



Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB)

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**VERMONT COMMUNITY BROADBAND BOARD'S NEW DOCUMENTARY
"CONNECTED" TO PREMIERE**

Montpelier, Vermont – A new documentary, produced by Vermont production company Well Told Films and the Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB), will premiere at the Capitol Theater in Montpelier on Wednesday. The documentary, called "Connected: Vermont's Grassroots Effort for Rural Broadband," tells the inspiring and uniquely Vermont story of people across the state coming together to solve a community problem – the lack of internet connectivity. The film shows how hundreds of volunteers came together to make a difference and the progress that's been made so far.

"It documents an historic time in Vermont in the evolution of broadband connectivity, similar in importance and scope to when Vermont first got electricity. This film chronicles the work of making fiber optic internet available to all Vermonters. It provides a roadmap for other communities and states that are struggling the way Vermont did, and tells a compelling and relatable human-interest story," said VCBB Executive Director Christine Hallquist.

"Connected" shows the spread of a community-based solution, called Communications Union Districts (CUDs), which are organizations of two or more towns that join as municipal entities to build communication infrastructure together, starting with ECFiber in east-central Vermont in 2008. Its founders tell the story in their own words, describing the situation that prompted action, how they came together and organized, worked through many hurdles, and finally celebrated the completion of the network in their original towns.

ECFiber is followed by the formation of nine additional CUDs. We hear from the leadership of many of them and learn about some of the challenges they have faced and are facing along the way. Currently, Vermont has ten CUDs, covering 216 towns, more than 76% of the state's population and 93% of the underserved homes and

businesses. Six out of ten CUDs are now actively connecting previously underserved homes.

“Connected” also highlights the challenges Vermonters were facing without broadband and how a reliable connection has changed their lives. We hear from a farmer, a busy mom juggling her work and her kids’ education, a professional who wants to stay in his hometown in the Northeast Kingdom but needs broadband to work, and people who run and live in an elder care home. Broadband has made it possible for them to participate in and grow their businesses, access healthcare and education, and stay connected to their families, all from their homes, no matter where they live in Vermont.

You can watch a preview of the documentary at [Connected Documentary Teaser \(youtube.com\)](#). The premiere is Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at 4:30 at the Capitol Theater, 93 State Street, Montpelier. The public is invited to attend the free screening.

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