



Connect Alaska Offers Interactive Tools to Improve High-Speed Internet Access

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –June 3, 2010

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Juneau, AK – Connect Alaska, a nonprofit public-private partnership, is now putting valuable tools and information directly into the hands of Alaska residents in an effort to identify areas of the state unserved or underserved by high-speed Internet access. The Connect Alaska website now allows anyone access to tools to help improve their Internet connection at www.connectak.org. Users can check their current Internet speeds, request quality broadband service in their area, and share stories of how high-speed Internet has impacted their lives.

“In today’s digital world, being connected to the Internet is critical to preserving and improving lifestyle,” says Brian Mefford, CEO of Connect Alaska’s parent company, Connected Nation. “Whether you live in a rural or urban area, broadband gives you the opportunity to work from home, take online classes, and market your products – all of which have a positive impact on the local economy. Yet, for thousands of Alaska residents, affordable access to high-speed Internet is still not available.”

These interactive tools are just the beginning of what will soon be available through the Connect Alaska website. Connect Alaska has been commissioned by the state and the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development to create the state’s first complete broadband map. The map is being created in collaboration with the state’s broadband providers and will be viewable using cutting-edge BroadbandStat technology, which will make it fully interactive and available to anyone with Internet access. Visitors will be able to find information about broadband providers, down to the street level, including the provider contact information and the types of broadband service available at their address. Alaska’s BroadbandStat map will be unveiled later this summer on the Connect Alaska website.

“High-speed Internet facilitates access to quality jobs, information, and vital services ranging from interactive telemedicine to higher education,” said Michael Black, deputy commissioner of the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development. “By increasing broadband access and use across the state, Alaska will have greater opportunities and a new throughway to economic empowerment.”

Connect Alaska is funded through a \$1.9 million award by the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to launch the initiative in the state and carry out the work over a five-year period. Under the NTIA State Broadband Data and Development grant program, Connect Alaska is charged with creating statewide awareness, mapping, and maintaining the state broadband inventory for two years, and conducting planning efforts for a period of five years. These funds are part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. NTIA, as required by the ARRA, will make a national broadband map publicly available by February 17, 2011.

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Related Links: www.connectak.org.

***About Connect Alaska:** Connect Alaska is a subsidiary of Connected Nation, a national nonprofit that promotes broadband adoption and availability across America. Connect Alaska partners with technology-minded businesses, government entities, and universities to accelerate technology in the state. The work of Connect Alaska is made possible by support from the State of Alaska and the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development. The project is funded, in part, by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) State Broadband Data and Development (SBDD) grant program. For more information about what Connect Alaska is doing to accelerate technology in Alaska's communities, please visit www.connectak.org.*