Tuesday November 17, 2015 – Phone – 11:00 a.m. | 651-259-7611

Danna McKenzie – Minnesota DEED Executive Director

**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?**

There are a number of sources. Minnesota data a couple years. Connect Nation, Connected Minnesota data.

We also use the other sources like Pew, American Community Survey.

Education level, income, age, race and ethnicity show up everywhere. Rurality is still a big focus and getting the infrastructure

89% statewide access right now. 75% in the rural area. Boarder-to-boarder.

Public access points is getting a lot of interest. Public libraries are becoming a way to address gaps and divide issues. These initiatives aren’t as mature right now but they are working on it.

Minnesota Regional Quality Equity Aid. Minnesota tries to pickup the cost.

Workforce centers are another focus. Each state has to implement the new government WOIA act and its digital literacy benchmarks. DEED is doing an inventory for digital inclusion and inventory.

“What we’re talking about is getting everyone to the starting line. We’re worried about when a jobseeker has an email address and knows how to use it. “

But to challenge that, can they access it through a mobile device. Asking those questions through that lens. They are being asked, but they all have answers yet.

Federal connect home initiative – HUD and public housing initiative

The divide can happen in so many different ways. Another part is affordability. The cost is the more significant barrier to low-income populations.

Comcast and other smaller broadband are increasing their speed.

Schools are also partnering with various entities to help kids have online access as well.

NGOs. PC’s for People.

Blanan Foundation

Otto Doll

Jennifer Nelson – MNED

Dave Meerman – DEED workforce development

Cory Sorenson

**What can be done to help close those gaps?**

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

**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?**