

Clarendon County Releases Comprehensive Technology Action Plan

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Clarendon County proclaims commitment to economic development, quality of life with Connected community technology plan

Manning, SC – Clarendon County now has an action plan to make way for greater technology use across the community and pave the way for a brighter economic future. The <u>Technology Action Plan</u> was unveiled Thursday at Central Carolina Technical College, F.E. Dubose Campus in Manning, as part of Clarendon County's participation in the <u>Connected</u> Community Engagement Program through the Connect South Carolina initiative. Thirty-two South Carolina communities are currently involved in some stage of the Connected program, but Clarendon is the state's seventh to unveil its official Technology Action Plan.

Participating in the Connected program means Clarendon County has gone through an extensive assessment of its overall broadband and technology innovation. The Technology Action Plan sets general community-wide broadband connectivity requirements to be worked toward that will support economic development and residential quality of life. The new plan gives the community step-by-step action items to make sure that goals are met and will aid in future broadband expansion and programs that will ensure the community maintains widespread Internet access, adoption, and use.

Dawn Griffith with the Clarendon Chamber of Commerce welcomed guests and Dr. Julie Griffin, director of the Clarendon Adult Education, and gave an overview of the assessment process to date. Lindsay Conrad, Connect South Carolina community technology advisor, provided an overview of Connect South Carolina and the Connected program to representatives from the education, government, economic development, and other various sectors.

Attendees were presented with the Clarendon County Technology Plan showcasing their technology inventory as well as scores indicating their successes and room for improvement in the areas of access, adoption, and use. Priority Action Items identified were:

- procure a multipurpose mobile technology center
- develop a technology mentorship program
- establish a "Community Technology Academy"
- develop or identify a broadband training and awareness program for small and medium businesses

"By bringing high-speed Internet to our community, we put our region ahead of the curve," said Dr. Griffin. "Technology puts our state on the road to success by fostering new jobs, new opportunities, and increased economic development."

The Connected program is part of the Connect South Carolina initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce NTIA State Broadband Initiative program. Connect South Carolina is working to facilitate the access, adoption, and use of technology throughout the state to create a better business environment, more effective community and economic development, improved healthcare, more efficient government, enhanced education, and improved quality of life. Residents are encouraged to get involved by joining their local Connected technology team and using the free Every Community Online program offered by Connect South Carolina to get training in computer and Internet skills which makes them eligible for discounted computers and home Internet service.

Photo: From left, Myrna Belser, Clarendon Adult Education; Dr. Julie Griffin, Clarendon Adult Education; Ann Cutter, Clarendon Adult Education; Lindsay Conrad, Connect South Carolina, and Dawn Griffith, Clarendon Chamber of Commerce, at the Connected Technology Action Plan release event Thursday at the Central Carolina Technical College, F.E. Dubose Campus in Manning.

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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. www.connectmycommunity.org