

Rep. Quinn: Recognized for Internet, infrastructure accomplishments

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Madison – Representative Romaine Quinn (R-Barron) was recognized on Thursday by the Wisconsin State Telecommunications Association for what WSTA Executive Director Bill Esbeck called “an MVP caliber list” of accomplishments in the 2017-19 legislative session.

“Representative Quinn’s leadership on rural broadband initiatives is an indication of his commitment to rural Wisconsin,” Esbeck. “Rural communities with robust broadband can remain competitive in a 21st century economy, and Representative Quinn supports policy that results in partnerships, investment, and increased broadband deployment.”

Rep. Quinn authored several bills that promoted broadband expansion: Assembly Bill 123, which was eventually rolled into the state budget, expanded funding for Broadband Expansion Grants and TEACH grants that help school libraries improve students’ internet access. His Telecommuter Forward! Communities bill, AB 917, creates a state standard for municipalities to attract telecommuters to their communities.

“Expanding access to broadband and the economic development opportunities that come with it has been a priority for me since I took office,” said Rep. Quinn. “Many rural communities struggle with just getting high-speed access, and we can’t let

these folks fall behind their neighboring cities. Access to high-speed internet means increased opportunities for businesses, students, and families. I was proud to work with my colleagues, especially members of the Rural Wisconsin Initiative, to keep making progress on this issue.”

Rep. Quinn also sponsored legislation that ended a double tax on emergency cleanup after natural disasters. Small telecommunications companies and electrical cooperatives were taxed twice on the labor and time provided by emergency work crews when cleaning up and restoring power after a natural disaster. Assembly Bill 583 ended this double tax, helping keep disaster cleanup costs low.

“Seeing how this affected costs for ratepayers in the wake of the storms that rolled through our district last year, it was clear something had to be done to make sure people’s power bills didn’t increase after a disaster,” said Rep. Quinn.

“Representative Quinn is a true partner with rural broadband providers, our customers, and the communities we serve,” continued Esbeck. “He also understands how to facilitate partnerships between broadband providers, state government, local governments, and other stakeholders to create a win-win for rural Wisconsin.”