Wisconsin Broadband Summit

November 16, 2021

Community Development Institute

Division of Extension

University of Wisconsin-Madison

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Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

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United States Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration
in support of the
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at the
Community Development Institute
Division of Extension
University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations are those of the presenters and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration

Active Networking and Leadership Panel

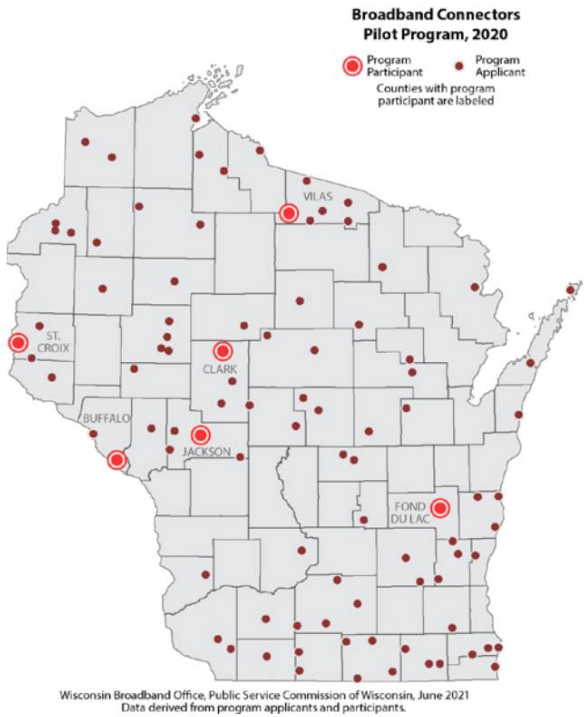
Gail Huycke, Professor
Community Development Institute
UW-Madison Division of Extension

Active Networking and Leadership: The Secret Sauce to Success

Connecting the Dots

- Utilize community development practices
- It takes time
- It can be messy
- It requires unlikely partnerships
- A “champion” is key
- Foundation to build on

Active Networking and Leadership



Three Tiers of Networking

- Entry level – just getting started, may have established a group and have begun exploration & planning
- Middle level - developed a network, established a plan and have some success with local/state funding for buildout
- Advanced level – Well established team looking at ways to match current state and local resources to federal funding opportunities.

Active Networks

County Broadband Committee:

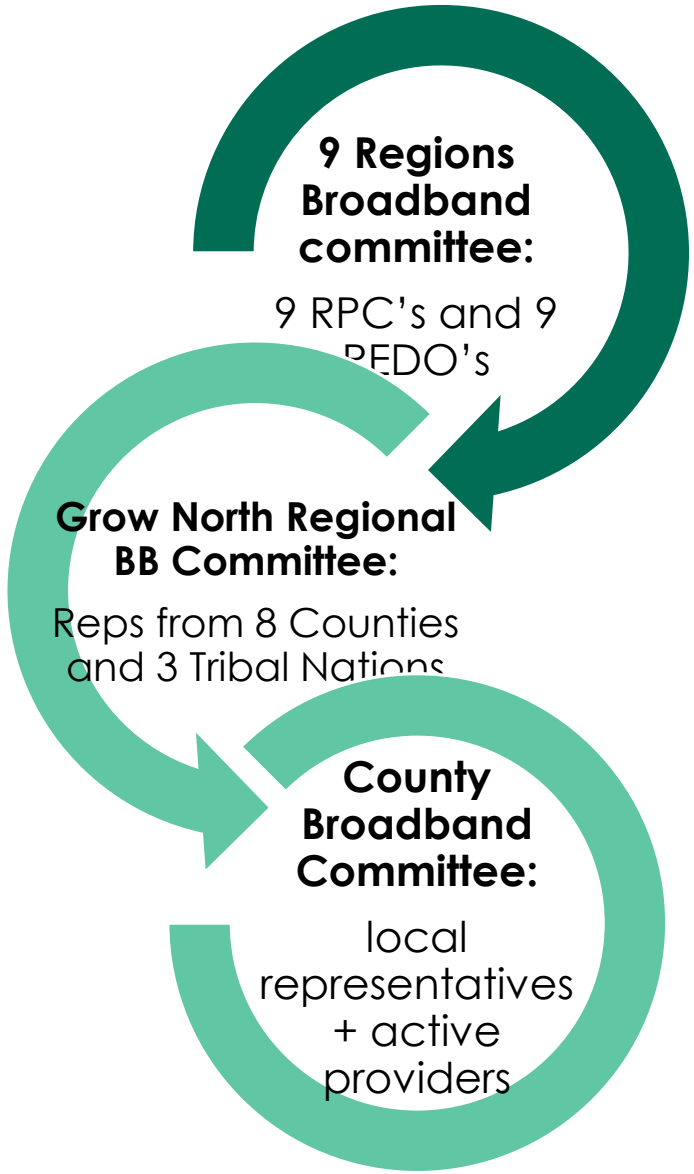
- County level comprehensive Broadband plans

