March 2019 – South Dakota legislature approved $5 million to be used as matching funds to improve broadband.

South Dakota created statewide Broadband plan.

May 2019 – Creation and launch of Connect South Dakota.

Spring/Summer 2019 – The $5 million leveraged more than $11 million in broadband upgrades. Additionally, because the state had a broadband plan in place, South Dakota companies were awarded additional points on their Reconnect application, a federal program to provide funding for telecommunications updates. While $5 million didn’t fix our broadband gap overnight, it was a start.

Eight awards to:

- Alliance Communications - $269,428
- Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Telephone Authority - $474,500
- Interstate Telecommunications Cooperative - $253,300
- Midco Communications - $306,199
- Mitchell Telecom - $441,470
- RC Technologies - $361,500
- Vast Broadband - $128,844
- Venture Communications - $2,764,759

The total project costs of these approved projects was $12 million.

Collectively, these eight projects connect about 4,800 unserved and underserved households and more than 100 South Dakota businesses.

Because South Dakota has a broadband plan in place, companies applying for Reconnect dollars receive additional points on their application.

Alcester, SD benefits from a Reconnect grant awarded to Heartland Communications of Iowa.

December 2019 – The USDA Reconnect Program awarded $9.5 million in high-speed broadband infrastructure to Valley Telecommunications that will create or improve e-Connectivity for more than 1,750 homes in rural South Dakota. https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2019/12/12/usda-invests-95-million-rural-broadband-south-dakota-families

In early November, Verizon announced 5G wireless would rollout in Sioux Falls, making it among the first 20 cities in the US with 5G technology.

When you combine the Connect and Reconnect projects, 6,800 households and nearly 150 businesses in South Dakota now have access to higher speed broadband service.

The total combined investment from Connect and Reconnect projects in South Dakota is $25 million.