

*Louisiana Public Service Commission*

215 St. Ann Drive, Suite 3  
Mandeville, La 70471

**JAY BLOSSMAN**  
Chairman

July 31, 2008

**First District**  
(985) 624-4660  
(985) 624-4470 Fax  
1-800-228-9368

Secretary Stephen Moret  
Louisiana Economic Development Department  
1051 North Third Street  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802-5239

**Re: Economic Development through addressing Rural Broadband Research**

Dear Secretary Moret:

The commissioners of the Louisiana Public Service Commission, are very concerned that significant portions of our state still lack the ability to access high-speed (broadband) internet service. Our offices receive more phone calls from constituents regarding broadband availability than almost any other issue. Broadband has become a critical piece of infrastructure for states that hope to progress economically and educationally. While Louisiana's broadband service providers have done well in deploying service in many areas across the state, we believe that more can be done to help them expand access to areas that are currently unserved and ensure that many rural Louisianans do not continue to be victims of what is known as the "digital divide."

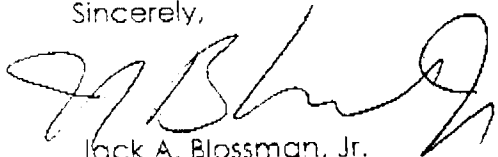
Fortunately, other states have successfully demonstrated that something can be done to address this problem. Connected Nation, a national non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, has helped the states of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio launch public-private partnerships that bring state government and the broadband provider industry together at a neutral and common table to facilitate a comprehensive program to help make broadband access universally available and increase broadband adoption rates in both rural and urban areas. Connected Nation has developed a model program that we believe could be replicated in Louisiana to achieve the same results. Connected Nation's ConnectKentucky program, for instance, has helped increase broadband access in that state from 60% in 2004 to 96% today. Additionally, broadband adoption rates have more than doubled during that time period, outpacing the national growth rate by 7% annually. By replicating the same model program in Tennessee and Ohio, Connected Nation has demonstrated that with very little investment, states can be proactive in addressing the broadband issue and can achieve remarkable results in a short period of time.

We believe that the state must act quickly to keep Louisiana from falling further behind. As such, as Chairman of the Commission, and on behalf of Commissioner James Field, Commissioner Dale Sittig, and Commissioner Lambert Boissiere, I would like to request

that you take some time in the near future to meet with Connected Nation and learn more about how their strategies could be implemented here in Louisiana. Brent Legg, Connected Nation's director of state & local initiatives, can be reached at (502) 330-7881 to facilitate such a meeting. We urge you to meet with them soon.

Louisiana is making great strides in securing a sustainable, vibrant economy for its citizens. But we must level the playing field across the state and ensure that all Louisianans can participate regardless of where they live. Let's work together to make that a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack Blossman, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Jack A. Blossman, Jr.  
Chairman