



For immediate release

Scott Marquardt named to Blandin Foundation Broadband Strategy Board

Joins Initiative to help inspire rural technology connectivity

Grand Rapids, Minn. (July 7, 2008)—Scott Marquardt, senior program officer, Southwest Initiative Foundation in Hutchinson, has been named to Blandin Foundation’s Broadband Initiative Strategy Board.

“I’m really looking forward to being involved in this board,” Marquardt says. “And I appreciate that the board members value my economic development “on the ground” perspective.

“Reliable and affordable broadband is absolutely essential for every rural economy. Now I will be able to help facilitate broadband connectivity for other communities that are ready to move forward with networks that will help them get competitive.”

The Broadband Strategy Board was formed in 2003. With 17 members, representing public and private sectors, it charts the strategic direction and oversees progress of the Blandin Foundation’s Broadband Initiative.

“We have been successful because of the quality of the professionals who have agreed to serve on this Strategy Board,” says Bernadine Joselyn, director of Public Policy and Engagement for the Blandin Foundation. “With the background that Scott Marquardt brings to the table, we are even better positioned to help rural communities establish the local leadership needed to create high-speed communication network accessibility that works for their schools, businesses, healthcare institutions, government offices and homes.”

Joselyn emphasizes that communities without broadband accessibility are economically sidelined. Those rural communities that invest in ultra high-speed communication networks, however, have the tools they need to attract and expand businesses, add jobs, strengthen health care capabilities, improve educational efficacy and overall increase the quality of life.

The Blandin Broadband Initiative vision, Joselyn says is “that to ensure a high quality of life and a globally competitive future for its citizens, business and communities, Minnesota is committed to making the necessary investment to become a world leader in the universal deployment and use of ultra high-speed next generation broadband.”

Before joining the Southwest Initiative Foundation, Marquardt was the project coordinator for the Montevideo “Get Broadband” project (2006-2007). He serves as second vice president for the Economic Development Association of Minnesota’s board of directors.

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Blandin Foundation

Blandin Foundation, Minnesota’s largest rural-based private foundation, is located in Grand Rapids, Minn. Its mission is to strengthen rural Minnesota communities, especially the Grand Rapids area, through grants, leadership development programs and public policy initiatives.

<http://www.blandinfoundation.org>