



Connected Texas Inaugural Broadband Summit Makes Big Impact

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Broadband Summit Sets Stage for Vital Broadband Expansion; Announces New Public Computing Centers

Dallas, TX – State leaders are now armed with new tools and connections that will help put broadband expansion plans into motion across Texas. The state's first-ever broadband summit, themed *Getting Every Community Online*, drew a large crowd representing a range of sectors – from education to agriculture – to the Gaylord Texan Hotel on Tuesday, where they focused on job creation and the economic development that comes from expanding broadband access, adoption, and use across the state.

"Thanks to a few years of research and careful public cross-checking and validation, we have a rich view of the state's current broadband landscape to help drive informed action," said Connected Texas Executive Director Don Shirley. "This summit is about bringing together the game changers and finding ways to leverage innovative solutions and passionate champions within our communities. We are proud to have the support and leadership of the Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas State Libraries and Archives Commission, and private partners like Intel. We also want to thank TIA 2012 for giving us the space and bringing us to their premiere industry event."

[Connected Texas](#) and the [Texas Connects Coalition](#) announced an exciting new partnership at the event that will expand high-speed Internet access across the state through several new public computing centers. The two initiatives are now joining forces to target and serve the areas in Texas in the most need of new or improved broadband service. The Coalition will now rely on Connected Texas' vast and thorough [broadband inventory maps and data](#) to identify the areas that are in the most need of Internet access. Those communities identified will benefit from a new \$10 million Public Computing Center grant recently awarded to the Texas Connects Coalition through the [Broadband Technology Opportunities Program](#) (BTOP). Together, Texas Connects

Coalition and Connected Texas will use the new computing centers to teach free computing and digital literacy skills while bringing the life-changing power of broadband access to Texans who have been largely left out until now.

“We’re excited to be partnering with the Texas Connects Coalition so that we can work together on building a stronger Texas economy and quality-of-life, beginning with the people and places that need our services the most,” said Shirley.

Texas Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples delivered the event’s keynote address highlighting the important role of broadband in rural development and gave encouraging news about the government’s efforts to expand broadband use: “In every discussion we’re thinking about how we can tie business, consumers, students and medical together through broadband,” said Staples.

The first collection of panelists comprised of providers both large and small that are reaching out to rural communities, businesses, schools, and governments to explain the cost-effective manner in which they’re bringing broadband opportunity to more areas across the Lone Star state.

The summit finished with a panel of educators and librarians who explained how broadband is improving the classroom experience, turning Texas libraries into digital hubs of learning and communication, and providing new, powerful tools for learning.

One of the key focuses of the summit was on growing broadband adoption particularly in rural areas. Connected Texas released a new [rural broadband adoption report](#) revealing technology adoption and usage is lower among rural Texans than among those living in suburban and urban counties, including computer ownership, broadband adoption, and mobile broadband usage. This means that approximately 1.2 million rural Texans do not have broadband service at home for a variety of reasons. More than one in four rural Texans who do not subscribe to broadband (27%) say that cost is their main barrier to adopting high-speed Internet.

Photo highlights and presenter slides from the summit can be found through www.connectedtx.org. The Connected Texas website serves as the central portal for free resources and information on Texas broadband access, adoption, and use. Online speed tests, interactive broadband maps, current research, and more are all available.

For more information about the expansive work of the Connected Texas initiative, please contact Connected Texas at info@connectedtx.org or Executive Director Don Shirley at (512) 660-2006.

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About Connected Texas: Connected Texas is a subsidiary of Connected Nation and operates as a non-profit in the state of Texas. The Texas Department of Agriculture is leading the initiative to increase broadband Internet access, adoption, and use across the state. Connected Texas was commissioned by the state to work with all Texas

broadband providers to create detailed maps of broadband coverage and development of a statewide plan for the deployment and adoption of broadband. For more information visit: <http://www.connectedtx.org>.

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