



Government Center  
555 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW  
Cambridge, MN 55008  
763-689-3859 - Phone  
763-689-8226 - Fax

## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

1 <sup>st</sup> District Greg Anderson	2 <sup>nd</sup> District Dave Oslund	3 <sup>rd</sup> District Terry Turnquist
4 <sup>th</sup> District Mike Warring	5 <sup>th</sup> District Susan Morris	

**County Administrator**  
**Julia Lines**

**Lindsey Giese**  
*Human Resources Director/  
Deputy County Administrator*

**Amanda Usher**  
*Organizational Development and  
Training Coordinator*

**Sharon Katka**  
*Human Resources Generalist*

**Colleen Anderson**  
*Administrative Assistant II*

**Contact: Julia Lines, Isanti County Administrator (763-689-3859)**

**Date: December 29, 2022**

### **Press Release: Broadband Grant Awards Mean Improvements for Areas of Isanti County**

In early December, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (MN DEED) announced that Midco and East Central Energy (ECE) will receive grants enabling them to build broadband infrastructure to provide high speed internet service to homes in portions of Isanti County beginning in 2023, with completion no later than June 2025.

The \$3.29 million grant that Midco received will provide fiber-to-the-premises service with upload and download speeds up to 5 Gbps (Gigabits per second) in Bradford Township. The \$16.85 million dollar ECE project received a \$5 million grant and will provide fiber-to-the-premises service with upload and download speeds up to 100 Mbps (megabits per second) to Stanchfield, Cambridge, and Maple Ridge townships. ECE received three MN DEED Border to Border grants and will also be making improvements in portions of Kanabec and Pine counties.

“This is great news,” shared Terry Turnquist, outgoing Isanti County commissioner from Braham and co-chair of the Isanti County Broadband Taskforce. “The Isanti County EDA has been working to find a broadband solution for rural residents and businesses for 5 years, and the partnerships and funding pieces finally came together.”

Recent information ranked Isanti County 81 out of 87 counties in the availability of high-speed internet. “We heard from our residents, farmers and businesses that reliable, affordable internet access is incredibly important,” noted Greg Anderson, outgoing Isanti County commissioner from Bradford Township and co-chair of the Isanti County Broadband Taskforce. He continued, “We came to understand that private companies aren’t motivated to invest in low-density rural areas because the infrastructure cost per subscriber is simply too high to get a decent return. The solution emerged when state broadband grant funds were available and local partners – East Central Energy and Midco, the county and townships – were ready to partner up to invest and pursue grant funds.”

Demonstrating local commitment and partnerships was important to securing the competitive state grant funds. Isanti County committed \$113,000 from the federal government funds that were received under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to match the state grant. Bradford, Cambridge, Maple Ridge, and Stanchfield Townships also provided matching funds. Ty Houglum, VP/Chief Information Officer at ECE noted, “The letters of support and financial commitment from Isanti County, other counties, and many of the local townships resulted in strong grant applications, and ultimately ECE was awarded nearly \$15M of

grant funding. We look forward to starting this exciting project and will soon be applying for additional grant funding for the remaining parts of our territory.”

“Building fiber infrastructure to the home will benefit Isanti County businesses and farms and improve access to critical school e-learning and improve reliability and efficiency for agricultural operations, businesses and government,” commented Turnquist. Greg Carlson, Chair of the Cambridge Medical Center Board of Trustees, and a member of the Isanti County Broadband Taskforce, commented “Health care providers increasingly rely on high speed internet to provide telemedicine services to patients. It’s often safer and more efficient for patients. This is an important step in making reliable broadband available in rural areas of the county.”