



**CONNECTED
NATION**SM

Connected Nation's Response to Recent Media Coverage

June 3, 2009

Message from Brian Mefford
CEO, Connected Nation

Today, the Wall Street Journal printed an article regarding Connected Nation and our implied inability to map broadband availability in a trustworthy manner. This article regurgitated the false claims of Art Brodsky and Public Knowledge and portrays them as a dependable source. Connected Nation has always worked with utmost transparency and is dedicated to the mission that all Americans know the endless opportunities that broadband provides. For more than a year, we have refuted all of these claims in multiple FCC filings in the public docket last year as well as speeches, presentations and news articles. However, it seems worth addressing again in light of the recent article.

Public Knowledge's allegations in the article can be summarized as this:

- Connected Nation is portrayed as a front for a private-sector conspiracy dominated by large broadband providers - an allegation that conveniently fails to acknowledge the vast number of national and state level partners of Connected Nation. To date, well more than three hundred providers of broadband have partnered with Connected Nation for state based broadband mapping. Connected Nation works with the smallest and largest providers of any state in which it does mapping. Public Knowledge's allegations also fail to account for the scores of testimonies from individuals and communities that have benefited from the work of Connected Nation's mapping or public-private partnerships. Connected Nation not only presents transparent maps of a state's broadband, the partnership is making a difference in closing the digital divide.
- Connected Nation's broadband inventory maps are not verifiable and transparent, represent only select providers, and attempt to conceal data. In reality, Connected Nation's state maps are published online and made available for address level searches and full public scrutiny of household level data that has been submitted by hundreds of broadband providers of all platforms and company size, private and public alike.

For over a year, Connected Nation has focused on continuing its efforts to produce real results that benefit real people across the United States. Frustrated that organizations like Public Knowledge are trying to undermine the work we passionately believe in by irresponsibly publishing fraudulent allegations, we seek here to set the record straight by reminding public leaders and broadband stakeholders at large of the facts about Connected Nation.

- Connected Nation's national partners include: the Alliance for Digital Equality, the American Academy of Nursing, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the American Homeowners Grassroots Alliance, AT&T, the Children's Partnership, Cisco Systems, Comcast Corporation, the Communications Workers of America (CWA), CTIA—The Wireless Association, DigitalBridge Communications, the Entertainment Consumers Association (ECA), the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF), Intel Corporation, the

www.connectednation.org

Internet Innovation Alliance, the Joint Center for Political & Economic Studies, the Kansas Farm Bureau Federation, Microsoft Corporation, the Minority Media and Telecommunications Council (MMTC), the National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO), the National Cable Telecommunications Association (NCTA), the National Consumers League, the National Grange, NIC, the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, the Phoenix Center for Advanced Legal and Economic Studies, the Telecommunications Industry Association, the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, USTelecom—The Broadband Association, Verizon Communications, Voyant International Corporation, and the World Institute on Disability.

- Connected Nation state-level partnerships include multiple other public and private organizations representing diverse interests and constituents across the state.
- Connected Nation receives the bulk of its funding through its work with state governments for providing mapping and research services as well as implementing grassroots programs to increase broadband adoption. These include community technology planning and programs that provide computers and connectivity to those who otherwise could not afford them.
- The main goal of Connected Nation is to work with community leaders to stimulate adoption of broadband services and, in turn, promote investment in network infrastructure build-out. Connected Nation has already established approximately 300 local technology planning teams in as many counties across the nation (representing more than 6,000 local volunteers from both the public and private sectors) that today lead their communities towards greater access to and use of broadband and Information Technology.
- Connected Nation remains committed to improving the process to create accurate, transparent and meaningful maps that provide support and direction to state and local leaders, broadband providers and interested citizens. However, our maps are best supported by the feedback of those most involved and affected. This public feedback loop has proved to be an integral and essential mechanism for ensuring the meaningful quality of Connected Nation's maps. We have been committed to these points for years, working with Congress for the national map and towards a standardized process to ensure a meaningful content and mapping success.

Connected Nation has worked since its inception to continually improve its ability to achieve measurable results, learning from its experiences and using that experience to develop best practices. These results, and the countless testimonies from Americans that have been directly impacted by our partnership efforts, speak for themselves.

