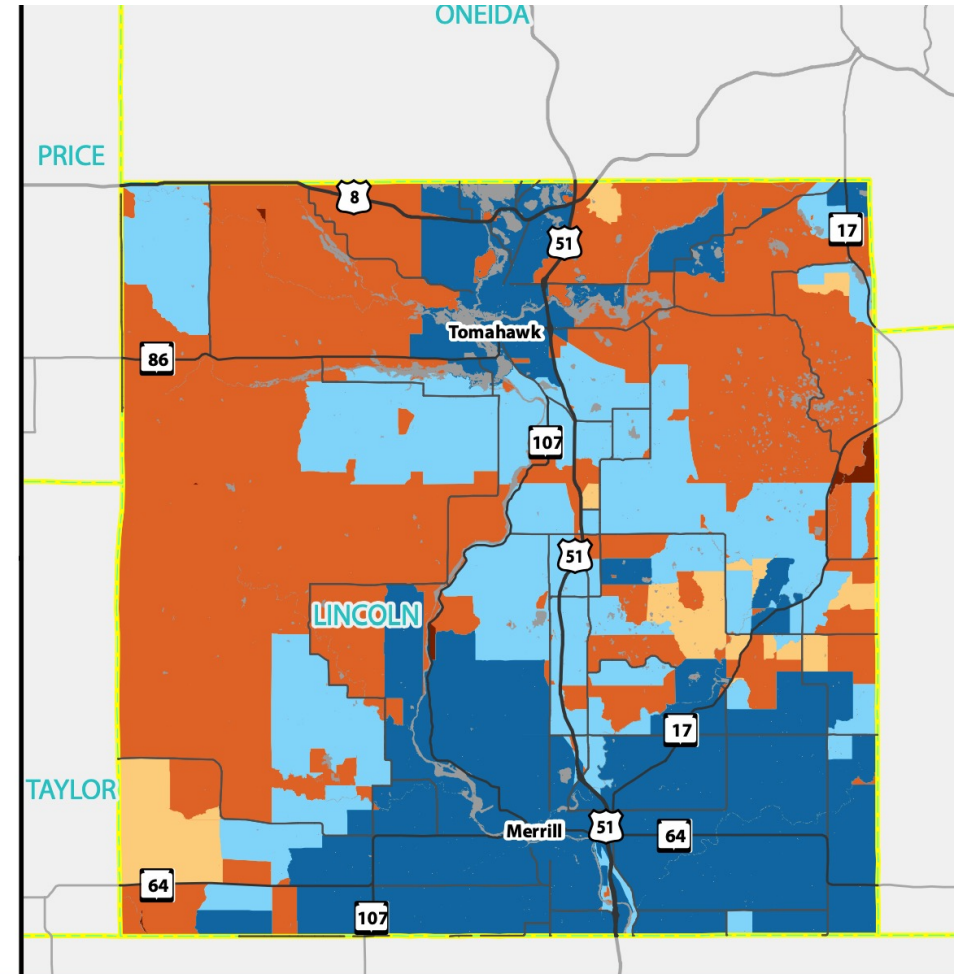
Closing the Broadband Gap: MAPPING

- FCC is currently refining its mapping – March 2020 congress pushed for better measures from FCC.

- Local Innovation: County level and state GIS mapping work; Publicly available data layers

- What is your county, region doing to work on this issue?

Closing the Broadband Gap:

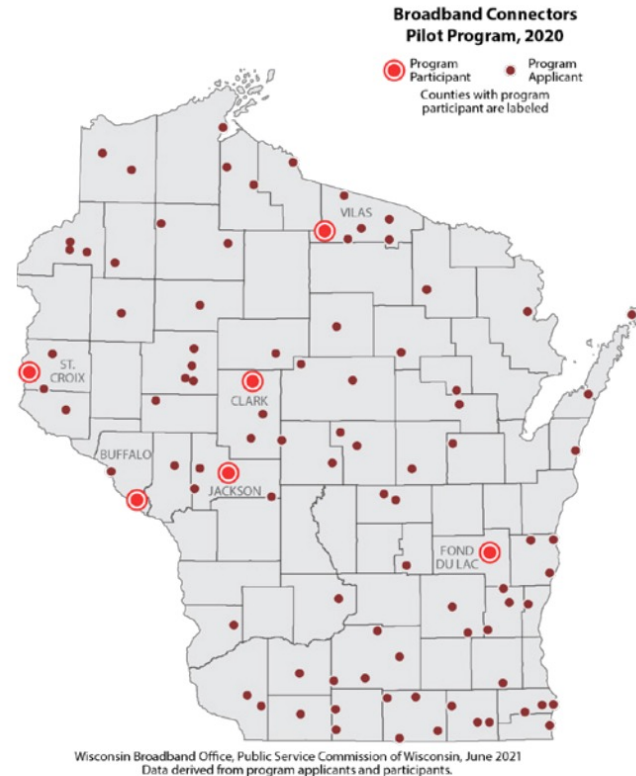# Funding for infrastructure buildout

- Providers say: the areas that have clear return on investment have been served
- Public dollars needed to close the gap. State and Federal programs
- These are complex, multi-million dollar projects
- Public-Private partnerships, municipal broadband, etc. are part of the answer

Closing the Broadband Gap:

Network Building

Broadband Connectors Pilot Program, 2020

⊙ Program Participant   • Program Applicant

Counties with program participant are labeled

Wisconsin Broadband Office, Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, June 2021
Data derived from program applicants and participants.

