



Madden's on Gull Lake – Brainerd, MN  
October 23-24, 2018

[#mnbroadband](#)



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# Welcome!

Welcome to Madden's and this year's *Border to Border Broadband: Transforming Minnesota* conference!

Our perennial tag line, "Connect, Learn and Recharge", reflects our commitment to you to provide the space, the inspiration and some time away from your day-to-day to gather with others who share your passion and commitment for bringing better broadband to all of Minnesota's rural communities.

It's in your community where the transformation happens. This year we showcase a variety of approaches that rural Minnesotans have implemented to transform their communities into vibrant places now and into the future. And, during the conference, transformation is happening in real time with three communities that are rolling up their sleeves...

We're glad you're here. We're sure you will be glad you came.

~Bernadine Joselyn

Director of Public Policy & Engagement, Blandin Foundation

*On behalf of the conference planning team*



Blandin Foundation™  
STRENGTHENING RURAL MINNESOTA



# Agenda at a Glance

## Tuesday, October 23

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### *Town Hall Conference Center*

**9:00 am**    **Registration Opens**  
Continental Breakfast

**10:00**      **Concurrent Sessions**

<b>Broadband 101</b> (Governor Anderson – Lower Level)
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<b>Approaches to Broadband-Based Economic Development</b> (Ballroom A)
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**12:00 pm**   **Lunch** (Ballroom B)  
**Introducing the New Blandin Broadband Communities**

**1-4:30**      **Climbing the Digital Use Ladder: Digital Inclusion, Adoption and Innovation**  
(Ballroom A)

**1-5:00**      **Community Broadband Feasibility Charrette** (Lower Level)

**Free time / Hotel Check-in**

### *Wilson Bay*

**5:30**        **Welcome Reception**

**6:30**        **Dinner**

**7:30**        **The Net Benefits of Broadband Adoption: An Empirical Case Study of Rural Indiana**  
with Alison Grant

**8:30**        **Social Time**

## Wednesday, October 24

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### *Town Hall Conference Center*

**7:45 am Breakfast Buffet**

**8:45 Welcome and Opening Remarks (Ballroom A)**

**9:00 Morning Keynote – *Digital Equity and Democracy: The Role of Internet Access and Use in Building Shared Prosperity* with Lisa Peterson-de la Cueva**

**9:45 Break**

**10-noon Community Broadband Feasibility Charrette (Lower Level)**

**10:00 Concurrent Sessions**

<b>What it Takes: Community Champions Share their Playbook for Pursuing the Broadband They Want and Need (Ballroom A)</b>
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<b>By the Numbers: A Workshop on Calculating the ROI of Rural Broadband for Your Community (Governor Anderson – Lower Level)</b>
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**10:45 Break**

**11:00 Concurrent Sessions**

<b>Tools to Track and Build Community Demand (Ballroom A)</b>
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<b>Broadband Advocacy Tips and Tools (Governor Anderson – Lower Level)</b>
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**12:00 pm Lunch (Ballroom B)**

**1:00 Get to Know the Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition (Ballroom A)**

**1:45 Community Broadband Feasibility Charrette Presentations  
Provider Respondent Panel**

**3:15 Closing Reflections**

**3:30 Adjourn**

# Program

## Tuesday, October 23

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*Town Hall Conference Center*

**9:00 Registration Opens**

**10-Noon Concurrent Sessions**

<b>Broadband 101 (Governor Anderson – Lower Level)</b>
<b>Approaches to Broadband-Based Economic Development (Ballroom A)</b>

### **Broadband 101 (Governor Anderson – Lower Level)**

This session will improve community leaders’ ability to make smart decisions and create partnerships to deliver wired and wireless broadband technologies.

Facilitated by Bill Coleman, Community Technology Advisors

Speakers: Jason Dale, Cooperative Network Services

Doug Dawson, CCG Consulting

Diane Kruse, NEO Connect

Mark Mrla, Finley Engineering



**Bill Coleman** helps communities make the connection between telecommunications and economic development. As owner of Community Technology Advisors since 2000, he assists community, foundation and corporate clients to develop and implement programs of broadband policy, infrastructure and market development. Earlier in his career, Bill managed Onvoy’s (now Zayo) Integrated Community Network rural market development efforts and staffed the MN Department of Trade and Economic Development Star City and Business Retention and Expansion Programs. Bill participates in his own community by leading TEDxMahtomedi, and serving on the board of the nonprofit PCs for People.

