



NYS Broadband Program awards Niagara-Orleans Regional Alliance (NORA) Legislators Johnson & Godfrey “Most Collaborative Broadband Program”

Rural broadband expansion efforts to reach 'virtually every child,' public schools, tourism industries, small and agri-businesses

For Immediate Release

June 17, 2015--ALBANY, NY-- **Niagara-Orleans Regional Alliance (NORA)** Legislators **Lynne Johnson**, of Orleans County, and **David Godfrey**, of Niagara County, were recognized with an award for the “Most Collaborative Broadband Program” at the 3rd Annual NYS Broadband Summit. Hosted by the NYS Broadband Program Office, the event honored New York’s outstanding broadband industry leaders. Johnson and Godfrey were acknowledged for leading a dual county initiative to deliver affordable broadband Internet to unserved address points in both Orleans and Niagara counties after an intensive study revealed more than 3,900 unserved addresses existed in areas the New York Broadband Map had documented was almost 100-percent covered. In reality, only 65-percent of the rural areas in both counties had access to high-speed broadband Internet. Cable and Internet providers are able to report to the state that an entire census block has Internet coverage, even if only one house on the block has Internet access, which has resulted in inflated coverage reports across New York State.

[Johnson](#) and [Godfrey](#) were nominated for the award by the Ridgeway (NY) Town Supervisor Brian Napoli, who several years ago identified the need for more broadband throughout Orleans and initiated talks on how to expand it. Napoli said, “The work of Legislators Johnson and Godfrey is a testament to how effective

officials can be when we join together to achieve a common goal.”

At last Thursday’s summit, NORA Stakeholder and Orleans County Legislative Chairman [David Callard](#) emphasized, “As legislators, we could no longer ignore the broadband gap that existed. We are proud to be part of this trailblazing initiative and thankful for the support of the NYS Broadband Program and Governor Cuomo through his New NY Broadband campaign.”

With several thousand houses in Orleans and 7 towns in Niagara County (Cambria, Hartland, Lockport, Newfane, Porter, Royalton and Somerset) lacking Internet, [William L. Ross](#), Niagara County Legislative Chairman added, “It’s wonderful to be congratulating the organization and persistence of Legislators Johnson and Godfrey, this outcome will be greatly beneficial to our residents without broadband.”

In early 2014, a NORA-commissioned study from BPGreene & Associates revealed the unserved address points in both Niagara and Orleans counties. Regionally, it was well-known there were many areas with no coverage which would hinder economic development efforts, if left unaddressed. NORA’s survey results provided overwhelming data that was so concrete the state accepted NORA’s study to formally update the New York State Broadband Map.

Along with Legislators Johnson and Godfrey, the 2015 Broadband Summit also commended Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the [New NY Broadband Program](#) created so all New Yorkers would have access to reliable and affordable high-speed Internet service by 2019. Through the NORA Broadband Initiative, Johnson and Godfrey have addressed what has become a statewide need, the lack of connectivity for many residents, small and agri-businesses, tourism and other industries in more rural counties. With the recent focus on “smart schools” and the passage of Proposition 3, Legislators Johnson and Godfrey have taken the extra step to ensure their communities are equipped to accelerate economic development efforts, support public schools and reach ["virtually every child."](#)

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