



## **Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development & Connect Alaska Unveil Interactive Map to Increase High-Speed Internet Access and Adoption**

For Immediate Release:  
September 1, 2010

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**Anchorage** – Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development Commissioner Susan Bell today announced the launch of Alaska’s first statewide broadband availability map. The web-based map is fully interactive and puts powerful tools and information directly into the hands of anyone interested in improving the technological landscape in the Last Frontier State.

“We are living in an increasingly digital world, where being connected to the Internet is essential to enhancing our quality of life. This newly completed map paves the way for technology which will create new jobs, increase Alaska’s economic competitiveness, and deliver services that have been previously unavailable to rural areas of the state,” said Commissioner Bell. “No matter where you live in Alaska, high-speed Internet enables access to quality employment, information, and vital services ranging from interactive telemedicine to distance education opportunities. Broadband gives you the opportunity to work from home, take classes online, and market products to the world - all of which have a positive impact on the local economy and quality of life.”

Much like the revolutionary impact of harnessing electricity or the telephone, high-speed Internet connection is Alaska’s lifeline to future prosperity. The development of Alaska’s map is funded by a federal stimulus grant and is guided by the Connect Alaska initiative, in partnership with the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED). Connect Alaska is a subsidiary of the national nonprofit Connected Nation and is Alaska’s designated entity under the grant award.

Alaska’s newly completed map shows great progress in spreading broadband across the state. Eighteen broadband providers offered data showing that 90.25% Alaskans can access broadband. However, of those, only 77% of residents report using broadband at home. The Connect Alaska initiative will continue the process of getting Alaskans online

and accessing the unlimited benefits and economic opportunity associated with broadband.

Full access to Alaska's interactive map is available now through the Connect Alaska website at [www.connectak.org](http://www.connectak.org).

“The data you find on the Connect Alaska map reflects the beginning phase of a comprehensive initiative to address the supply and demand side challenges of the state. The goal of the Connect Alaska initiative is to help all Alaskans, particularly those in the remote villages, access the essential benefits of broadband. This effort applies to all sectors – school districts, higher education institutions, health care providers, tourism agencies, businesses, and government entities – each group offers a unique perspective for determining the technological challenges and needs in their communities,” explains Brian Mefford, CEO of Connect Alaska's parent organization, Connected Nation. “It is imperative that the map is as accurate as possible, so we are urging everyone to check the information reflected at your address and report any inaccuracies through our feedback mechanisms.”

All Alaska residents are encouraged to visit the Connect Alaska website, [www.connectak.org](http://www.connectak.org), to join in this important initiative and offer feedback. The website gives residents a one-stop-shopping portal where they can find providers at their address, check their current Internet speeds, request broadband service in their area, and share stories of how high-speed Internet has impacted their lives.

Connect Alaska is funded through a \$1.9 million award by the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to launch the initiative in the state and carry out the work over a five-year period. Under the NTIA State Broadband Data and Development grant program Connect Alaska is charged with creating statewide awareness, mapping, and maintaining the state broadband inventory for two years, and conduct planning efforts for a period of five years. These funds are part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. NTIA, as required by the ARRA, will make a national broadband map publicly available by February 17, 2011.

By increasing broadband access and use across the state, Alaska is facing a bright future, with greater opportunities, and a new throughway to economic empowerment.

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Related Links:

Press Release: [Alaska Awarded \\$1.9 Million for Broadband Initiative](#)

*All Connect Alaska press releases are also available via the Internet at [www.connectak.org/press\\_release](http://www.connectak.org/press_release)*

**About Connect Alaska:** Connect Alaska is a subsidiary of Connected Nation and operates as a non-profit in the state of Alaska. The Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED) is leading the initiative to increase broadband Internet access throughout rural Alaska. Connect Alaska was commissioned by the state to work with all broadband providers in the state to create detailed maps of broadband coverage in order to accurately pinpoint remaining gaps in broadband availability in Alaska. This work will support developing a statewide plan for the deployment and adoption of broadband in the state. For more information visit: [www.connectak.org](http://www.connectak.org).