**Jason Dale** has worked in the rural telecommunications industry his entire career in roles ranging from construction, to engineering, to management. After 20 years with a consulting engineering firm, since 2010 he has served as the CEO of Cooperative Network Services, an entity formed by 20 cooperative telecommunications providers. CNS is a regional fiber transport provider and offers professional services to the telecommunications and broadband industry,





including Engineering/GIS, Human Resources, Video Product Management, Marketing, Graphic Design, and Bookkeeping/Payroll. Jason is a Licensed Professional Engineer in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Michigan, and Wisconsin. Since 2000, Jason and the team at CNS have designed and engineered FTTH networks serving tens of thousands of customers over tens of thousands of miles of fiber cable plant



**Doug Dawson** is the President of CCG Consulting, the largest telecom consulting company with over 800 clients. Doug has worked in the industry since 1978 and has both a consulting and an operational background. Doug and CCG specialize in helping clients to launch new broadband markets, open new markets and develop new products. Doug in particular helps clients find ways to finance new ventures. CCG has a varied telecommunications practice and helps clients with engineering, regulatory, operation and planning issues. Doug also writes the daily blog <http://potsandpansbyccg.com>, that covers a wide range of topics for broadband and other related subjects.

**Diane Kruse** is a thought-leader in the ever-changing broadband industry. As the CEO of NEO Connect, she consults with electric companies and local governments on feasibility, strategy, design and financial impacts of Gigabit broadband networks. She has founded four successful telecommunication companies and has 35 years of telecommunications and energy industry experience, the last 25 years as an entrepreneur starting and managing several telecommunication companies. Prior to NEO, she was the CEO of Zoomy, a leading firm in the FTTH industry that specialized in FTTH design/engineering and construction for municipalities, rural telecom companies, and real estate developers. Kruse has served as Chairman of the Board for the FTTH Council and currently serves as one of the Chairmen of the Broadband Communities' Summit.



**Mark Mrla** joined Finley Engineering Company in 2008 and works out of the Slayton, MN office. He currently serves as Director of Strategic Operations and is responsible for business development and various aspects of project management, engineering, budgeting, scheduling and client relations. Mark also coordinates teams and processes for client loan and grant applications for various government programs. Prior to joining Finley, Mark served in various management and technical positions at MidAmerican Energy Company, Gateway, Inc., and owned and operated a private technology consulting company.

Mark holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering from the University of Iowa and has served in numerous leadership positions on various community and professional boards of directors and committees. Mark is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) and is a registered Professional Engineer (PE) in 13 states.

## Approaches to Broadband-Based Economic Development (Ballroom A)

Broadband is essential to a thriving community – but it is not a panacea and it won't work in a vacuum. Like a treadmill in the basement, broadband is only helpful when you use it. In this session, panelists from a variety of organizations working to support tech-based economic development strategies will discuss their own efforts and provide the audience with ideas on how they can engage with their own providers around broadband-fueled economic development.

Facilitated by Danna MacKenzie

Speakers: Gary Johnson, Paul Bunyan Communications  
Tom Lambrecht, Great River Energy  
Richard Stuart, TenBelow  
Brian Zelenak, Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative



**Danna MacKenzie** heads the Minnesota Office of Broadband Development, which is housed within the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development. As Executive Director, Danna leads broadband strategy and program development efforts within the state and provides support to the Governor's Task Force on Broadband.

Prior to joining the Office, Danna served as technology director for Cook County, Minnesota for 17 years. One of the roles she held there was administrator for the Cook County Broadband Commission, which was instrumental in bringing fiber to the home to rural Cook County. During these years she also served as a member of the Blandin Foundation Broadband Strategy Board, focusing on connectivity and broadband use throughout rural Minnesota.

**Gary Johnson** is CEO and General Manager of Paul Bunyan Communications, a position he accepted in 2012. Originally hired as a computer programmer, Gary has served in various capacities throughout his 30 years with the cooperative, focusing on Internet, digital video, and other broadband technologies.

Paul Bunyan Communications has received substantial industry and media recognition for their aggressive rollout of one of the nation's largest rural gigabit networks. Known as the GigaZone, the advanced all-fiber network delivers 1,000 Mbps upload and download speeds across the majority of their 6,000 square mile service area.



**Tom Lambrecht** is the manager of Economic Development Services for Great River Energy, the wholesale power supplier to 28 electric cooperatives. Great River Energy works with our member coops and communities in our service area to enhance community preparedness and to promote economic development opportunities across all industries. Lambrecht has directed over \$60 Million in direct development financing through the electric cooperatives leveraging





significant private and public capital investment. Under Lambrecht’s leadership, Great River Energy created the first Certified Site program specific to data centers in Minnesota.

Lambrecht has served as the board President of the Mid-American Economic Development Council, the MN Business Finance Corporation, and the National Rural Economic Developers Association, and he is a member of the Advisory Board to Community Development Funding, LLC. He has a Master’s degree through the University of Minnesota’s Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs and an undergraduate degree in Public Administration.

**Richard Stuart** is an internet marketing consultant who has been helping good people grow great businesses using internet marketing since 1996. Taking an extended sabbatical to become an Outward Bound instructor serving students in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness rekindled Richard's spirit of service. Richard currently serves as the Project Coordinator and Community Manager for Ely's Ten Below Coworking which is powered by Incredible Ely, whose mission is to revitalize Ely’s downtown and support economic growth in the Ely area by connecting people, knowledge, ideas and resources.