Grow North Broadband Committee:

- RDOF readiness
- Goal: Middle Mile conversations

9 Regions Broadband committee:

- GEO Partners and what it could do (Brown Co Pilot)
- Mapping innovations



Active Networking and Leadership

"Establish a coalition of willing, engaged broadband leaders to connect communities and providers, local and regional partners, planning and technical assistance opportunities, funding, and resources"

- *Community level*
- County level
- Regional
- Statewide

Active Networking and Leadership Panel

- Bill Niemuth
  Town of Boulder Junction
  Vice Chair, Boulder Junction High-Speed Broadband Expansion Committee

- MaryAnn Lippert
  Rural Wood County Resident
  Broadband Committee

- Barbara Koldos
  Vice President, Business Development
  New North, Inc.

Active Networking and Leadership Panel

Bill Niemuth
Town of Boulder Junction
Vice Chair, Boulder Junction High-Speed Broadband Expansion Committee
Email Address: bill@loss-mitigation.com

BOULDER JUNCTION
HIGH-SPEED
BROADBAND

https://www.boulderbroadband.com

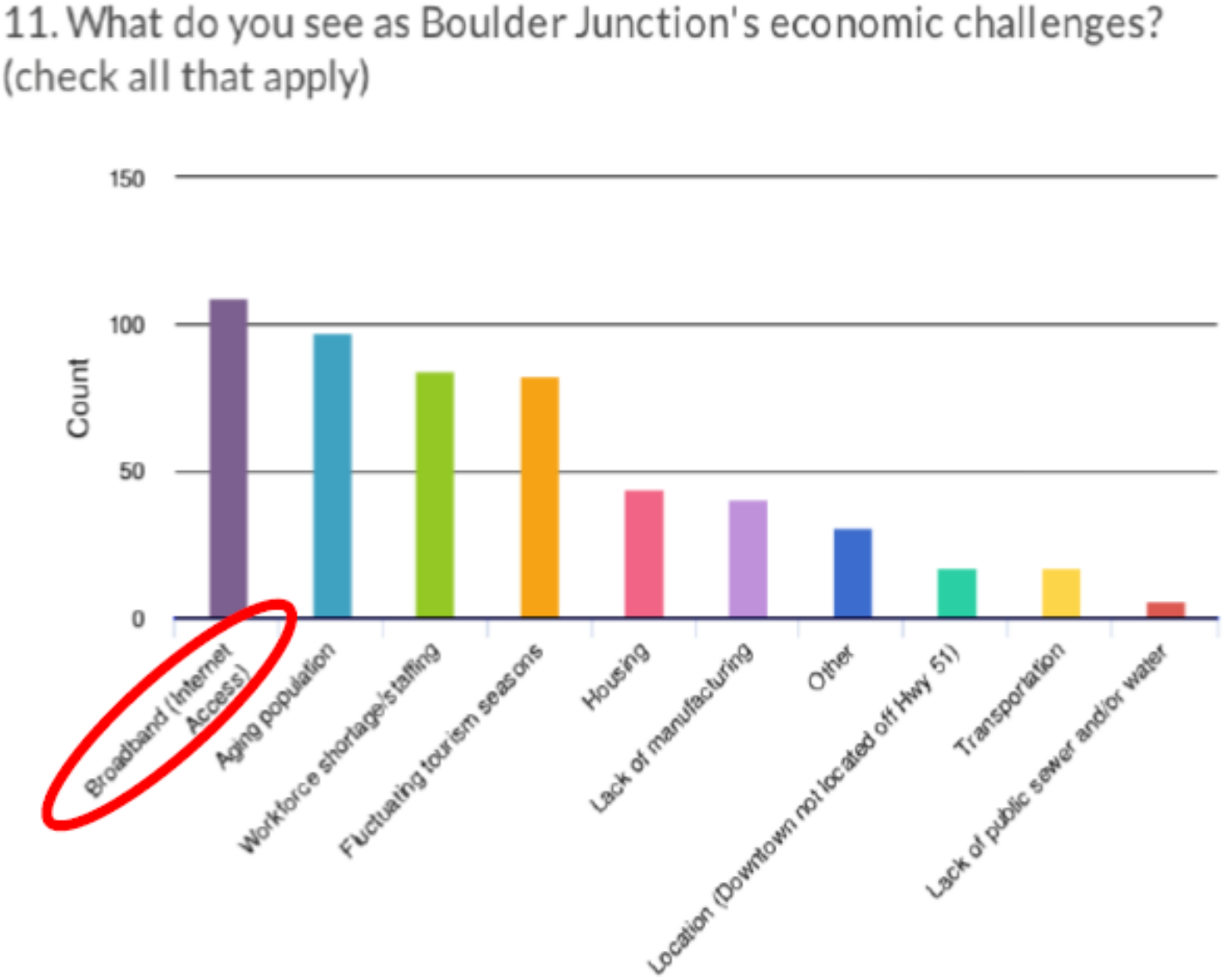
Welcome to Boulder Junction!

