Tuesday, November 17, 2015 – Phone – 10:00 a.m.

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**Obviously, as time marches on, the digital divide has closed substantially in Minnesota and across the United States. More people have access to faster Internet and cheaper devices than ever before. Yet, as is to be expected, there are always more challenges on the horizon when it comes to digital literacy, education, connectivity and access.**

**What, to you, are the greatest current drivers of the digital divide in Minnesota, whether it be regarding education, Internet connectivity, cybersecurity, computer ownership or whatever else?**

As you have noted, technology is changing, but the range of services are changing too. Realtime video stream. Educational needs and availability is increasing.

The thoroughfares are bigger. But the range of services have substantially increased. The digital divide exists but it is more on how to enable the same access that larger more affluent pockets have for those who have less.

We can look at human development indexes. What does it take to education? What does it take to connections in Africa or Asia or poor neighborhoods?

Though it seems everyone have a smart phone. 89% of people use the Internet, nearly doubling since the year 2000. Broadband at home, about 70 percent use that.

92% of adults have cellphones now. 68% have smartphones. 65% use social networking.

“It’s improving. If we look at where the gaps are, those are some good, positive trends.”

Look ten years now, the Internet will be like access to power. It will be less visible but more ingrained in our lives, for both good and bad.

Shopping online, Uber. Those in the Cambodian restaurant in Paris has no idea what was going on.

“There is a need for having similar or the same services for those who have and those who have not.”

We used to have 64k memory in a fighter plane. Now we have fibreoptics.

“Technology leads. Policy follows.”

“It’s a very new breed of duck.”

**What can be done, in your view, to help close those gaps?**

“A lot of it is infrastructure that is needed.”

What part does the private sector do? What does the government do? What about private/public partnerships?

Video on demand. Video conferencing. Virtual classrooms. Smartphones make things even more possible as we move toward 5G networks.

Funding it is the question.

“We can do better across the nation, and in a progressive, forward-looking state like Minnesota.”

Inform the populous and bring services at the state level to people. Education, libraries, learning enhancement and entertainment. Give people these things equally to those who need it.

**The FCC changed its definition of what constitutes high-speed broadband earlier this year. In what way, if any, do you think that affects goals and benchmarks to improve Minnesota’s Internet connectivity?**

A good example.

**What new digital gaps do you see potentially forming in the near future as technology continues to rapidly evolve?**

**Who is most in danger of being left behind?**

**Is there anything you would like to add?**