**Brian Zelenak** has been the CEO of Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative for the past two years. MLEC is located outside Aitkin, MN, and serves Aitkin, Mille Lacs and parts of Crow Wing County. Among his achievements, Brian has led MLEC’s efforts to install fiber to-the-home and MLEC’s substations, has obtained almost \$2 million in state and county grants for fiber expansion, and is awaiting word on additional federal grants. Brian is a strong advocate for electric cooperatives to assess their role in raising the quality of life in rural Minnesota by bringing fiber to unserved areas. Brian is also a strong believer in establishing partnerships that capitalize on individual entities’ strengths for the betterment of the community as a whole. Brian has over 28 years of experience in the utility industry, including having worked for Xcel Energy for 20 years. He holds a B.S. degree in Energy Management from Moorhead State University, and has a broad understanding of and experience with energy policy issues.

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**11:30 Lunch (Ballroom B)**  
**Introducing the New Blandin Broadband Communities**  
Mary Magnuson, Blandin Foundation

**Mary Magnuson** has worked for the Blandin Foundation for 15 years, and currently administers the Blandin Community Broadband Program. Her responsibilities include grants management, Strategy Board support, and event planning, as well as providing high-level administrative support for the Public Policy & Engagement department. Mary earned a bachelor’s degree in anthropology from the University of MN, and is president of the board of Grand Rapids Arts, a member of the Get Fit Itasca Leadership Team, and past president of the Grand Rapids Area Roller Derby Association.



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**1:00-5:00**

**Community Broadband Feasibility Charrette**

The charrette exercise provides community teams from Koochiching, LeSueur and Waseca counties with hands-on experience working through a compressed feasibility study process. Each team will be led by a team of highly skilled and experienced technical consultants; and the results of each teams' work will be shared at the end of the conference.

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**1:00-4:30**

**Climbing the Digital Use Ladder: Digital Inclusion, Adoption and Innovation**

Digital Inclusion is a ladder with steps that increase constantly. While some are inching to get on the ladder -- others are beating the path to the top. During this session, you'll hear from both ends of the spectrum and walk away with a few ideas you can implement tomorrow, and a few to work toward in the future. Hear from each round of presenters, mingle and ask follow-up questions, and reconvene for the following panel.

*Facilitated by Ann Treacy, Treacy Information Services*

**Ann Treacy** authors and manages the Blandin on Broadband blog. She has worked on broadband issues since 1994 – both supporting deployment of broadband and helping people and businesses better use broadband through digital inclusion training and online marketing consulting. Ann has a Master's degree in Library and Information Science as well as a Master's in Literature. You can learn more at [www.byteoftheweek.com](http://www.byteoftheweek.com).



**1:00-2:00 – Digital Inclusion**

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**PCs for People** <https://www.pcsforpeople.com>

Madeline Tate [mtate@pcsforpeople.org](mailto:mtate@pcsforpeople.org)

PCs for People refurbishes donated computers to distribute to low income households. They also offer affordable tech support and Internet access (where available). In a partnership with the Blandin Foundation, PCs for People has been working with rural communities around Minnesota.

**Project FINE** <http://www.projectfine.org>

Chong Sher Vang [cvang@co.winona.mn.us](mailto:cvang@co.winona.mn.us)

Project FINE focuses on integrating new Americans to their new home in Winona. They offer a range of classes and services including technology training from the ground up in multiple languages and opportunities for kids to learn how to code.

**Cook Public Library** [www.cookpubliclibrary.org](http://www.cookpubliclibrary.org)

Crystal Phillips [crystal.phillips@alslib.info](mailto:crystal.phillips@alslib.info)

Cook Public Library allows patrons to checkout mobile hotspots so that patrons can access broadband from home. She will tell us about the program and maybe some other innovative ways they are using broadband especially with teens.

**Winona Friendship Center** <http://www.cityofwinona.com/city-services/winona-senior-friendship-center/>

Malia Fox [mfox@ci.winona.mn.us](mailto:mfox@ci.winona.mn.us)

The Friendship Center offers remote elder exercise online. Participants can see each other and the instructor for this one of a kind exercise program.

## **2:15-3:15 – Digital Adoption**

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**Community Technology Empowerment Project** <https://www.spnn.org/ctep>

Katie Ward [katieward@spnn.org](mailto:katieward@spnn.org) and Gus Leinbach [gusleinbach@spnn.org](mailto:gusleinbach@spnn.org)

CTEP AmeriCorps members adopt long-term a technology project in the Twin Cities. They have done research, created portals, developed and deployed programs to get kids and adults to better use technology. Gus and Katie are CTEP members; they will talk about their experience as well as their peers’.