Virtual Broadband Summit - University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension

November 16, 2021

2017 Economic Development Survey

- 169 Responses
- A Wealth of Information
- Business Development Another Key Response



We Walked to the Light.....of Fiber Optics

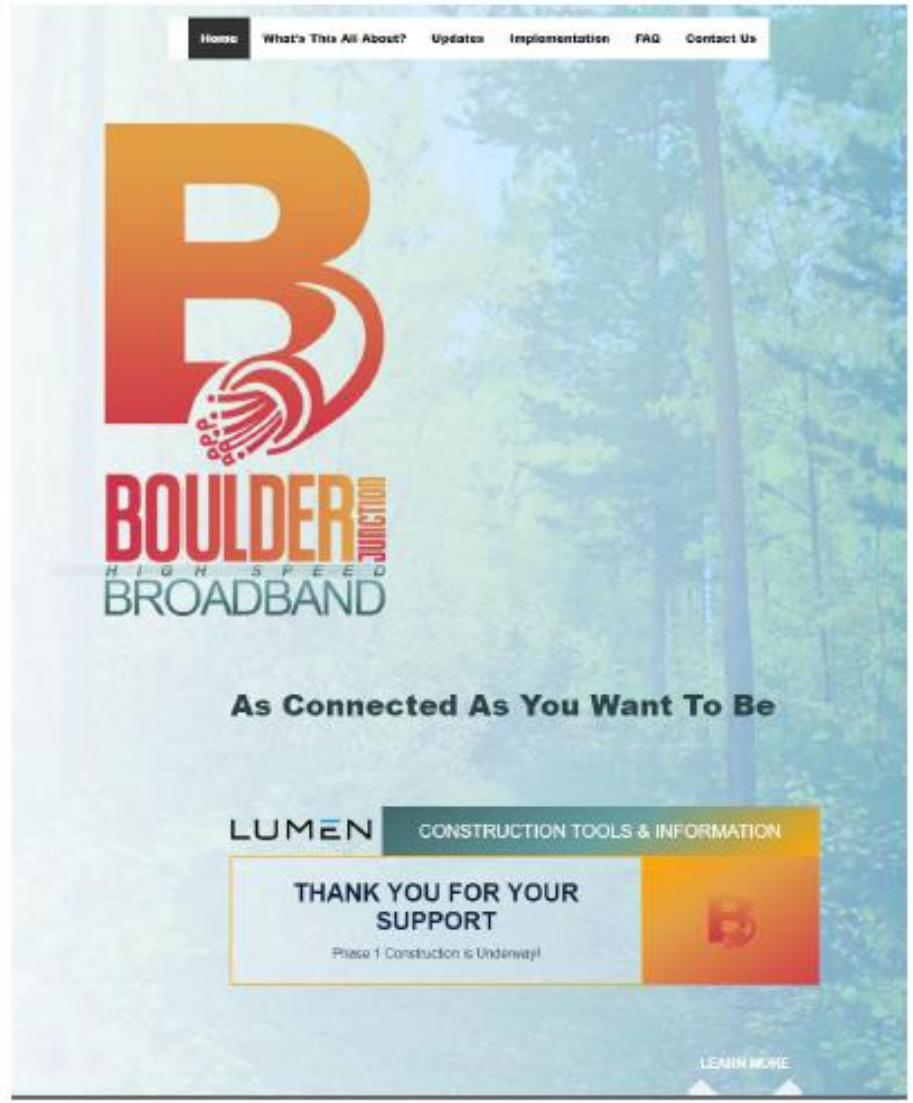
- The Broadband Workgroup
- Leader, stakeholder, and elector education, feedback, and support
- WI PSC Grant Submission – Phase 1
- A Town Committee is Born
- WI PSC Grant Submission – Phase 2
- Project Management Phase
  - Fiber Infrastructure
  - Connecting stakeholders to high-speed fiber service
- Gearing up for Phase 2 Construction

