

# PRESS RELEASE



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## **New North Broadband Overview Map now available for use by anyone**

*Interactive tool will benefit internet, community, economic-development planning in region*

NEW NORTH, January 23, 2024 – A new interactive tool – the New North Broadband Overview Map – now is available for use by anyone. Developed collaboratively with community-based partners throughout the region, it provides a powerful means for planning through the use of localized data in a visual, easy-to-understand manner. It will be especially helpful in meeting the broadband internet needs in the New North.

The New North Broadband Overview Map can be accessed at [tinyurl.com/NEWBroadbandHub](https://tinyurl.com/NEWBroadbandHub).

The plotting mechanism was developed collaboratively with multiple community partners, including East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC), the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission (BLRPC), Door County, Marquette County and Neverman Consulting, among others.

The mapping tool was funded through a Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Local Planning Grant from the Wisconsin Public Service Commission. Each county in the state had the option to receive individual funding for broadband planning or could apply for it collectively under its Regional Development Organization (REDO); Northeast Wisconsin built a broadband alliance with New North Inc. as the REDO.

The New North Broadband Alliance has been meeting since April 2023. A key item identified by the group was the need for similar expectations for each county. A determination was made by the group that it would be most efficient and cost effective to fund a regional map that addressed shared boundaries.

“The Alliance realized through its meetings that mapping was a critical aspect of the BEAD planning grant process and that the map would have other valuable, long-term uses,” says Barbara Koldos, vice president of business development for New North Inc. and a member of the Governor’s Task Force on Broadband Access. “We are excited to offer this compilation of data sources on a single point of reference that is easy for people to read and understand. It provides a powerful planning tool for industry and governmental bodies in the New North region to receive localized data visually for broadband internet and a host of other economic and community-development applications.”

Broadband internet service providers in the region already have been provided with access to the mapping tool and plan to actively utilize it, according to Koldos. It contains unique data filters that are important determinants to the cost and viability of broadband internet expansion in any particular area, such as environmental factors and railroad crossings.

Beyond broadband internet, the tool also offers mapping of multiple other factors that go into economic development. Most prominent among these, Koldos says, is data on population, housing units, economic levels, business and industrial parks, and available services.

“Broadband continues to be essential community infrastructure, which is why New North led efforts for the Regional Broadband Access Study in 2021,” says Barb LaMue, president and CEO of New North Inc. “This overview map and hub continues to position the New North region at the forefront of the broadband internet expansion in the state. We thank our Alliance members for their contribution and foresight to collaborate for the greater good of the region.”

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Creation of the regional mapping tool was led by Mike Zuege, GIS manager for [ECWRPC](#), and Nicole Barbiaux, GIS coordinator for [BLRPC](#). They developed a comprehensive map in lieu of 15 individual county maps that would have to be pieced together and would have border boundary inconsistencies.

Along with Koldos, prominent contributors to the project included [Door County](#) Community Broadband Coordinator Jessica Hatch, [Marquette County](#) Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator Keri Solis and August Neverman of [Neverman Consulting](#), who formerly served as the broadband coordinator for Brown County.

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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 Brown, Calumet, Door, Florence, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marinette, Marquette, Menominee, Oconto, Outagamie, Shawano, Sheboygan, Waupaca, Waushara and Winnebago. [www.thenewnorth.com](http://www.thenewnorth.com)

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