

Rep. Shankland: Applauds new funding for broadband expansion

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MADISON- Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) issued the following statement regarding today's announcement that over \$5 million of state funding from the federal CARES Act will be awarded by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) to expand high-speed, broadband internet. The new funding will be awarded to the 2020 broadband expansion grant applicants that did not receive funding and are able to connect customers by the end of the year.

"Wisconsin has lagged behind other states in rural broadband expansion, and the pandemic has only underscored the need to extend internet connectivity to all corners of our state. Folks need reliable internet for communication, healthcare, work, education, and commerce now more than ever.

"I frequently write letters of support for these broadband grants in our communities and hear from constituents about how beneficial they are, from the towns of Plover and Grant to Buena Vista and Sharon. I am pleased to see more people will benefit from these broadband expansion grants yet this year.

"I introduced legislation this year to increase funding for state broadband expansion grants, prioritize direct service to farmers, and improve our broadband mapping accuracy, and will continue advocating for rural broadband. I appreciate Governor Evers for also recognizing the urgent need for internet connectivity and its transformational importance to our quality of life. These additional CARES Act dollars will bring broadband to unserved and underserved areas of our state at a time when it is sorely needed."