



## Anoka County Community-wide Broadband Project

### BROADBAND IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the rise of the interstate highway system became the key economic driver, facilitating the exchange of goods and services and connecting markets. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this role is played by broadband data infrastructure.

***A robust broadband data infrastructure is essential to the economic survival of towns, cities, and entire regions today and in the future.***

Congress recognized the importance of broadband in Section 706 of the 1996 Telecommunications Act which instructs the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) to “encourage the deployment on a reasonable and timely basis of advanced telecommunications capability to all Americans.”



In 2009 broadband has become a priority. As the Federal Communications Commission notes:

***Broadband technology is a key driver of economic growth. The ability to share large amounts of information at ever-greater speed increases productivity, facilitates commerce, and drives innovation. Broadband is changing how we communicate with each other, how and where we work, how we educate our children, and how we entertain ourselves.***

***When it comes to the Internet – speed matters. Communities must have ready access to high-speed connectivity in order to remain competitive in the global economy.***

### THE BIG DEAL ABOUT BROADBAND

Fiber-optic broadband provides a means for connecting homes, businesses, and government buildings with one another – and with the world – through the Internet. The main advantage of fiber broadband is that it’s roughly 500 times faster than cable and 20,000 times faster than dial-up.

- ✚ For everyone, quicker downloads, access to on-demand entertainment, and increased ability for telecommuting or flexible work schedules.
- ✚ For business, this means easier communications, greater productivity, and the ability to attract and retain workers.
- ✚ For government, this means improved efficiency, unprecedented transparency, and more responsive service.
- ✚ For everyone, broadband brings an enhanced Internet experience, as well as numerous new social, educational, and economic opportunities.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BROADBAND

*When it comes to the Internet, speed matters. Businesses must have ready access to high-speed connectivity in order to support the continued development of the services and applications that enable them to remain competitive in the global economy. In turn, high-speed networks stimulate innovation and entrepreneurial development by:*

- ✚ Attracting technology-based employers
- ✚ Supporting “creative workers” who often hold higher paying jobs
- ✚ Enhancing the efficiency and productivity of local government
- ✚ Improving the competitiveness of local businesses in a global marketplace
- ✚ Increasing the ability of smaller communities to attract and retain young people
- ✚ Expanding the opportunities for education beyond any boundaries of geography
- ✚ Encouraging the development and use of new services
- ✚ Providing the ability to handle large amounts of data for medical, library, and other data-intensive applications

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## ANOKA COUNTY'S BROADBAND VISION

As one of Minnesota's fastest growing counties, Anoka County includes both areas of high-density urban development as well as quaint communities and scattered farmsteads. This unique blend of population growth and rural identity highlights the important role of broadband in the future of Anoka County. The County recognizes a need to provide and improve access for broadband services for residents and businesses throughout the County.



For information call: 763-422-7426  
or e-mail at

[ConnectAnokaCounty@co.anoka.mn.us](mailto:ConnectAnokaCounty@co.anoka.mn.us)

**ConnectAnokaCounty**  
Attn: Matt Schmit  
2100 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Suite 300  
Anoka County, MN 55303

## UNIQUE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 includes \$7.2 billion for broadband initiatives, and creates a unique opportunity for Anoka County to leverage federal funding to realize its broadband development vision. Under current rules, Anoka County is eligible to apply for funding.

## PROJECT PLAN AND NEXT STEPS

The County is positioning itself to submit an application for funding in December 2009. As part of the application process, the County is reaching out to potential stakeholders within the community, such as area public schools, community and technical colleges, health care providers, businesses, municipalities, and residents. The County is also gathering input via residential phone surveys, business questionnaires, and community meetings.

Anoka County wants your input. We will be hosting community meetings at 7 p.m.  
on:

**September 29 at Spring Lake Park High School**  
**October 1 at Anoka City Hall**  
**October 8 at Ham Lake City Hall**

For additional information, visit our website at [ConnectAnokaCounty.com](http://ConnectAnokaCounty.com)