# Abbeville Community Enrolls in Connect South Carolina's Connected Program

*Kickoff Meeting Focused on Access, Adoption, and Use of High-Speed Internet in Abbeville Community*

**Abbeville, SC** – Abbeville community leaders have enrolled their community in the innovative Connected program that seeks to boost the local economy and quality of life for residents through increased access, adoption, and use of high-speed Internet.

Connect South Carolina State Program Manager Heather Jones, along with community leaders representing healthcare, industry, economic development, education, county/city government, and other stakeholders, brought together by Steve Bowles, Abbeville County economic development director, joined together on June 19 at the County Administration building to discuss ideas and challenges to bringing high-speed Internet to the area.

Attendees were given the opportunity to discuss the Connect South Carolina Connected engagement goals and objectives for their community. Representatives of the outlying communities of Abbeville that do not have fiber to the home broadband availability talked about increased provider participation and extended services to their areas.

School representatives focused on advancements in technology and grant opportunities for educational purposes. They also expressed concern regarding inadequate staff to assist with deployment and implementation if new programs were to be funded.

"The participation at the Abbeville community kickoff meeting is a great example of the awareness of the importance of expanding and enhancing the access, adoption, and use of broadband throughout all facets of a community," said Jones. "I am excited to see the interests and concerns of these individuals being voiced for the betterment of the entire community and I look forward to working with them to achieve their goals."

The Connected Community Engagement Program involves building a comprehensive 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. The gathered information from the meeting on June 19 will be used to help create the Technology Action Plan for the Abbeville community.

The Connected program is part of the Connect South Carolina initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce NTIA State Broadband Initiative program.

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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

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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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