

Gov. Walker: Visits broadband grant recipients, highlights program successes

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MADISON - Governor Scott Walker joined Public Service Commission (PSC) Commissioner Mike Huebsch and State Broadband Director Angie Dickison today in highlighting the Broadband Expansion Grant Program, which benefits thousands of Wisconsinites by helping businesses, non-profits, and local governments invest in necessary infrastructure to access fast and reliable broadband service.

“We want the people of our state to have reliable access to broadband because in the 21st century economy, internet opens the door to infinite resources for our business leaders, teachers, doctors, patients, students, and residents,” Governor Walker said. “That’s why our budget proposal invests an additional \$34.5 million into broadband enhancement. It’s great to travel throughout Wisconsin today and hear firsthand from community leaders about how our broadband investments are positively affecting them. We’ve come a long way, but there’s still a lot of work to be done. And we won’t stop until every corner of our state, especially rural areas, have access to broadband internet.”

As part of Broadband Day, Governor Walker will visit Oneida County Economic Development Corporation in Rhinelander, Hull Town Hall in Stevens Point, Brooks Farm Homestead LLC in Waupaca, and Centurylink in Baraboo.

Governor Walker’s 2017-19 budget proposal invests an additional \$34.5 million in

total broadband expansion funding through PSC Expansion Grants and the Technology for Educational Achievement (TEACH) program.

The Governor created the Broadband Expansion Grant Program in the 2013-15 biennial budget and tripled funding for grants in the 2015-17 biennial budget. The Broadband Expansion Grants provide reimbursement for equipment and construction expenses incurred by efforts to extend or improve broadband telecommunications services in underserved regions of Wisconsin.

Last summer, Governor Walker also launched the Broadband Forward! Program, which coordinates and streamlines administrative procedures for the deployment of broadband, puts in place directives for communities to comply with certain procedures for reviewing applications and permits related to broadband projects, demonstrates a community's public support for increased broadband access, and encourages greater private and public broadband investment through certification. Since the Broadband Forward! Program launch, nine communities have been certified as "broadband ready" by the Broadband Forward! Community Certification Program.