



Blandin Foundation™
STRENGTHENING RURAL MINNESOTA

Kanabec County selected as a Blandin Broadband Community

Two-year partnership provides planning, organizing support for high-speed Internet work

DULUTH, MINNESOTA – Wednesday, Nov. 14, 2012—Blandin Foundation announced today at its annual broadband conference in Duluth that Kanabec County was successful in its application to become a Blandin Broadband Community, one of only nine selected in the state.

The Blandin Broadband Communities program is an intensive, two-year partnership between Blandin Foundation and selected rural Minnesota communities. The program provides planning and organizing support to regions that demonstrate readiness and resources to either bring robust broadband adoption to communities without it, or assist already connected communities to make best use of information and services broadband can deliver.

Kanabec County is one of nine rural Minnesota communities designated as Blandin Broadband Communities. Communities were selected based on technology goals, current levels of broadband access and use, and ability to connect with other technical assistance and resources to meet their goals.

Guiding this work is a Kanabec Broadband Initiative (KBI) planning team of representatives from city and county government, schools, health care, service providers, businesses, agriculture, social services and economic development organizations. “The KBI group has been working since January 2011 to address the broadband needs of all county residents and businesses,” said Beth Thorp, Mora Community Development Planner. “We see this partnership with the Blandin Foundation as a key step in our efforts to educate residents and business owners about the options and uses for broadband, as well as to continue to move us closer to our goal of providing increased broadband speeds and options to the rural parts of Kanabec County. We are very excited about the opportunities this partnership will provide.”

“Kanabec County is ready and committed to take the next step with broadband, and we are delighted to be a partner in their work,” said Dr. Kathy Annette, Blandin Foundation CEO. “We believe that, in the rich blend of education, the economy, inclusion and leadership, communities come together, defining and claiming their futures. This is especially true in a world more and more dependent on digital connections. We look forward to where our partnership leads!”

Next steps in the Blandin Broadband Community partnership include assessing the community’s current broadband access and adoption and, in early 2013, a series of planning events.

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About Blandin Foundation: *Blandin Foundation works for vibrant rural Minnesota communities by investing in community leaders and working with partners to expand opportunity for all*

residents. Located in Grand Rapids, Minn., 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. Information on Blandin Foundation grant-making, leadership development programs and public policy initiatives: www.blandinfoundation.org. Information about the Blandin Broadband Communities program: <http://broadband.blandinfoundation.org/programs/programs-detail.php?intResourceID=3168>

About Kanabec Broadband Initiative and Kanabec County: Initiated by the concerns of local businesses, Kanabec Broadband Initiative is an ad hoc group of community stakeholders, formed in January 2011, that recognize the importance of broadband to the economic competitiveness and quality of life of Kanabec County residents, businesses and institutions. Information about KBI can be found at www.kanabecbroadband.org. Kanabec County, with an estimated 2010 population of 16,239, is a largely rural county, covering approximately 525 square miles, in east central Minnesota. It is located approximately 70 miles north of the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area. More information can be found at www.kanabeccounty.org.

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