

# South Carolina Receives \$1.7M to Map State's Broadband Availability



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*Connect South Carolina Initiative Will Feature Latest in Broadband Mapping Technology.*

**Columbia, SC**— Yesterday, South Carolina received a match grant of approximately \$1.7 million from the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to support a comprehensive broadband mapping and planning initiative through the Connect South Carolina program.

Connect South Carolina ([www.connectsc.org](http://www.connectsc.org)) is a partnership between the state of South Carolina and Connected Nation to increase broadband Internet access throughout rural South Carolina. The grant is comprised of \$1.2 million for broadband data collection and mapping activities over a two-year period and almost \$500,000 for broadband planning activities over a five-year period in South Carolina, bringing the total grant award to approximately \$1.7 million. The award provided through NTIA's State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program is a matching grant and part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

"For our state to be remain competitive and thrive in an increasingly global marketplace, it is vital that people living in rural South Carolina have as much of a chance to get on the information highway as people living in our urban cores," said Governor Mark Sanford. "As we've long advocated, without high speed access, the economic growth opportunities of these regions may well be locked in at low speeds and for the way that this grant can help the public sector leverage the private sector's investment in rural broadband, I'd encourage Connect South Carolina in the task before them."

The data collected from the Connect South Carolina initiative will be displayed in the national broadband map, which will help inform policymakers and provide consumers with improved information on broadband Internet services available in the United States.

As part of the Connect South Carolina initiative, Connected Nation will be implementing a brand new interactive mapping tool for viewing, analyzing and validating broadband data. Called BroadbandStat, the new interactive mapping platform is a multi-functional,

user-friendly way for local leaders, policymakers, consumers and technology providers to devise a plan for the expansion and adoption of broadband. BroadbandStat was developed by Connected Nation in conjunction with ESRI, the world market leader in geographic information system (GIS) software.

BroadbandStat is unique because it allows a user to build and evaluate broadband expansion scenarios using a wealth of data, including education and population demographics, current broadband speeds and availability and research about the barriers to adoption. The tool also provides an instant feedback mechanism for consumers to validate broadband data electronically or via phone.

As the organization that produced the nation's first accurate statewide broadband availability map in 2005, Connected Nation is a prominent voice for the nation's need for better broadband data. Connected Nation has worked closely with national leaders and provided numerous [filings](#) in support of a process for broadband data collection at the national level.

"We are pleased to be working with the state to help create a comprehensive broadband map of South Carolina," said Brian R. Mefford, Connected Nation's chief executive officer. "We applaud NTIA for working diligently to create a national broadband map and are honored to have been selected to help South Carolina in its efforts to close the digital divide in the state."

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**About Connect South Carolina:** Connect South Carolina is a subsidiary of Connected Nation and operates as a non-profit in the state of South Carolina. The state of South Carolina is leading the initiative to increase broadband Internet access throughout South Carolina. Connect South Carolina was commissioned by the Governor's Office to work with all broadband providers in the state of South Carolina to create detailed maps of broadband coverage in order to accurately pinpoint remaining gaps in broadband availability in South Carolina. [www.connectsc.org](http://www.connectsc.org).

**About Connected Nation:** Connected Nation is a national nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that expands access to and use of broadband Internet and the related technologies that are enabled when individuals and communities have the opportunity and desire to connect. Connected Nation effectively raises the awareness of the value of broadband and related technologies by developing coalitions of influencers and enablers for improving technology availability and use. Connected Nation works with consumers, community leaders, states, technology providers and foundations, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to develop and implement technology expansion programs with core competencies centered around a mission to improve digital inclusion for people and places previously underserved or overlooked. [www.connectednation.org](http://www.connectednation.org).