**Ely/Hibbing Business Consulting, Entrepreneur Fund** [www.entrepreneurfund.org](http://www.entrepreneurfund.org)

Julie George [julieg@entrepreneurfund.org](mailto:julieg@entrepreneurfund.org)

Julie has worked with several BBC (Blandin Broadband Community) initiatives where local businesses have been paired with a consultant to work on digital marketing strategies and improvements – as well as business-focused technology classes.

**Women’s March Minnesota** <https://www.womensmarchmn.com>

Ann Treacy [atreacy@treacyinfo.com](mailto:atreacy@treacyinfo.com)

Women’s March Minnesota was born of the 2017 national march to action but has developed into a movement, largely based on use of the website, email list and social media. Learn how they are using online tools to encourage people to vote in the 2018 election through a campaign called Power to the Polls.

**Boreal Corps** <https://www.borealcorps.org>

Anne Brataas [anneb@borealcorps.org](mailto:anneb@borealcorps.org)

Boreal Corps is a program that is using technology to help kids help others to tell stories. Last year participating youth worked with the American Lung Association of MN to do online health messaging to reach their peers in Cook and Lake County about the dangers of vaping. Right now, they are working on a broadband multigenerational history project to unite the community behind a project in bringing a contingency to Uganda for the grand opening of the maternal-child clinic, sending kids text and photos that kids package into effective daily blog posts to keep the community engaged.

### 3:30 – 4:30 Digital Powerhouses

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**Online Gaming contest** <https://gigazonegaming.com/>

Brian Bissonette [bissonette@paulbunyan.net](mailto:bissonette@paulbunyan.net)

Paul Bunyan hosted their 3<sup>rd</sup> annual GigaZone Gaming Championship on Saturday, October 20 at the Sanford Center in Bemidji. It is the first and largest stadium style eSports event in northern Minnesota and over 3,000 in attended in 2017. All the fun is free. Guests played in tournaments of Overwatch, Madden 19, Fortnite, Rocket League, Super Smash Brothers, Magic the Gathering, and more for cash and prizes. There was also open console and arcade gaming throughout and a Cosplay Contest for those who dressed up and embraced their inner fantasy character with prizes of up to \$200 for the top costume of the weekend.

**Visual** <http://www.visualisgood.com>

Chuck Olsen [chuck@visualisgood.com](mailto:chuck@visualisgood.com)

“Virtual Reality is Here.” Learn how this new medium opens up a world of new experiences with your smartphone. Chuck will focus on using VR with older adults during this presentation, but he also uses it for a wide range of purposes – including music videos, promotions and social justice.

#### **Precision Ag**

Jake Rieke [jacobrieke@gmail.com](mailto:jacobrieke@gmail.com)

Jake is on the board of RS Fiber, which has worked to bring Fiber to the Farm in Renville and Sibley Counties. He is also a farmer who uses improved broadband for precision agriculture applications.



### **Break / Hotel check-in**



#### *Wilson Bay*

**5:30 Social Hour**

**6:30 Dinner**

**7:30**

#### **Keynote - The Net Benefits of Broadband Adoption: An Empirical Case Study of Rural Indiana**

Alison Grant, Ph.D. Student, Researcher, & Instructor, Dept of Agricultural Economics, Purdue University

The presentation will provide an overview of a study that outlines and projects the statewide net benefits that could be obtained from installation of rural broadband in all of the areas served by Rural Electric Member Cooperatives (REMC) in the state of Indiana. To put this into perspective, Indiana’s 38 electric cooperatives distribute electricity in 89 of the state’s 92 counties, or about 80 percent of the landmass. Seven of these REMCs across Indiana were studied and then were

extrapolated to all REMCs in the State. The benefit-cost ratios range from 2.97 to 4.09 for the seven studied REMCs across Indiana. This means that for every dollar invested in rural broadband, approximately \$3-\$4 are returned to the rural area in economic or social benefits. The study reveals that the state of Indiana would receive about \$12 billion in net present value of benefits if the broadband investment were made statewide. That translates to \$1 billion per year annuitized over 20 years at a six percent interest rate. In addition to the benefit-cost analysis, our report quantifies the additional state and federal tax collections and cost savings that could happen with broadband investments in these seven REMCs. These tax/cost enhancements amount to 27% of the statewide benefits, or \$270 million per year, about a quarter of total net benefits.

From a societal perspective, the rural broadband investment is clearly quite attractive. However, the anticipated revenue from customers would not be adequate to cover the total system costs, so some form of external assistance would be needed to incentivize the investments. Recently, it was announced that the State of Indiana would invest \$100 million in rural broadband this year, which has triggered the construction process. The above mentioned study was cited heavily as the rationale behind this investment.

