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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Kansas awarded \$2 million from National Telecommunications and Information Administration for broadband mapping initiative**

*Recovery Act funding to lay groundwork for increased high-speed Internet in rural Kansas;  
Lt. Governor Findley, Commerce Secretary Thornton to host news conference Dec. 7 in Topeka*

Kansas has been awarded a \$2 million matching grant by the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to fund broadband mapping and planning through the Connect Kansas initiative.

The award will help Kansas collect data and develop a detailed map of the state's existing broadband infrastructure. The map will be a crucial tool for businesses, consumers and policymakers involved in the Connect Kansas initiative to increase high-speed Internet access in rural Kansas.

"High-speed Internet is crucial to our economy, our ability to serve citizens and our overall quality of life," Governor Mark Parkinson said. "We look forward to utilizing these Recovery Act funds to advance the Connect Kansas initiative and better serve our rural communities."

Connect Kansas is a Kansas Department of Commerce initiative to increase high-speed Internet access in the state's underserved rural areas. The initiative is funded primarily by the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and has two components: 1) mapping Kansas' broadband capacity, as well as related planning; and 2) providing federal grants and loans to qualified organizations involved in expanding broadband to rural areas. Today's announcement concerns only the mapping and planning component.

The mapping component is made possible by a \$185,000 contribution from the Information Network of Kansas and \$15,000 from Kansas Farm Bureau. The state has contracted with Connected Nation, a national leader in broadband issues and technology, to help with mapping and planning.

"Rural Kansas remains a crucial to our state's economy and heritage," said Carole Jordan, Rural Development Division Director for the Kansas Department of Commerce. "We're excited to move forward with the Connect Kansas initiative and increase broadband access in rural Kansas, which will benefit our state economy, create new Kansas jobs and help us fulfill the mission of the federal Recovery Act."

Kansas businesses, organizations, Internet service providers and citizens are asked to contribute to the mapping process by visiting [www.connectkansas.org](http://www.connectkansas.org) and providing information about broadband access in their areas.

"Now that we've received federal funding for the mapping process, it's crucial that Kansas businesses, organizations and everyday citizens provide us data about Internet connectivity in their regions," Jordan said.



“By doing so, they’ll help us create a more complete map, which will allow us to achieve better results throughout rural Kansas.”

Kansas is one of 21 states since October to receive Recovery Act funding through the NTIA for state-level mapping initiatives. NTIA expects to continue announcing awards on a rolling basis throughout the fall. Data from the states’ individual maps will ultimately be displayed in NTIA’s national broadband map.

“We are pleased to be working with the Department of Commerce and the Governor’s Office to help create a comprehensive broadband map in the state of Kansas,” said Brian R. Mefford, Connected Nation’s chief executive officer. “We applaud NTIA for working diligently to create a national broadband map and are honored to have been selected to help Kansas in its efforts to close the digital divide in the state.”

**NEWS CONFERENCE SCHEDULED FOR DEC. 7 IN TOPEKA**

The Kansas Department of Commerce will celebrate today’s announcement with a news conference hosted by Lt. Governor Troy Findley and Kansas Commerce Secretary Bill Thornton on Dec. 7 at 11 a.m. in the auditorium of Memorial Hall in Topeka. All media, Internet service providers, organizations and citizens are invited to attend.

For more information, contact Joe Monaco, Public Information Officer with the Kansas Department of Commerce, at (785) 296-3760 or [jmonaco@kansascommerce.com](mailto:jmonaco@kansascommerce.com).

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