



Connected Nation Gives Real Time Visibility To Broadband Penetration

By [Vivek Naik](#)
[TMCnet Contributor](#)
July 21, 2009

[Connected Nation](#) reportedly announced it has created broadband coverage maps with the help of a Geographic Information System solution, ArcGIS, from [ESRI](#), which was originally called the Environmental Systems Research Institute, in an effort to provide competitive advantage during the funding application process for \$4 billion in broadband grants and loans available through the U.S. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

"States that use GIS to create coverage maps have the data in a format that can easily be integrated into their broadband network expansion plans and grant requests," said Randy Frantz, Telecommunications and Location-based Services Industry Solutions Manager, ESRI ([News - Alert](#)). "These states will have a competitive advantage in demonstrating need during the funding application process."

The ARRA has set aside \$7.2 billion for the [development](#) of broadband and Wi-B in U.S. and \$350 million from this fund reservoir is earmarked for Broadband Data Improvement Act of 2008, \$2.5 Billion of the \$7.2 billion is set aside for low-interest loans, loan guarantees and grants at RDUP's [discretion](#) and that the remaining \$4.7 Billion is allotted for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to decide on grants to deserving companies and technologies via its Broadband Technology Opportunities Program. In addition, there is another \$1.3 billion set aside in the form of loans and grants to enhance broadband and telecommunications services in rural areas within the federal budget for the fiscal year 2010.

"The Obama administration and Congress have charted an important broadband course for investing in America's future," said Brian Mefford ([News - Alert](#)), chief executive officer, in an earlier [report](#). "State public-private partnerships can work locally on supply and demand issues to ensure the return on this investment is measurable, is meaningful, and impacts those it is intended to help first - those Americans who were previously unserved or overlooked."

Connected Nation ([News - Alert](#)) claims that some states such as Kentucky, Ohio, Minnesota, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia already have

maps in hand to assist applicants with real time and conclusive support for their applications, and that GIS development work is under way with other states.

The maps are detailed to the extent of customizing and including street, household, and census block levels, said officials, and the software allows service providers, businesses, and consumers a way to simply access the broadband coverage information. The ArcGIS technology also combines service data from more than 30 broadband providers with household demographic information to guarantee relevant information.

Connected Nation claims it has taken the initiative the Broadband Data Improvement Act state initiative grant program and says its proven programs are aligned with the goals and guidelines of ARRA.

"I am happy to join the state's broadband providers and Connect North Carolina to put North Carolina on the fast track with the broadband inventory map," said Bill Faison, North Carolina Representative, during the July 2009 release of that state's broadband inventory map.