$3.9MM in Wisconsin PSC Funding

&

$3.8MM of Boulder Junction Funding

Website and Marketing Strategy



LUMEN®

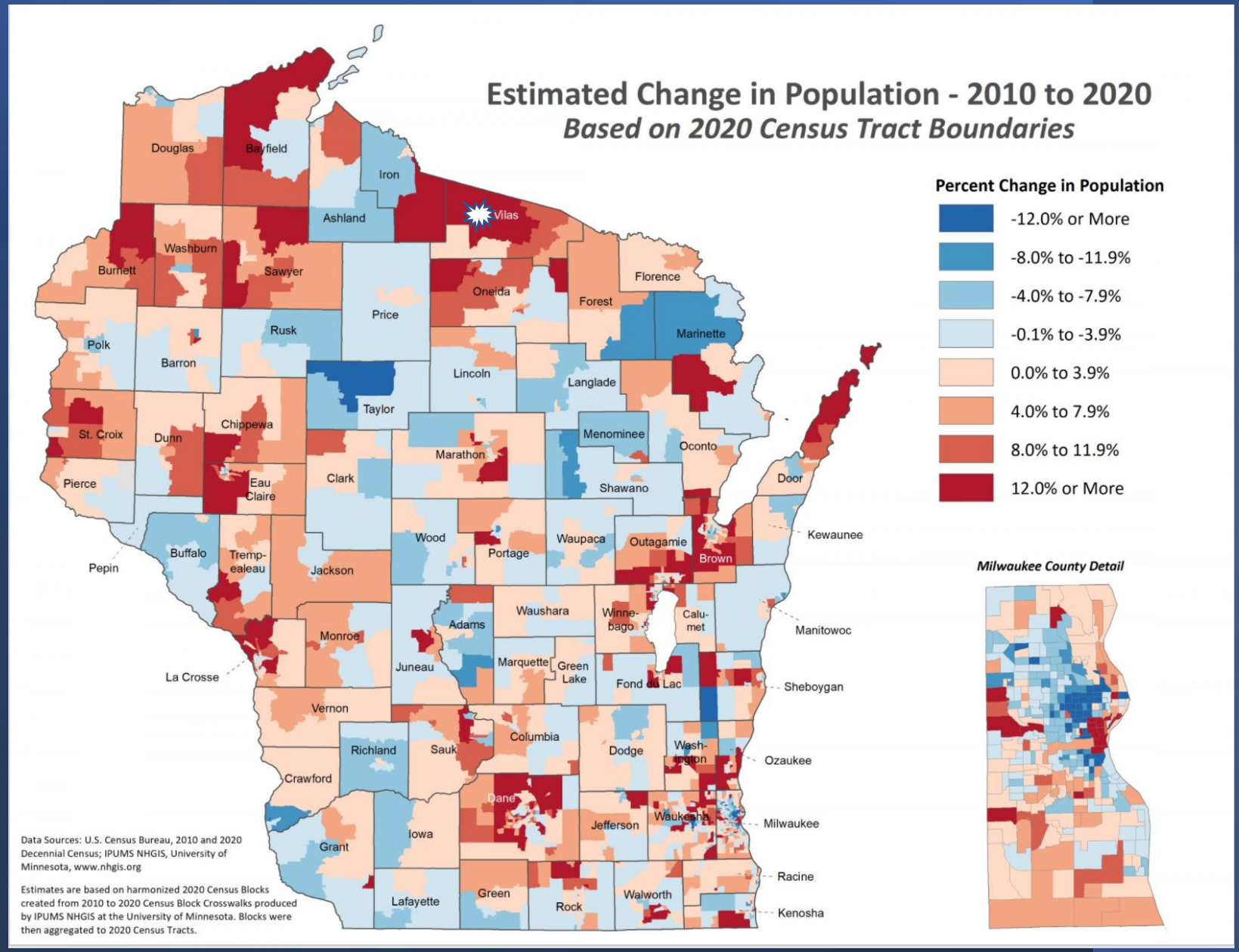
Lighting up Boulder Junction and Redefining its Future