- Fall of 2020, WEDC and PSC jointly ran a Broadband Connectors Pilot

- 96 communities applied in a two week window; 6 communities selected

- We're watching what is working in other states and learning: technical assistance and training, comprehensive planning grants, collaborative learning, matchmaking, etc.

Active Network Building
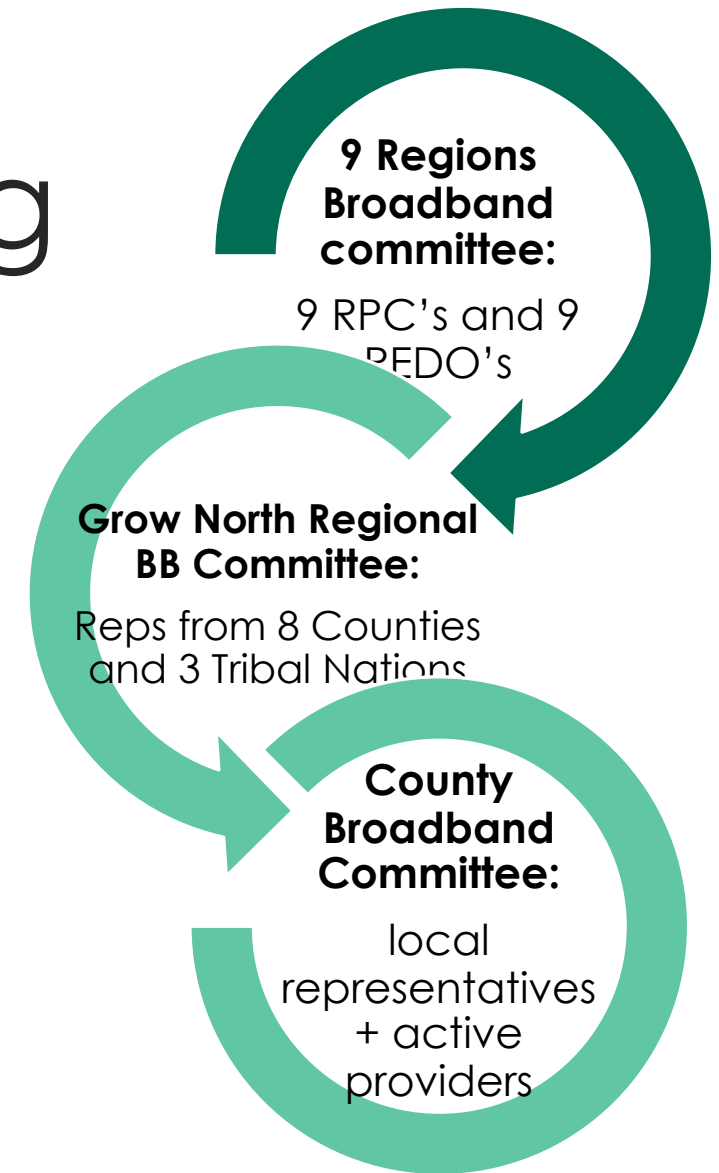
County Broadband Committee:

- ➡ Comprehensive BB plan, manage grants, direct relationship with active (sometimes small) providers

Grow North Regional Broadband Committee:

- ➡ Regional level conversation, introduce resources, problem solve when common issues arise, may manage regional grants

9 Regions Broadband committee:

- ➡ advocate for state tools, research potential innovations in mapping, resource acquisition for state

9 Regions Broadband committee:
9 RPC's and 9 REDO's

Grow North Regional BB Committee:
Reps from 8 Counties and 3 Tribal Nations

County Broadband Committee:
local representatives + active providers

Early wins from this work:

County Broadband Committee:

- County level comprehensive Broadband plans (Marathon Co, Taylor Co, Oneida Co, many more)

Grow North Broadband Committee:

- RDOF readiness
- Goal: Middle Mile conversations

9 Regions Broadband committee:

- GEO Partners and what it could do (Brown Co Pilot)
- Mapping innovations

9 Regions Broadband committee:

9 RPC's and 9 REDO's

Grow North Regional BB Committee:

Reps from 8 Counties and 3 Tribal Nations

County Broadband Committee:

local representatives, active providers

Closing the Broadband Gap:

In closing

- Real work still ahead to close the gaps- active participation
- Find out who is already working on this- county level (ideal partner for towns), regional planning commission, regional economic development, etc.
- This situation is not unique to Wisconsin- we have many items stacked in our favor
- Grant funded projects are a major way to support the buildout

Questions ?

Thank you ~

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