In order to provide even more assurance of our maps' accuracy, Connected Nation will soon be announcing a process for third party validation of our mapping efforts. In the meantime, we have the benefit of a thorough analysis of Connected Nation's programming in Kentucky from academic community. For those who are seeking a thorough methodology to measure the impact of ConnectKentucky, they can turn to the Michigan State University study at <https://www.msu.edu/~larose/ruralbb/>. The case study on ConnectKentucky concludes,

“The Connect Kentucky program apparently closed digital divides between young and old and better educated and less educated residents at the Kentucky site. There, the levels of broadband adoption reached levels close to those found in urban areas. This offered further evidence that the broadband gap may be closed through a combination of access to technology and targeted community development efforts.”

In closing, I encourage readers to do their homework. Mr. Brodsky has successfully made noise regarding his thoughts about Connected Nation. Unfortunately, his thoughts and attacks are unfounded and deter from the true mission of Connected Nation:

“Connected Nation believes that states, communities, families and individuals can realize great economic and social advantages when we accelerate broadband availability in underserved areas and increase broadband use in all areas, rural and urban, alike.”

I hope you will make a concerted effort to learn more about Connected Nation’s efforts. I encourage you to ask questions of us and allow us the opportunity to clearly answer your questions. In our time in the towns, communities, and cities of America, I have learned the open and honest communication is the only way to make apparent the value of broadband technology, and it is my hope that this exercise will allow us to understand that broadband is fundamental to our mutual and national success. But you don’t have take our word for it. Below are a few of the many publicly filed comments from local officials who have actually worked with Connected Nation and can attest to the impact of our programs.

Sincerely,

Brian R. Mefford
Chief Executive Officer
Connected Nation, Inc.

STATEMENTS FROM STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

GOVERNOR TED STRICKLAND, STATE OF OHIO ^[1]

“I understand that the Federal Communications Commission is considering its role in the process of mapping broadband infrastructure. [...] I urge you to work with, facilitate, and encourage public-private partnerships like Connect Ohio. These programs are taking hold and proving to be an effective method of achieving the goal of ubiquitous broadband that we share. [...] Connect Ohio’s state-based broadband maps are critical to the program’s success. The accuracy and usefulness of these maps depend upon our ability to work with broadband providers, community leaders, and consumers through a collaborative process whereby we help each other build, verify, and update the maps. A federal program that works with and supports state-based broadband mapping through public-private partnerships would be a solutions-oriented approach to national broadband mapping.”

DIANE WELLS, MANAGER TELECOMMUNICATIONS DIVISION, MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE ^[2]

“As a result [of Connected Nation’s State web-based maps of broadband availability in Minnesota], the State of Minnesota now has an invaluable set of tools for identifying unserved and underserved households in our state, understanding why households are still unserved, and developing specific policies to promote expansion of the broadband market to ensure all Minnesota residents have access to broadband. The State selected Connected Nation as a result of the company’s innovative model that works on behalf of the State to develop high quality and verifiable products. Further, the State of Minnesota decided that Connected Nation’s approach to mapping, based on voluntary collaboration with the provider community, is the most expedient and effective way to produce this important policy tool. Now having this tool in hand to inform our public policy, we are confident we made the correct choice. Connected Nation and Connect Minnesota have been excellent partners for Minnesota. As [the Federal Government] develop[s] a plan for mapping broadband availability across the United States, we invite and encourage you to look closely at Minnesota’s broadband mapping process. We believe you will find an excellent model for mapping broadband availability in such a way that is transparent, verifiable, continuously updated, and perhaps most importantly, practical and valuable for identifying those unserved and underserved areas of Minnesota.”

MARK DAVID GOSS, CHAIRMAN, KENTUCKY PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION (2004 – 2008) ^[3]

“ConnectKentucky has proven that the data obtained through a collaborative approach is much more accurate than what could be achieved through government regulation. And ironically, the public-private partnership structure itself enables a much greater level of transparency than what government could provide to consumers. It is critical to remember that the preliminary technical network data that ConnectKentucky originally receives from broadband

providers is meaningless to consumers. The real value in ConnectKentucky's mapping program is not even that it gets around the proprietary issues involved with the provider data, but rather in ConnectKentucky's work in the field with broadband providers to gather the data necessary for the map, then translate it into GIS format, and finally represent the data in the most public and transparent of formats so that the consumer can be the ultimate judge of the data.”

[1] Comments to the Federal Communications Commission, August 22, 2008
http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/prod/ecfs/retrieve.cgi?native_or_pdf=pdf&id_document=6520064914

[2] Comments to NTIA, April 13th, 2009
<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandgrants/comments/790C.pdf>

[3] Comments to the Federal Communications Commission, August 22, 2008
http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/prod/ecfs/retrieve.cgi?native_or_pdf=pdf&id_document=6520038658