1347 Homes and Businesses

1130 Sign-ups

83%! – More Each Week

Creating a New Economy Through High-Speed Broadband



Our Learnings

- You CAN go fast
- You CANNOT over communicate
- Consider all options
- Get community support and Develop partnerships

Active Networking and Leadership

MaryAnn Lippert

Rural Wood County Resident

Philosophy

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed individuals can change the world. In fact, it's the only thing that ever has."

-- Attibuted to Margaret Mead

“Don’t let aiming for perfection get in the way of getting stuff done”

Wood County Experience

- It all started with an email from a Town Chair……
- Called pals who were also frustrated with internet speed
- Formed a “Skunk Group”
- Learned what other counties were doing (Kewaunee, Polk)
- Provider contacted us
- We promoted – people/government came on board!
- Submitted 2 proposals to PSC in Dec, 2020. Both funded!

Jackson County Experience

- County convened a multi-sector stakeholder group with citizen co-chairs
- Issued an RFI – 2 responses. (After the deadline, 2 more contacted us!)
- Two proposals submitted in the ARPA round – 1 funded
- Currently Core Group continues: educating Town officials; (1 Town already focused on a grant application); considering speed testing; considering issuing another RFI to prepare for next funding opportunity

Lessons Learned

- Don’t wait for government to take the lead. “Gather your pals”
- If government *is* the convener, use co-chairs from the community
- Meetings of multi-sector stakeholders vs. role of a “core group”
- Communicate with your community – use the assets of a rural area (weekly newspaper, “Shopper,” radio interviews, social media, service clubs)

Lessons Learned

- A willing provider is the key!
- Reach out beyond your usual providers to assess interest using a semi-structured RFI process.
- Data –> public data is the foundation. Speed testing projects are great if you have the interest/resources! But don't forget residents who are *not* at the meeting table……. Engage them.
- Letters of support tell the stories in a powerful way!