Acknowledgments to the study's other authors: Dr. Wallace Tyner & Dr. Larry DeBoer of Purdue University



**Alison Grant** is currently pursuing her Ph.D. degree in the department of Agricultural Economics at Purdue University. She has a Master of Science degree in Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics from the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada. She has spent the last year focusing on the benefits of costs of broadband implementation in rural areas. Trained as an agricultural and resource economist, Alison Grant's past research has focused on the economic impact of perceived environmental externalities using econometric analysis. Specific research themes include modeling the impact of aggregate sites on surrounding rural residential property values; examination of the factors that affect farmland values and rental rates; determining the economic costs of pesticide policy in Ontario; and exploration into the application of water markets.

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## 8:30      Networking Time

*Enjoy social time in Wilson Bay, or a bonfire on the beach.*

*Building closes at midnight*

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## Wednesday, October 24

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### Town Hall Conference Center

**7:45**      **Breakfast Buffet** (*Ballroom B*)

**8:45**      **Welcome** (*Ballroom A*)

Bernadine Joselyn, Public Policy & Engagement Director, Blandin Foundation



**Bernadine Joselyn** directs Blandin Foundation’s Public Policy and Engagement program, leading efforts to catalyze community action that advances community goals. A native of Minnesota, Bernadine spent the first 15 years of her professional life in Soviet (and then post-Soviet) Affairs. She served seven years as a diplomat with the U.S. Department of State, where — after an initial tour in New Delhi, India — she was assigned to Moscow, Russia, and Washington, D.C., focused on the U.S.-Soviet/Russian relationship. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Bernadine left the diplomatic corps to work on international academic and cultural exchange programs with the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) and subsequently the Eurasia Foundation, overseeing a \$5 million annual grant program.

In 2000 Bernadine returned to Minnesota to complete a master’s degree in public affairs at the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey Institute. She also earned a master’s degree in international security policy and certificate in advanced studies from Columbia University.

**9:30**

### **Keynote Presentation – Prioritizing Digital Equity in an Age of Uncertainty**

Presentation by Lisa Peterson-de la Cueva, St. Paul Neighborhood Network (SPNN)-Community Technology Empowerment Project (CTEP)

Facilitated by Sam Drong

Promoting digital access and inclusion may have never felt more urgent, but achieving digital equity in an increasingly fragile democracy can often feel daunting. Lessons gleaned from the field and from social movements show how we are uniquely positioned to push for change and tell the story of a society in which technology is a tool for equal participation.

**Lisa Peterson-de la Cueva** is a community-based educator and equity advocate who has been working on digital inclusion and civic engagement for the last fifteen years. She has taught immigrants and refugees digital skills and later trained citizen journalists to use digital platforms to tell their own stories around the foreclosure crisis, community policing, housing, immigration, and education in the Twin Cities. She has additionally worked with Twin Cities Latino communities, using media to advance comprehensive immigration reform efforts





in politics and law. For the last five years Lisa has been working with the Community Technology Empowerment Project, an AmeriCorps program at the Saint Paul Neighborhood Network, to promote digital literacy efforts in low-wealth communities across the Twin Cities.

**Sam Drong** has spent the last decade working to create digital equity in Minnesota. As the Chief Program Officer at PCs for People, he worked to provide computer and internet access to low-income families and build awareness of the growing digital divide. He also spent time on the Technology Literacy Collaborative’s steering committee helping digital inclusion practitioners share best practices for how to address digital inequities.



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**9:45 Break**

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**10:00 - noon**

**Community Broadband Feasibility Charrette** (*Lower Level*)

**10-10:45 Concurrent Sessions**

<p><b>What it Takes: Community Champions Share their Playbook for Pursuing the Broadband They Want and Need</b> (Ballroom A)</p>
<p><b>By the Numbers: A Workshop on Calculating the ROI of Rural Broadband for Your Community</b> (Governor Anderson – Lower Level)</p>

## What it Takes: Community Champions Share their Playbook for Pursuing the Broadband They Want and Need *(Ballroom A)*

Facilitated by Mark Erickson

Panelists: Nancy Hoffman, Chisago County HRA EDA

Jan Keough, Cloquet Valley Internet Initiative

Whitney Ridlon, MN Dept of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation

Communities still striving to get better broadband will tell their broadband stories - the trials, tribulations and successes. They will offer tips on how to keep the conversation alive and remain energized.



**Mark Erickson** is Economic Development Authority Director for the city of Winthrop, Minnesota. He also served as city administrator from 2008 to 2014 and worked closely with the RS Fiber Cooperative project in Sibley, Renville, Nicollet and McLeod counties in West Central Minnesota. Prior to Winthrop he was employed by Hiawatha Broadband Communications in Winona, Minnesota, working with communities interested in building Fiber-To-The-Home networks.

