



Lexington County Joins Innovative Broadband Expansion Effort

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

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Lexington, SC – Community leaders with Lexington Connects have enrolled their community 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 Wednesday, February 19, Connect South Carolina community technology advisors Leslie Callison and Heather Jones 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.

The kick-off planning meeting was held at the Lexington County Administration building, with more than 50 attendees from numerous county municipalities, the local technical college, library, healthcare system, and local agencies.

"There is a tremendous amount of energy and support for the Connected program and Connect South Carolina in Lexington County," said Joe Mergo, Lexington County administrator. "Our leadership and community partners understand that this program will provide the framework for the county to become a world leader in the areas of digital literacy, education, economic development, and healthcare in this globally competitive environment."

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.

During the kickoff meeting, the need was stressed for additional talent in the IT pipeline. Technology in education was also touted as a bright spot as Lexington County School District One began its Personal Mobile Computing Initiative during the 2010-2011 school year and in 2011-2012, all high school students received iPads; in 2012-2013 the program expanded to middle school students.

The next steps include following up with members of the technology action committee on information shared to get further details and additional contacts who will be useful in identifying outreach efforts available in the community.

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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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CONNECTEDSM
Community Engagement Program

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>