I’m always interested in chatting about organizing rural communities to do good stuff.
Call me if you want to visit.
715-340-0503

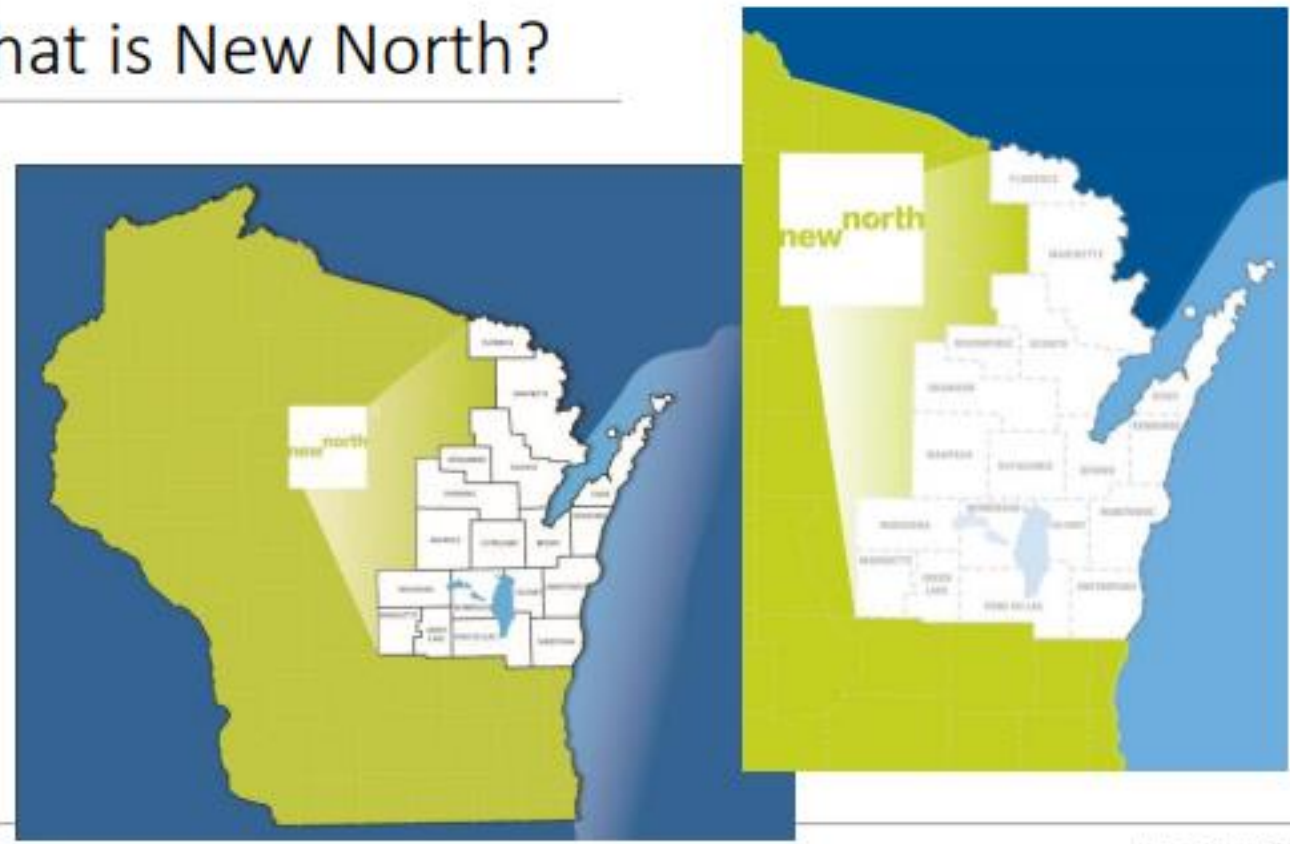
maryannlippert@outlook.com
maryannlippert.com

Connecting the Dots to Get the Region Connected

Barbara Koldos

Vice President, Business Development
New North, Inc.

What is New North?



Where we've been

March	Safer at Home Order
April	Bi-Weekly Huddles
May	What can be done?
June	Research, Convene
July	First Task Force Meeting
August	Gather
September	Application Submitted

