

## **Monroe County Receives Broadband Forward! Community Certification**

Monroe County has been certified as a Broadband Forward! Community by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin which distinguishes the (Town/Village/City/County) as supportive of increased broadband access by taking steps to reduce obstacles for private and public investment.

2015 Act 278 created Wisconsin's Broadband Forward! Community certification program. The program coordinates and streamlines administrative procedures for the deployment of next generation broadband technologies.

"Monroe County is a great example of a rural Wisconsin community working hard to ensure their community is connected," said Governor Tony Evers. "It's an important stepping stone into further broadband expansion and economic development."

"Expanding broadband is critical to Monroe County and we need to take all the steps we can to reduce the hurdles for deployment of additional infrastructure," said Cedric Schnitzler, Monroe County Board Chair. "Our Broadband Forward! Certification sends the signal that we're serious about working with broadband providers to extend service."

"The State Broadband Office at the Public Service Commission stands ready to serve as a resource to communities and providers looking to maximize broadband infrastructure investments in Wisconsin—with the goal of bringing broadband service to every corner of our state," Evers said.

To assist in the expansion of broadband in Wisconsin, Governor Evers signed 2021 Wisconsin Act 58 which included an historic investment of \$129 million to support the Broadband Expansion Grant Program in reaching more underserved areas of the state. In addition, Governor Evers announced that he was providing \$100 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act funding to the Public Service Commission for broadband access grants.

"Our grant program aims to help applicants find a path to return on investment in areas of our state that are challenging to serve. We are also hoping that our state funding will make federal and private investments reach farther into our rural areas," said Evers. "Any improvement in the speed and efficiency of these investments, such as that provided by the Broadband Forward! Community program, will make a significant difference in Wisconsin."

For communities interested in the Broadband Forward! Community certification, or those who would like information on services offered by the State Broadband Office, please visit:

<https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/Programs/WBO.aspx>