



For Immediate Release

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WSTA Honors Senator Howard Marklein for Leadership on Rural Broadband Expansion

Madison, WI - Wisconsin's premier telecommunications industry association recognized Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green) for his strong leadership and support of policies to promote rural broadband expansion and partnerships between communities, broadband providers and key stakeholders. Senator Marklein received the Wisconsin State Telecommunications Association (WSTA) Excellence in Legislative Leadership Award earlier this week at the 2022 WSTA Fall Conference.

"Senator Marklein is a rural broadband champion, period. His track record of success supporting rural broadband expansion in Wisconsin is second to none," said Bill Esbeck, WSTA executive director. "Senator Marklein recognizes the role broadband plays in improving quality of life and economic opportunities. WSTA members share his passion, and we value our partnership that facilitates rural broadband investment."

"I am proud to be recognized by WSTA for our collaboration on broadband issues. I know that our success in expanding broadband access in rural Wisconsin involves dozens of hard-working telecommunications providers, community champions and the men and women who connect our communities," Senator Marklein said. "Since 2014, we have made tremendous progress, but I know there is much more work to be done. I appreciate the partnership and collaboration with WSTA as we continue to make sure state government supports their efforts to expand and reach new people and neighborhoods every day."

Since 2015, Senator Marklein's success on broadband policy includes:

- Authoring the Broadband Forward! Community Certification law ([2015 WI Act 278](#)), which helps streamline local permitting for broadband projects
- Chairing the 2016 Legislative Council Rural Broadband Study Committee, which was a thoughtful, inclusive process to improve opportunities for rural broadband investment
- Authoring Broadband Expansion Grant Program improvements and securing historic funding increases for the grant program in the 2017-2019 Biennial Budget as a member of the Joint Committee on Finance

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- Authoring the Telecommuter Forward! Community Certification law ([2017 WI Act 342](#)), which is a first-in-the-nation initiative to facilitate partnerships, job creation and economic activity through broadband usage
- Authoring the Rural Broadband Property Tax Exemption law ([2019 WI Act 128](#)) for existing and future rural broadband infrastructure, which facilitates additional rural broadband investment
- Allocating a record \$129 million for the Broadband Expansion Grant Program in the 2021-2023 Biennial Budget as chair of the Joint Committee on Finance

“This is the second time WSTA has honored Senator Marklein’s work on rural broadband expansion,” continued Esbeck. “We look forward to continuing our partnership to connect rural Wisconsin’s remaining unserved and underserved customers.”

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