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**Western Wisconsin Poised for Major Broadband Expansion Projects**  
*Sen. Smith Commends Evers' Administration and Local Telecommunication Providers*

MADISON – On October 14, the Wisconsin Broadband Office released the recipients awarded Broadband Access Grants from the Public Service Commission (PSC). These grants totaling \$100 million will connect nearly 30,000 locations in 40 counties and three tribal lands with new high-speed, fiber broadband service, according to the PSC.

The western Wisconsin region leads in the number of projects that were awarded a Broadband Access Grant. Of the 83 projects awarded a grant, 32 of the projects are in Buffalo, Chippewa, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson, Pierce and St. Croix counties, totaling more than \$38 million. A full list of project descriptions can be found [here](#).

Sen. Jeff Smith (D–Brunswick) shared the following statement in response to the announcement:

*“Governor Evers declared 2021 the Year of Broadband Access and he has delivered on this commitment for our rural communities, especially in western Wisconsin. The Evers’ Administration understands how urgent it is to connect our schools, homes and businesses with high-speed internet—and they’re making sure it’s getting done with these community stakeholders. I congratulate the telecommunication providers who received a Broadband Access Grant and thank them for their broadband expansion efforts.*”

*“There were nearly \$438 million in project applications for this grant cycle. Thanks to Governor Evers, the awarded \$100 million is a good start. We still have a lot of work to do in Wisconsin to catch up to other states. There is another \$130 million in funding on the horizon and western Wisconsin will need every penny we can get to bring high-speed internet to our rural communities.”*

In March, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act (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.