

Connected Texas Launches Web site to Solicit Citizen Feedback About Broadband



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*Connected Texas Web site provides forum for Texans
to register technology needs and test connection speeds*

AUSTIN– Today, the Texas Department of Agriculture and Connected Nation launched a Web site for Texas’ comprehensive broadband mapping initiative. The site is designed to collect information from Texans to help identify current broadband availability across the state and highlight areas that are currently unserved by a broadband provider. The Web site, www.connectedtx.org, allows for consumer feedback and broadband validation.

“It is critical to bridge the digital divide and connect all Texans,” Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples said. “To do this we must find out the haves and have-nots when it comes to broadband service. This new Web site provides opportunities for Texans to help us pinpoint broadband availability across the Lone Star state. Join me in telling your broadband story. And, the best news, you have the opportunity to write the final chapter.”

Connectedtx.org allows broadband subscribers to test their connection speed and describe how broadband impacts their lives. Those who do not currently have broadband access can add their name and address to a secure database of households that would like to subscribe if given the opportunity. The information collected on the Web site supports the creation of the broadband inventory map that will assist in expanding broadband delivery to residents across the state.

The Texas broadband map, set to be released in November 2009, will show broadband service availability by households, based on information from providers across Texas, including cable, telephone, wireless Internet service providers, rural cooperatives and municipalities. Most importantly, the broadband map will show service gaps remaining in rural and other remote locations.

Connected Nation conducted a recent study of the impact of public-private broadband expansion programs funded through the Broadband Data Improvement Act (BDIA). The study found that a comprehensive, grassroots-driven program for increased broadband access and use in Texas could result in a total economic impact of \$9.4 billion through the creation of nearly 173,000 jobs and cost savings in areas such as health care and the environment and through activities such as telecommuting.

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About Connected Texas: Connected Texas is a comprehensive broadband mapping initiative designed to assess current broadband availability across Texas and determine where broadband is not available. Connected Texas works with technology providers to develop broadband inventory maps for the purpose of improving digital inclusion statewide. This project is sponsored by the Texas Department of Agriculture. For more information about Connected Texas, visit www.connectedtx.org.