

Connected Nation Receives ARRA Grant for Connected Texas Initiative



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For Immediate Release
January 13, 2010

[Link to Press Release](#)

Connected Texas Will Give Residents Powerful Hands-on Mapping Tool

Washington, DC –Texas is getting approximately \$3 million in federal funds to improve high-speed Internet access across the state. The U.S. Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) made the announcement yesterday.

The grant money will fund a project called Connected Texas (www.connectedtx.org) which is a partnership between the Texas Department of Agriculture and the national non-profit, Connected Nation. Work will begin immediately on the five-year initiative, by first creating a detailed map of current broadband availability across the Lone Star State. The map will be created with new, cutting-edge technology that will give Texans a powerful, hands-on tool for finding real-time information on high-speed Internet availability. BroadbandStat was developed by Connected Nation in conjunction with ESRI, the world market leader in geographic information system (GIS) software. BroadbandStat allows viewers to zoom in all the way down to street level for specific information on what services are available in a specific area. The information gathered by Connected Texas will also be included in the new, national broadband map mandated by the federal government, which is scheduled to be available beginning February 2011.

“We are pleased to be working with the Texas Department of Agriculture to help create a comprehensive broadband map in the state of Texas,” said Brian R. Mefford, Connected Nation’s chief executive officer. “Broadband is a modern lifeline to quality jobs, information and vital services like interactive telemedicine and education. Yet, thousands of Texas residents still have no access to affordable, high-speed Internet. Connected Texas is going to lay the foundation for broadband expansion across Texas.”

The grant is comprised of \$2.5 million for two years of researching current broadband in Texas and creating a map. Another \$500,000 is allotted for future broadband planning activities over a five-year period, bringing the total grant award to approximately \$3 million. The award comes through NTIA’s State Broadband Data and Development

Grant Program and is a matching grant funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Connected Texas also gives residents a powerful, interactive tool for improving their access to high speed Internet. The state's Web site (www.connectedtx.org) was launched in September 2009 and allows people to test their current Internet speed, provide feedback on service in their area and share their personal stories of how high speed Internet has impacted their lives.

This latest award brings the number of Connected Nation's partner projects to a total of thirteen: 12 states and one U.S. territory on the national broadband mapping effort. These efforts comprise approximately 42 percent of the country's landmass and encompass approximately 39.5 million households.

More than \$7 billion in stimulus funds have been designated to help expand broadband access to unserved and underserved communities across the United States. These funds are available through NTIA's Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) and the Rural Utilities Service's Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP). NTIA has received applications for the grant program from all 50 states, five territories and the District of Columbia. The agency is currently reviewing the remaining five applications. The remaining awards are expected to be announced in the next few weeks.

As the organization that produced the nation's first granular statewide broadband availability map in 2005, Connected Nation is a prominent voice for the nation's need for better broadband data. Connected Nation has completed statewide broadband availability maps for eight states, all prior to the current stimulus fund availability. In addition to these mapping projects, Connected Nation has worked with local communities to encourage broadband adoption and use. These programs, including computer donation, technology planning and economic development, are an essential step in closing the digital divide in the United States.

Connected Nation has worked closely with national leaders and provided numerous [filings](#) in support of a process for broadband data collection at the national level. To learn more about the programs that are helping more families and communities connect through broadband, visit www.connectednation.org.

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Related Links:

[Press Release: Texas Receives \\$3 Million for Broadband Mapping and Planning](#)

[Press Release: Connected Texas Launches Web site to Solicit Citizen Feedback About Broadband](#)

[ESRI: About BroadbandStat](#)

[Blog: Connected Tennessee Debuts Latest Innovation in Broadband Mapping](#)

[Press Release: Connected Nation State-level Digital Inclusion Work Highlighted at FCC Public Hearing](#)

[News Article: Texas Partners with Connected Nation to Map Broadband Availability and Prepare for Federal Stimulus Funding \(Texas Magazine, 07/31/09\)](#)

[Press Release: Texas Partners with Connected Nation to Map Broadband Availability and Prepare for Federal Stimulus Funding](#)

[Press Release: Ten More Connected Nation Partner Projects Receive Recovery Act Funding For Broadband Mapping and Planning Initiatives](#)

About Connected Nation: Connected Nation is a national nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that expands access to and use of broadband Internet and the related technologies that are enabled when individuals and communities have the opportunity and desire to connect. Connected Nation effectively raises the awareness of the value of broadband and related technologies by developing coalitions of influencers and enablers for improving technology availability and use. Connected Nation works with consumers, community leaders, states, technology providers and foundations, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to develop and implement technology expansion programs with core competencies centered around a mission to improve digital inclusion for people and places previously underserved or overlooked.
www.connectednation.org.