

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2309
February 23, 2016

Blandin Foundation
100 North Pokegama Avenue
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

To the Blandin Foundation:

I am pleased to take this opportunity to recognize the Blandin Foundation and its incredible service to the people of Minnesota through its efforts to provide broadband to all Minnesotans. In an increasingly interconnected and technologically dependent world, our livelihoods depend on a strong broadband network. Yet, as I travel the state, I have seen first-hand too many places where access to high-speed Internet is lacking.

Ensuring internet access for all Minnesotans is an issue of great concern at the core of our state's economic development. It affects the future well-being and vitality of every individual and business in Minnesota. For this reason, I applaud the Blandin Foundation, the Minnesota Office of Broadband Development, and many other stakeholders in Minnesota that developed a broadband vision for the state during last year's *Border to Border Broadband: Better Together* conference. By engaging over 170 policy makers, community developers, providers, and businesses for over four working sessions in two days, you have worked tirelessly so that "everyone in Minnesota will be able to use convenient, affordable world-class broadband networks that enable us to survive and thrive in our communities and across the globe."

This vision is crucial to our schools, libraries, healthcare facilities, and local businesses. Broadband deployment is a necessity to help grow our small-town rural economy, support Minnesota's entrepreneurial spirit, create new jobs, attract new people, and modernize the education and healthcare services so essential to quality of life. Your efforts will be critical to securing these goals and seeking new and innovative ways to meet Minnesota's broadband needs.

I continue to look forward to the day when every Minnesotan has the appropriate access to connect with the world and thank you for your tireless work and commitment to bringing affordable, high-quality broadband to all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,



Al Franken
United States Senator