



Beaufort County, Hilton Head Island Join Innovative Broadband Expansion Effort

Leaders enlist in South Carolina's Connected program to bridge technology gap, boost economy, seed ground for innovations

Media Contact: Jessica Ditto
jditto@connectednation.org
(202) 251-4749

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Jennifer Cobb
jcobb@connectednation.org
(615) 828-1017

Hilton Head Island, SC – Community leaders from Hilton Head Island and Beaufort County have enrolled their communities in an innovative program that seeks to boost the local economy and quality of life for residents through increased access, adoption, and use of broadband.

On Friday, January 31, Connect South Carolina Community Technology Advisor Lindsay Conrad led the community leaders through the steps of the Connected Community Engagement Program that offers a comprehensive and localized way for communities to bridge the digital divide impacting many regions.

"Joining the Connected program is a great first step for a community that cares about its residents, businesses, and future economic success," said Conrad. "There is a great possibility that should our Beaufort County stakeholders come together and complete the components of the assessment, we just may be able to rank Beaufort County and Hilton Head Island as certified Connected communities in South Carolina."

The kick-off planning meeting was held at the Beaufort County Library in the town of Hilton Head Island and Jim Collett, with the Hilton Head Island Technology Taskforce, welcomed nearly 40 guests to the meeting and explained the need for community planning around broadband in the area.

"Technology opens the door to the future. From healthcare to education, agriculture to business - everything we do now, we can do better, faster, and more efficiently," said Collett. "Making

broadband technology a reality for the citizens of this community places a world of opportunities at their fingertips. This is good."

The Connected Community Engagement Program involves building a comprehensive Technology Action Plan for developing a technology-ready community by reviewing the technology landscape, developing regional partnerships, establishing local teams, and conducting a thorough community assessment.

Meetings for both communities will be held together but the Connected program assessments will be completed separately. Shea Farrar, senior planner, Comprehensive Planning Division, Town of Hilton Head Island; and Daniel Morgan, IT director of Beaufort County, will begin outreach and follow up to attendees to help build the stakeholder list as the teams start to gather information for their respective assessments. The next meeting will be again held at the Beaufort County Library on February 28 at 2 p.m. For more information, contact Lindsay Conrad at lconrad@connectsc.org.

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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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Connected Nation developed the Connected Community Engagement Program to help guide a community through an assessment of its overall broadband and technology status. Connected Certified Communities have measurably demonstrated their proficiency for effective Access, Adoption, and Use of broadband supported technologies. Connected Nation through its partners provides a national platform for recognizing those communities that excel across these important benchmarks. Funded by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), this effort is part of the State Broadband Initiative. <http://www.connectednation.org/get-connected>