Governor Noem Announces K-12 Connect

10/27/2020
PIERRE, S.D. – Today, Governor Kristi Noem announced the launch of K-12 Connect, a program to provide internet service at no cost to eligible K-12 students in their homes for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year.

"Given the unprecedented disruption for many of our K-12 students, we want to make sure there isn't a gap in learning this year," said **Governor Noem**. "So many South Dakotans are stepping up to help, and I want to thank the South Dakota telecommunications companies that are teaming up with us to make this access possible."

Eligible households will receive a letter this week indicating eligibility and identifying a telecommunications company to call to access free internet service through K-12 Connect. **To enroll, eligible households must call the telecommunications company noted in their letter to set up service.** Providers will install the necessary equipment on a first-come, first-serve basis. **Internet service will be provided through June 30, 2021.** After that time, the household must return the equipment to the provider or continue services at the household's expense.

Households must meet all of the following:
Have at least one student currently enrolled in an accredited South Dakota K-12 school;
Must meet the income eligibility guidelines for the free and reduced school lunch program; and
The household was not subscribed to a fixed broadband internet service as of July 1, 2020.
Enrollment closes Nov. 20, 2020.
K-12 Connect is a partnership of the South Dakota Governor's Office, Bureau of Information and Telecommunications, Department of Education, and participating telecommunications companies. Funding for the program is from the CARES Act.

More information, including options for households who may qualify but don't receive a letter, can be found at k12connect.sd.gov.

Telecommunications companies who are participating in K-12 Connect include:

Alliance Communications Cooperative
Beresford Municipal Telephone Company
Faith Municipal Telephone Company
Fort Randall Telephone Company
Golden West Telecommunications
Interstate Telecommunications Cooperative
Kennebec Telephone Company
Long Lines Broadband
Midco
Midstate Communications
RC Technologies
Santel Communications Cooperative
Swiftel Communications/Brookings Municipal Telephone
TrioTel Communications

Valley Telecommunications Cooperative
Vast
Venture Communications Cooperative
West River Cooperative Telephone Company
West River Telecommunications Cooperative