



# Lexington County Becomes Third South Carolina Certified Connected Community

**Contact:** Jennifer Cobb  
[jcobb@connectednation.org](mailto:jcobb@connectednation.org)  
(615) 828-1017

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***Lexington County proclaims commitment to economic development, quality of life with Connected Community certification; becomes third community in state to achieve certification***

**Lexington, SC** – Lexington County is now officially a Connect South Carolina Certified [Connected](#) Community! With Lexington’s certification, the community becomes the 34th in the country and the third in the state of South Carolina, after Anderson and Abbeville counties, to achieve certification.

During the certification process, Lexington County schools, its library system, businesses, municipalities, and other community partners participated in a rigorous nine-month assessment process that measured the County’s performance in the area of high-speed Internet access, as well as in the community’s use of new and emerging technologies. To achieve the certification, the County had to score at least 100 points out of 120. Lexington County scored 114.

The announcement was celebrated during the Certification Ceremony at the County’s state of the art Emergency Operations Center on Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup>.

“The County of Lexington, through collaboration and cooperation with all of our community partners, is elated with becoming a Certified Connected Community,” said Joe Mergo, Lexington County Administrator. “We continue to be progressive and forward thinking as we position our community for future success in a twenty-first century technology environment for our schools, governments, medical providers, and businesses.”

Connected certification affords a community an avenue to discuss its success and pursue opportunities as a recognized, technologically advanced community. The [Lexington County Technology Action Plan](#) unveiled at the event includes projects and action items established for Lexington County related to partnerships, connectivity, and broadband training and awareness, to undertake in the near future.

The certification is an important benchmark as the team now phases into working its newly established long-term community technology action plan.

In photo from left: Public Information Officer for Lexington-Richland School District Five, Mark Bounds; Superintendent Elect for Richland School District Two, Dr. Tom Siler; Lexington County School District One, Superintendent Dr. Karen Woodward; Lexington County Administrator, Joe Mergo; Director, Lexington County Library System, Dee Bedenbaugh; Lexington County Council Chairman, Johnny Jeffcoat; Community Champion & Community Development Title VI/Grant Manager Stephany Snowden; Connect South Carolina Community Technology Advisor Leslie Callison, and Connect South Carolina Executive Director Jim Stritzinger unveiling the official Certified Connected sign.

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**About Connect South Carolina:** As the State Broadband Initiative grantee, 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](http://www.ConnectSC.org). Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

**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.