For Immediate Release
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Sullivan County Becomes First Certified Connected Community in Tennessee

BLOUNTVILLE, Tenn.— Connected Nation just announced that Sullivan County is the first Certified Connected Community in the State of Tennessee. Sullivan County is now one of only 17 communities across the nation to receive this certification.

"We couldn't be more excited to recognize Sullivan County today as Tennessee's first Certified Connected Community," said Corey Johns, Executive Director, Connected Tennessee. "Sullivan County now joins a distinguished group of communities from across the country to achieve certification through Connected Nation's nationally-recognized "Connected" community technology program."

In achieving this designation, Sullivan County has demonstrated that they meet or exceed benchmarks for broadband access, broadband adoption, and broadband use, signifying that the county possesses the necessary broadband infrastructure and digitally proficient workforce required to be truly competitive on today's connected global economy.

"Sullivan County's being one of only 17 communities nationwide designated as a Connected Community is a great accomplishment. We were challenged to be the first in Tennessee and today we celebrate hitting that goal," said Richard Venable, CEO of NETWORKS Sullivan Partnership. "Our challenge now is to be known as the best, most successful Connected Community in the state and nation. "
To achieve the certification, the community completed a rigorous assessment and had to score at least 100 points out of 120. Sullivan County scored a 118.

"Today's Certified Connected Community announcement signifies an important milestone for Sullivan County's evolving technology landscape and establishes an important benchmark for achieving progress through technology," said Alyson Ferine, State Operations Manager - East TN, Connected Tennessee
The assessment confirms broadband infrastructure availability, residential use of the technology, and improvements to the quality of life in the community through the technology available. Bristol Tennessee Essential Services' high speed data system helped meet this criteria.

"In the early 2000s BTES' board and staff had a vision of having a highly connected community," said BTES' CEO Mike Browder. "Now we provide a super high speed data system over fiber that offers speeds of a Gigabit per 2 second that is available to every business and every home in our service area which continues to allow us to be prepared for future technological needs and growth in our community."
Connected certification affords a community an avenue to discuss its success, its resources and pursue opportunities as a recognized, technologically advanced community. Through this program, communities are creating a better business environment, more effective community and economic development, improved healthcare, enhanced education, and more efficient government.

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