

# PRESS RELEASE



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## **New North digital inclusion event set for Oct. 3 at FVTC's Bordini Center** *Aims to enhance region's digital ecosystem through discussion of best practices, future needs*

NEW NORTH, September 15, 2023 – A new event focused on digital inclusion and enhancement of the digital ecosystem within the New North region will be held on Oct. 3 at the Bordini Center of Fox Valley Technical College from 8:30-11:30 a.m. “Bridging the Digital Divide: Digital Inclusion Efforts in the New North” will be convened as part of [National Digital Inclusion Week](#), October 2-6, 2023.

“Digital inclusion includes skilling, access to broadband and access to devices,” says Rebecca Deschane, vice president of talent development for New North Inc., the regional marketing and economic development organization for the 18 counties of Northeast Wisconsin. “Everyone deserves the opportunity to use technology to live, learn, work and thrive in today’s world. Our goal is to enhance the region’s digital ecosystem by looking at successful initiatives and envisioning the New North’s digital future.”

Registration for the free event is available at <https://bit.ly/NewNorthDigitalInclusion>.

A digital initiative within the New North region to be highlighted at the event is NEW BOOST™ for Hidden Talent, shared by Dr. Sabrina Robins of African Heritage Inc. and Vickie Patterson of the Bay Area Workforce Development Board. Updates will be provided by Michelle Schuler of Microsoft on its TechSpark program and by the NEW Digital Alliance, an organization created by Wisconsin-based tech leaders to collaborate on increasing tech talent within Northeast Wisconsin. Broadband workforce preparedness, access and affordability will also be discussed.

The NEW Manufacturing Alliance will share details on its successful digital literacy training, in partnership with Goodwill and Microsoft.

According to the state’s [Digital Equity Scorecard](#), a publication issued by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance in partnership with the National Skills Coalition and Microsoft, nearly 33 percent of unemployed individuals in Wisconsin lack the foundational digital skills to compete for more than 140,000 open positions. Closing the digital divide is an important aspect of continued economic growth because, without those skills, almost 74 percent of open jobs are out of reach for unemployed individuals in Wisconsin.

The second half of the event will feature small-table, guided conversations around gap analysis and digital resource assessment that will be the basis for a digital asset-mapping effort. Attendees will share other digital initiatives in place and where they see local gaps. The conversation will conclude with dialogue on what is envisioned for the future state of regional digital inclusion.

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New North, Inc., is a 501(c)3 non-profit, regional economic development corporation fostering collaboration among private and public sector leaders throughout the 18 counties of Northeast Wisconsin, known as the New North region. The New North brand unites the region both internally and externally around talent development, brand promotion and business development, signifying the collective economic power behind the 18 counties. The counties include Outagamie, Winnebago, Calumet, Waupaca, Brown, Shawano, Oconto, Marinette, Door, Kewaunee, Sheboygan, Manitowoc, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Marquette, Florence, Menominee and Waushara. [www.thenewnorth.com](http://www.thenewnorth.com)

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