Mark graduated with majors in journalism and economics from the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho in 1980 and worked at the Pacific Daily News on Guam and the Sioux Falls Argus Leader in Sioux Falls, SD. He was also co-owner of the Lakefield Standard in Lakefield, Minnesota before going to work for Hiawatha Broadband. He currently serves on the RS Fiber Cooperative Board of Directors, the Minnesota

Municipal Utilities Association Board of Directors and chairs the League of Minnesota Cities Telecommunications Task Force. He is a former member of the Blandin Foundation's Broadband Strategy Board.

**Nancy Hoffman** has been in the Economic Development field for over 20 years working with rural and suburban cities, regional development commissions and counties. She holds a masters degree in Urban and Regional Studies from Mankato State University. Nancy started her current position in July 2012 as the Executive Director for the Chisago County HRA/EDA. Nancy's primary responsibilities include attracting and retaining businesses to Chisago County. This includes assistance with site selection, finance and loan packaging, business planning and technical assistance for business. It also includes assisting cities with industrial park development, marketing the communities and promoting housing options. Nancy participates on a number of state and regional organizations as she sits on the Blandin Broadband Strategy Advisory Committee, Chairs the Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition, member of Minnesota Business Finance Corporation (MBFC), member of the Workforce Development Board of the Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Council, Chairs GPS 45::93 a regional economic development partnership and Treasurer of the East Central Regional Arts Council.





**Jan Keough** is a Supervisor for the Town of North Star, located 20 miles north of Duluth. She represents North Star and six other rural townships in the Cloquet Valley Internet Initiative, working to get broadband access to families since 2011.

**Whitney Ridlon** has worked in community development for 15 years in both rural and urban communities. She holds a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Metropolitan State University. Passionate for her home communities on the Iron Range, she moved back home from St Paul in 2014 to work on community development initiatives for the

Department of Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation. She has been working to expand broadband into rural areas of NE MN, connect local communities to financial and technical resources, and administers a variety of community grant programs that encourage community planning, partnerships, and

downtown/business revitalization. In her free time, she enjoys participating in grassroots community initiatives, coaching figure skating, and spending time with daughter Della, son Wyatt, and husband Josh.



### **By the Numbers: A Workshop on Calculating the ROI of Rural Broadband for Your Community**

*(Governor Anderson – Lower Level)*

Bernadine Joselyn, Blandin Foundation

Ann Treacy, Treacy Information Services

In this hands-on session, we will use established formulas to calculate the potential community return on public investment in your community.



**10:45      Break**



**11-11:45 Concurrent Sessions**

**Tools to Track and Build Community Demand (Ballroom A)**

**Broadband Advocacy Tips and Tools (Governor Anderson – Lower Level)**

**Tools to Track and Build Community Demand (Ballroom A)**

Facilitated by Diane Wells, Minnesota Office of Broadband Development

Panelists: Paul Solsrud, Cooperative Network Services  
Damian Smith, City of Lake Shore

Convincing a broadband provider to expand service in or to your area can be tough when the homes are few and far between. We will learn about tools that can help you quantify the interest that's there and that will help build the business case.



**Diane Wells** has over 30 years of experience working with telecommunications and broadband issues for the State of Minnesota. Through an interagency agreement, she joined the Office of Broadband Development at the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development at its inception in 2013. Prior to joining the Office, Ms. Wells managed the telecommunications division at the MN Department of Commerce for eight years and served on the telecommunications staff of the MN Public Utilities Commission for 17 years. Ms. Wells received her undergraduate degree from St. Cloud State University and her M.P.A. from the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas in Austin.

As Product Manager at Cooperative Network services, **Paul Solsrud** works to improve the lives of rural residents by working with rural providers and rural communities to Bring More Broadband to More Rural Places. With over 15 years' experience in the rural Independent telecommunication industry, Paul has been a key player in a wide variety of rural telecom projects. Serving in both Marketing and Operational roles, Paul has lead or assisted with a variety of product launches and product management for B2B and B2C segments including Cable TV, DSL and FTTH broadband services, wireless broadband services, wireless voice services, business voice and data services, professional telecom consulting services, customer service management, broadband feasibility studies and more. Paul holds a Bachelor of Science in Marketing and a Business Economics Minor from St. Cloud State University, and is active in a variety of telecom-related industry associations and presents regularly at conferences like this one.





**Damian Smith** is the founder of Total Energy Concepts, Inc. (TEC), a company he started in 2003 that helps businesses save money through sustainability improvements and optimization. A resident of Lake Shore (located on the northwest shore of Gull Lake), Damian was appointed Chair of their Broadband Committee, whose purpose is to connect the entire city to broadband that meets or surpasses the state’s minimum standards

Damian graduated from NDSU in 1999 and has held positions as Flight Test Engineer for the Department of Defense at Edwards Air Force Base, and in the Structures Engineering Department at Northwest Airlines.

