South Carolina Broadband Adoption Rate Increasing

Adoption rate grows by nearly 10%, yet 1.2 million South Carolina residents remain unconnected

COLUMBIA, SC – New data from Connect South Carolina shows that broadband adoption in the state is increasing, with 66% (2.4 million) of residents now subscribing to broadband service, up from 57% in 2011. One of the biggest jumps was among low-income rural households where broadband adoption grew faster than in the rest of the state. Despite the growth, 1.2 million state residents remain unconnected to empowering and vital high-speed Internet service.

The data is available via an interactive widget on the Connect South Carolina website.

Among the key findings of the residential survey are:

- Across the state, approximately 263,000 children live without broadband service at home. For many of these families, cost is the biggest hurdle to overcome - 21% of households with children say the price of a computer is too expensive, and 17% cite the monthly cost of broadband service as a barrier.

- Mobile broadband usage is soaring in South Carolina. More than one-half of South Carolina adults go online using their cell phones or mobile

devices, and young adults (age 18-34) are more likely to use the Internet on their cell phones than they are to have home broadband service.

- Nearly two-thirds of rural Internet users (65%) with annual household incomes less than $25,000 use the Internet to search for or apply for jobs.

- 14% of rural residents access the Internet via mobile device only; significantly higher than the non-rural population.

This survey is conducted in support of Connect South Carolina's efforts to close South Carolina's digital divide and explores the barriers to high-speed Internet adoption, rates of broadband adoption among various demographics, and the types of activities broadband subscribers conduct online, among other findings.

"We couldn't be more excited to see South Carolina's broadband adoption rate jump by almost ten percent since 2011," said Connect South Carolina Stakeholder Relations Manager Corey Johns. "With approximately 329,000 more South Carolina residents now taking advantage of the potentially life-changing opportunities enabled through high-speed Internet access, this news validates the ongoing efforts to increase broadband access, adoption, and use across South Carolina."

To address the remaining digital divide, Connect South Carolina offers the Every Community Online program providing free digital literacy training and low-cost computers and Internet access, while the Connected Nation Connected Community Engagement Program, with 17 communities already enrolled, provides technology planning and assessments to address broadband access, adoption, and use.

Connect South Carolina's 2012 residential survey was conducted in late 2012 and includes responses from 1,200 adult heads of households. The survey was conducted as part of the State Broadband Initiative (SBI) grant program, funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, and by the American Recovery and Reinvestment of 2009.

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About Connect South Carolina: As the State Broadband Initiative, Connect South Carolina is leading the effort to increase high-speed Internet access, adoption and use to ensure South Carolina's competitiveness in the connected

global economy of the twenty-first century. Connect South Carolina is a public-private partnership designated by the state to work with all broadband providers to create South Carolina's first interactive map of broadband coverage. This work serves as a foundation for addressing remaining service gaps while also engaging state, regional and local leaders in workforce development activities designed to bridge South Carolina's digital divide. For maps, research or to get involved with efforts in your community please visit: www.ConnectSC.org.

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