



Young County Becomes Second Certified Connected Community in Texas

Contact: Jennifer Cobb
jcobb@connectednation.org
(615) 828-1017

For Immediate Release
August 22, 2014

Young County proclaims commitment to economic development and quality of life with Connected community certification

Graham, TX – Young County is now officially a Connected Texas certified [Connected](#) community. Young is the second Texas county, after Bastrop, to achieve certification. What makes Young’s achievement unique is that in June 2013, the county missed certification by just three access points. Upon release of technical data this past April, it was realized that Young County access numbers increased enough to reach the required score on the Connected assessment, thus granting Young County Connected certification.

The occasion was marked with a public event Tuesday at the Graham Public Library. Connected Texas Executive Director Don Shirley presented Graham Mayor Jack Graham and County Commissioner Mike Sipes with the official Connected trophy and road sign. Members of the community technology team were also presented with certificates.

“Young County being certified by Connected Texas is probably one of the biggest rural advantages a community can have in bringing and finding quality residents and quality businesses. There is no reason that the charm of rural life changes because we have high technology,” said Sipes. “The use of technology is growing all the time; we are continuing to bring more and more people into it; grandmothers and small children are all relying on technology. The business of the community is much more efficient when done through reliable Internet

connection. We are just very proud to be part of Connected Texas and the second county certified in the our state.”

“It’s a real honor and testament to our community that we are the second county certified in the state of Texas,” said Graham. “This is a project that we’ve had a group working on for about a year and we are really proud of that group and our community for meeting these requirements to become a certified Connected Texas community.”

Currently there are 46 communities across the state of Texas engaged in the Connected program. Young County is the 23rd community in the nation to earn the certification. Developed by Connected Nation, the Connected program entails building a comprehensive action plan for developing a technology-ready community by reviewing the technology landscape, developing regional partnerships, establishing local teams, and conducting a thorough community assessment. The broadband coverage of the area was measured using Connected Texas’ broadband availability maps and survey research.

The [Young County Technology Action Plan](#) unveiled at the event includes projects to expand digital literacy, including a commitment by the Graham Chamber of Commerce to host “Techie Tuesday” classes once per month, build awareness for the benefits of broadband, and assist businesses with technological training, as well as improving the online presence of local governments, among other entities.

Connected certification affords a community an avenue to discuss its success and pursue opportunities as a recognized, technologically advanced community.

“This is a big step for Young County and for the city of Graham,” said community champion Cam Bennett. “We were short by a few points the previous year but with some access deployment this year, we were able to establish a certified Connected community. For Graham, this certification allows us to set a path for future development of broadband deployment to everyone in the community, including hospitals, schools, and residents. The Graham Industrial Association and Graham Chamber of Commerce are committed to push along the program to help benefit the members of our community.”

This certification is an important benchmark as the team now phases into working on its newly established long-term community broadband plan. Residents are also encouraged to get involved by joining their

local Connected technology team and using the free [Every Community Online program](#) to get training in computer and Internet skills which makes them eligible for discounted computers and home Internet service. Residents and businesses are encouraged to visit the [community technology profile](#) on the website and help project leaders populate a directory of technology assets in the county.

Photo: County Commissioner Mike Sipes, Connected Texas Executive Director Don Shirley (middle, holding trophy) and Graham Mayor Jack Graham stand together at Young County's certification celebration on Tuesday.

#

About Connected Texas: Connected Texas, the Texas division of Connected Nation, is a public-private partnership, funded by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration and the State of Texas, working with telecommunications providers, business and community leaders, information technology companies, researchers, public agencies, libraries and universities to enable economic growth and a better way of life through improved broadband Internet access, adoption, and use. For more information visit: <http://www.connectedtx.org>.

Also follow Connected Texas on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Connected Nation developed the Connected Community Engagement Program to help guide a community through an



assessment of its overall broadband and technology status. Connected certified communities have measurably demonstrated their proficiency for effective Access, Adoption, and Use of broadband-supported technologies. Connected Nation through its partners provides a national platform for recognizing those communities that excel across these important benchmarks. Funded by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), this effort is part of the State Broadband Initiative.