



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Sen. Smith Encourages Community Stakeholders to Apply for
Broadband Expansion Grants**

ARPA Broadband Access Grant Application Deadline is July 27, 2021

MADISON – With less than a month before the application period ends, Sen. Jeff Smith (D – Brunswick) is reminding communities to apply for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Broadband Access Grants.

Internet service providers, telecommunications utilities, co-operatives, local governments, for profit and non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for grants. The deadline to apply for the grant is July 27, 2021. More information can be found on the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin website at psc.wi.gov.

“This is one-time ARPA money available for rural communities to apply for broadband expansion grants,” said Sen. Smith. “After years of neglect by the Walker-Kleefisch Administration, we still have a lot of catching up to do to improve broadband access in Wisconsin’s unserved and underserved areas. I appreciate Governor Tony Evers’ ongoing commitment to ensure every household is connected with reliable and affordable high-speed internet.”

In March, President Biden signed ARPA into law, which allocated funds to aid states in its response to the pandemic. Governor Tony Evers directed \$100 million in funding for projects that will expand high-speed broadband internet to unserved and underserved locations in the state.

Governor Evers has prioritized broadband expansion efforts before and during the Year of Broadband Access. Governor Evers’ 2019-20 budget allocated a total of \$48 million toward broadband expansion grants. Last session, he established the Task Force on Broadband Access, bringing together lawmakers and stakeholders to develop innovative broadband expansion strategies. During the pandemic, Governor Evers directed \$5 million from the federal CARES Act for additional broadband expansion grants. In his most recent budget, Governor Evers proposed investing a historic \$200 million toward improving broadband access.

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The 31st Senate District includes all of Buffalo and Pepin counties and portions of Trempealeau, Pierce, Dunn, Eau Claire and Jackson counties and very small portions of Chippewa and St. Croix counties.