



## **Grant to expand Internet access**

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Tennessee will receive \$1.8 million in federal funding for broadband mapping and planning in an effort to increase the availability and use of high-speed Internet service in the state, according to a news release.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act matching grant is awarded by the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

The award will help Connected Tennessee, the organization that helps accelerate the availability of broadband in Tennessee, deliver a comprehensive map of existing broadband service to the state, the release said.

"Expanding access to high-speed Internet services across our state is key to economic development in today's environment," Gov. Phil Bredesen said in the release. "About half the state's geographic area is underserved for broadband, representing about 10 percent of Tennesseans. This Recovery Act funding will put Tennessee in a better position to compete in the new global economy."

In conjunction with broadband providers in the state, Connected Tennessee periodically will update service maps to reflect broadband availability and other relevant information such as household size, topographical information and civil infrastructure data.

Connected Tennessee is a public-private partnership launched by the state in 2007 to unite local governments, businesses and citizens in the goal of increasing broadband service in the state's underserved areas. The state has contracted with Connected Nation, a national leader in broadband issues and technology, to help with mapping and planning.

"We are pleased to be working with the state to further develop our existing broadband maps and to paint a more accurate picture of broadband availability throughout the state," said Michael Ramage, Connected Tennessee's executive director. "We are honored to be recognized for the work we have accomplished over the past two years and to be afforded the opportunity to build on that foundation to further close the digital divide in the state of Tennessee."

Tennessee businesses, organizations, Internet service providers and citizens can contribute to the mapping process by visiting [www.connectedtn.org](http://www.connectedtn.org) to provide information about broadband access in their areas.

Mapping is one of four parts of the state's application for broadband grants. The state also applied for \$20.9 million for broadband infrastructure; \$5.67 million for sustainability

and adoption and \$4.92 million for public computer centers. Federal announcements related to those three areas are not expected until early 2010.