E·D·A

May 2021

What we're doing

Gap Analysis and Implementation Plan

RFQ for Consultants
Engaged Design Nine, MSA, GeoPartners

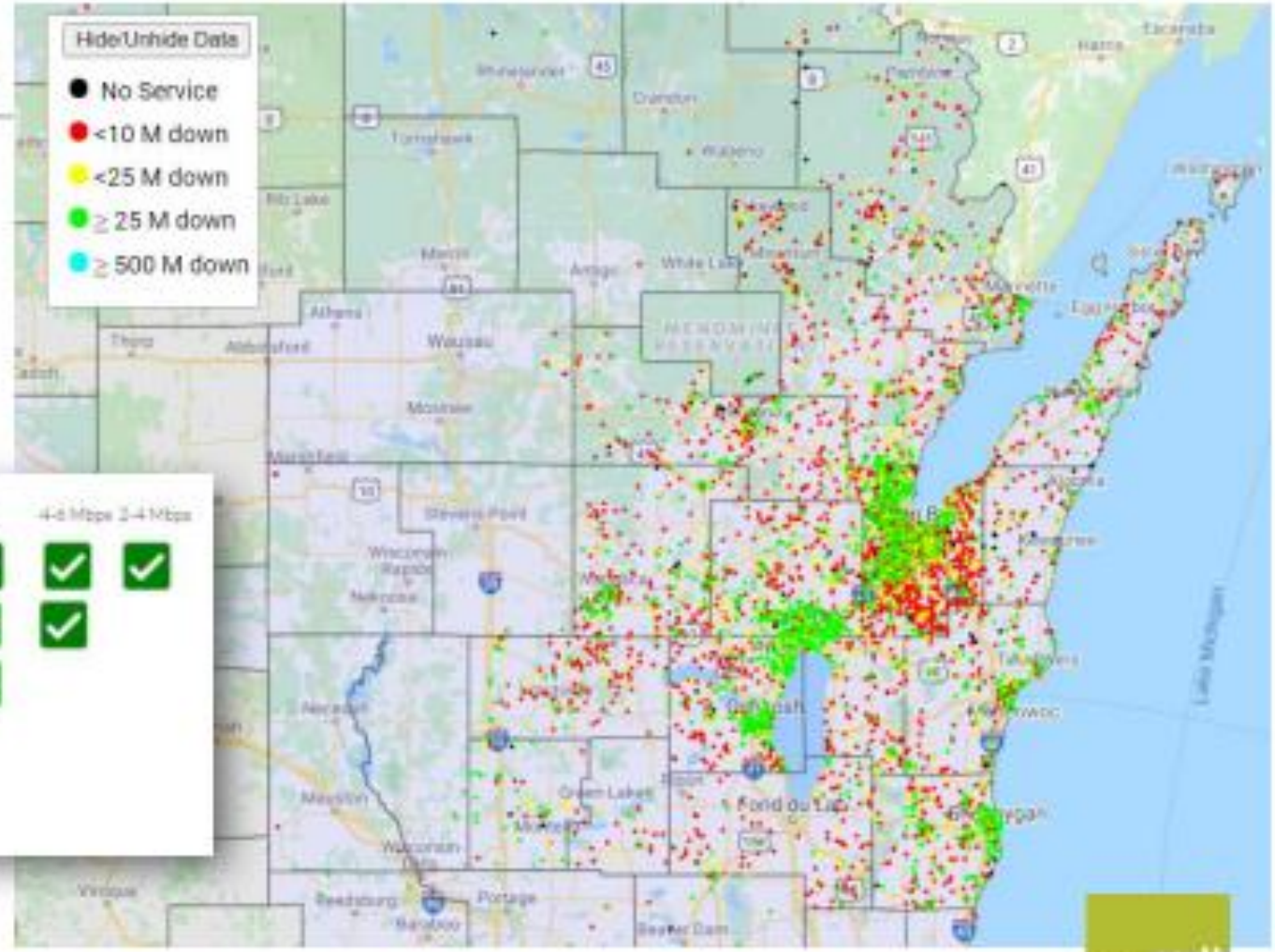
18-County Top Official Roundtable
Community Meetings
Surveys to all Households
Speed Tests

GIS Mapping
Survey Compilation

Continuously keeping partners engaged and informed

What we're doing

Results so far…



Where we're going

Gap Analysis and Implementation Plans for each 18-County by December 31

Speed test for entire State of Wisconsin

Thank you!

Barbara Koldos

barbara.koldos@thenewnorth.com

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