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### **Broadband Advocacy Tips and Tools** (*Governor Anderson – Lower Level*)

Bernadine Joselyn, Blandin Foundation

Ann Treacy, Treacy Information Services

In this hands-on session, we will go through the process of developing a message that you can use with local community leaders, policymakers and the general public to help them understand the importance of investing in broadband in the local community.

**12:00 pm Lunch** (*Ballroom B*)

*Ballroom A*

**1:00**

**Get to Know the Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition**

Panelists: Nancy Hoffman, Chisago County HRA EDA  
Becky Lourey, Nemadji Research Corporation  
Vince Robinson, Lincoln County Enterprise Development Corporation  
Nathan Zacharias, Conservation Strategies

Learn why you want to become a member of and actively participate in the Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition. Coalition leaders will provide an update on the coalition's past efforts and future strategies for promoting rural broadband deployment.

**Becky Lourey** has pursued a varied menu of professional endeavors as an artist, farmer, health care advocate and owner of a data management software business; in addition to serving three terms each in the MN House of Representatives (1990-1996) and Senate (1996-2006). The variety of her real-world working experiences brings a broad perspective to her continuing public policy activities. Becky's commitment to public policy ideals and keeping a progressive agenda for Minnesota will never fade. In a time when the challenges facing our state and nation seem greater than ever, excitement and possibility for constructive new directions inspire Becky to stay involved. She believes that together we can shed more light and less heat on the issues of the day.



**Vince Robinson** is the owner and President of Development services, Inc. (DSI) in Ivanhoe, MN. He has worked closely with rural communities, businesses, entrepreneurs, funding sources, and economic development projects in Southwest Minnesota for over 25 years. Vince and DSI have a passion for assisting small and rural communities through community development consulting, grant writing and administration, business and housing development consulting, and housing management services.

Vince also has a passion for renewable energy and has been involved with the development of numerous ethanol, wind, and solar projects throughout Southwest Minnesota. Vince Lives in Lake Benton, MN where he enjoys all types of outdoor recreation, attending plays or concerts, and friendly competition in cards and board games.

**Nathan Zacharias** has been a Legislative Assistant with Conservation Strategies for two legislative sessions, where he worked directly on broadband issues with the Rural Broadband Coalition. He has previous legislative experience in the United States and Minnesota Senate and holds a B.A. from St Cloud State and M.A. from UConn, both in Political History.





1:45

### Community Broadband Feasibility Charrette Presentations

Koochiching, Le Sueur, and Waseca county teams will present what they've learned about options for broadband deployment in their communities.

### Provider Respondent Panel

Facilitated by Bill Coleman, Community Technology Advisors

Panelists: Joe Buttweiler, CTC  
Bill Eckles, BEVCOMM  
Steve Howard, Paul Bunyan Communications



**Joe Buttweiler** is the partnership development manager at CTC headquartered in Brainerd, MN. Joe uses his 15 years of experience working for electric utilities deploying technology systems and infrastructure to assist public sector organizations, utilities and telecommunications companies to provide or partner to provide broadband solutions. Having established two of the most well-known and successful electric-telco partnerships right here in Minnesota, CTC is considered a premier resource for utilities and public-sector organizations interested in deploying Broadband. CTC now works with companies across the United States to help them deploy or structure partnerships to deploy broadband networks. Joe studied GIS at Bemidji State University and holds an MBA from

Cardinal Stritch University.

**Bill Eckles** has been the CEO of BEVCOMM since 2003. BEVCOMM was founded by Bill's great-grandfather in 1895 making him the 4<sup>th</sup> generation Eckles to serve as its CEO. Bill is currently the vice-chair of the Minnesota Telecom Alliance and he is a Past President of the Wisconsin State Telephone Association. He currently serves on the board of directors for Broadband Visions, and Southern Minnesota Broadband which provide transport facilities and video headend services.



Prior to joining the telecommunications industry Bill was the Director of Flight Operations and Chief Pilot for Thunderbird Aviation in the Twin Cities. Bill holds an Airline Transport Pilots License and is a certified flight instructor. Bill has an undergraduate degree in finance and a MBA from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN.



**Steve Howard** is the Information Technology and Development Manager at Paul Bunyan Communications, a position he accepted in 2011. Steve and his team develop plans and business cases for expansion of Paul Bunyan's Fiber Optic network and GigaZone internet services to new areas. Steve also oversees IT services and the data and network infrastructure at Paul Bunyan Communications.

**3:15 Closing Reflections**

Bernadine Joselyn, Blandin Foundation

**3:30 Adjourn**



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# Exhibitors

## ADTRAN

[www.adtran.com/broadband](http://www.adtran.com/broadband)

901 Explorer Blvd.; Huntsville, AL 35806

**Greg Luhman**, Business Development Manager

[gregory.luhman@adtran.com](mailto:gregory.luhman@adtran.com)

(651) 900-0596

ADTRAN has a unique understanding of the transition facing operators today. For over three decades, ADTRAN has been enabling service providers to deliver the services their customers need when they need it. Today is no different. ADTRAN is accelerating the delivery of Gigabit broadband with rapidly deployable solutions that leverage existing network infrastructure, speed time to market and reduce deployment costs. ADTRAN offers the most open, programmable and scalable Gigabit broadband access portfolio on the market today with solutions that are designed to maximize the existing network, while enabling the migration to new software-based deployment models. ADTRAN not only offers the latest in technologies, but provides world-class service and support to meet both the operators' needs and those of their customers. To find out more about our solutions for Gigabit services, visit [adtran.com/broadband](http://adtran.com/broadband)

## Calix

[www.calix.com](http://www.calix.com)

16305 36th Ave N Ste 300; Minneapolis, MN 55446

**Keith Carlson**, Regional Vice President Sales

[keith.carlson@calix.com](mailto:keith.carlson@calix.com)

(763) 268-3497

Innovative communications service providers rely on Calix to help them master and monetize the complex infrastructure between their subscribers and the cloud.

## Clearfield, Inc

[www.seeclearfield.com](http://www.seeclearfield.com)

7050 Winnetka Ave N; Minneapolis, MN 55428

**Jim Pilgrim**, Application Engineer

[jpilgrim@clfd.net](mailto:jpilgrim@clfd.net)

(612) 840-3631

Clearfield is a Fiber to Anywhere company, setting the standard for delivering (on time!) a scalable fiber optic network and unmatched fiber performance while lowering the cost of broadband deployment.

## Finley Engineering

**finleyusa.com**

1981 Engebretson Street; Slayton, MN 56172

**Ben Humphrey, VP**

b.humphrey@finleyusa.com

507-777-2000

**Mark Mrla, Manager**

m.mrla@finleyusa.com

417-682-5531

**Christopher Konechne, Engineer**

c.konechne@finleyusa.com

507-777-2000

Whether you're a rural electric cooperative, a city, a county, telecommunications or another organization exploring fiber opportunities, your goal is the same: find the optimal way to bring high-speed broadband to your community. When you partner with Finley, you'll experience an approach to network design and deployment that is as unique as your business.

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For us, it's not just consulting. It's a partnership. We become a trusted extension of your team.

## Growth & Justice

**www.growthandjustice.org**

1533 Grantham Street; St. Paul, MN 55108

**Jane Leonard, President**

jane@growthandjustice.org

(651) 303-5263

Growth & Justice is a research and advocacy organization that seeks a more equitable and prosperous economy and society for all Minnesotans.

## Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition

**www.mnbroadbandcoalition.com**

125 Charles Avenue; St. Paul, MN 55103

**Nancy Hoffman, Chair**

nancy@chisagocounty.org

(651) 674-9979

**Emily Murray**

EMurray@mncounties.org

(651) 789-4339

The Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition is a membership group of local units of government, elected officials, economic development agencies, educational institutions, health care organizations, telecommunications organizations, non-profits, individuals and more who advocate at the State Capitol for better broadband in rural Minnesota.

**Department of Employment & Economic Development (MN DEED)**  
**Office of Broadband Development**

<https://mn.gov/deed/broadband>

1<sup>st</sup> National Bank Building; 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200; St. Paul, MN 55101

**Danna MacKenzie**, Executive Director  
Danna.MacKenzie@state.mn.us  
651-259-7611

**Office of Broadband Development**  
DEED.Broadband@state.mn.us  
651-259-7610

The Office of Broadband Development at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (MN DEED) is the central broadband planning agency for the state. The office advises policy-makers on broadband related issues; measures and monitors broadband access statewide, including producing maps showing areas with and without access; administers the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program; tracks connectivity needs of community anchor institutions such as K-12 schools, libraries, and healthcare providers; helps to identify and remove barriers to broadband deployment; surveys digital literacy and inclusion issues and opportunities; monitors federal policies and programs that impact Minnesota; acts as a clearinghouse for information on broadband funding sources and other resources, works with communities to help find solutions to their identified gaps, and provides administrative support to the Governor’s Task Force on Broadband.

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# Notes

# Conference Organizers



Blandin Foundation™  
STRENGTHENING RURAL MINNESOTA

**Blandin Foundation** stands with rural Minnesota communities as they imagine and claim ambitious, vibrant futures. It is one of only a handful of foundations in the U.S. focused exclusively on rural communities and the largest rural-based private foundation in Minnesota.

Blandin Foundation believes that encouraging the use of broadband is a critical component for increasing the technological vitality of Minnesota's rural communities. The Blandin Community Broadband Program works in partnership with others to increase awareness about the value of broadband; increase business and residential use of broadband in rural communities; and increase public and private investment in rural broadband capacity. Learn more at <http://broadband.blandinfoundation.org>.

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**OFFICE OF BROADBAND  
DEVELOPMENT**

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