



July 2025

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INSIGHT INTO **YOUR** BROADBAND ASSOCIATION

Wrapping Up the 2025 Legislative Session

As I'm sure you're all aware by now the legislative session ended with a bit chaos related to ODOT funding. For our members, we weathered the session fairly well. We had successes and a couple of let downs for sure.

There were no bills that related directly to broadband or telecommunications that passed which we didn't support or we were at least neutral on. The disappointments came with general business legislation impacting industries across the board.

I want to thank the members of the OBA Legislative Committee for their efforts at helping me understand how bills might affect our member companies. The insights and feedback the committee offered are truly helpful and appreciated.

The OBA testified on a few bills this session and impacted others while not having to testify. Here are a few of those bills:

- **House Bill (HB) 2370** – This bill increased the fees that public utilities pay to the Oregon PUC. OBA confirmed and ensured that our members who are public utilities were not included in the bill.
- **HB 2851** – Would have made a slight change in existing language to include infrastructure elements other than fiber were included in the definition of critical infrastructure. The ACLU opposed this minor change and we were not able to get the changes adopted.
- **HB 3148B** – This bill made the OTAP assistance plan permanent and changed its name to Oregon Lifeline. It repealed the OTAP Advisory Committee and the bill also allows for one time assistance for purchasing internet enabled devices.
- **Senate Bill (SB) 4** – This bill would mandate customer bill credits for internet outages lasting longer than one hour, regardless of the reason for the outage. We and our industry partners were able to successfully kill this effort. However, I believe the legislature has tipped their hand related to broadband issues like this one. We must remain vigilant about customer credits and state mandated low-income offerings.
- **SB 330** – If passed, would mandate that electric service power lines be undergrounded. This bill had good intentions (fire prevention) but would have been very expensive. Again, OBA and our friends in the electric utility business were able to ensure it did not pass. The bill's proponent did say he would re-visit the issue in the future so... stay tuned.
- **SB 426B** is probably the worst bill that passed that impacts OBA members. The bill makes owners liable for wages not paid to sub-contractors, even if you have already paid the general contractor. While the bill is meant to target those in the general construction industry, it applies to all.

The OBA came to the fight over this bill kind of late in the session. While it was pointed out that our members use specialized contractors unlikely to neglect their workers, the liability in the bill still applies to us.

These represent just a few of the bills that OBA tracked and worked on through the session. If you're interested in the complete tracking report, please use the following [link](#). You should be able to right click on any piece of legislation and read it in full.

We still continue to struggle with issues related to working in the public ROW. In particular, ODOT continues to withhold permits until certain work is performed in conjunction with tribal representatives. The OBA is reaching out to the involved agencies in an attempt at speeding up the process. While I have heard from a few folks about this, please let me know if you are experiencing delays in getting permits due to cultural item concerns or other issues.

I'm actively tracking legislative and regulatory issues on your behalf to ensure your interests are represented. If you have any questions, concerns, or if something is affecting your operations (USIC locates, anyone?), please don't hesitate to reach out. Your input helps strengthen our advocacy efforts.

-Brant Wolf

HAPPENINGS >>>

Membership News

Membership Announcements & News

➤ Expanding Representation: New and Returning Faces on the OBA Board of Directors

We're excited to share two important updates from this year's Annual Meeting of Members that reflect our continued commitment to inclusive representation.

First, following recent bylaw changes, CLEC members now have a dedicated seat on the OBA Board of Directors. **We're pleased to announce that Michael Wynschenk, CEO of Hunter Communications, was elected to serve a three-year term as the first CLEC representative.** Welcome aboard, Michael!

Additionally, we're happy to share that **Shaun Plummer of Core Telecom Systems was re-elected to represent the Associate Member class.** Shaun has been a valued voice on the board, as well as numerous internal committees, and we look forward to his continued leadership.

Please join us in congratulating both Michael and Shaun as they help shape the future of OBA!

➤ AMS & Website Launch Coming Soon!

We're thrilled to announce that our brand-new website is nearly ready for launch! While progress experienced a brief pause in Q2 due to a couple of major events happening in quick succession, the finish line is now in sight. Get ready for a fresh new look, improved functionality, and a smoother experience. Stay tuned—more details coming your way soon!

Scholarship Foundation Update

Big Success at This Year's Scholarship Auction & Raffle!

We're thrilled to share that our annual Scholarship Foundation Fundraising campaign, auction and raffle was a huge success! Thanks to the generosity of our community, sponsors, and participants, we raised over \$11,000 to support next year's scholarship awards. Every dollar contributes directly to empowering folks through education, and we couldn't have done it without you. Thank you for helping us invest in the next generation leaders!

In the meantime, let's congratulate the 2025 recipients!

Scholarship Award Recipients

Cameron Hill



Brigham-Young University Idaho

Geology

Sponsored by



2025 - 2026

Luna Lopez

Umpqua Community College

Engineering



Sponsored by



Carter Nicholas

Clackamas Community College

Computer & Network Administration



Sponsored by



Kiana Hargens

Chadron State College

Chemistry & Veterinary Medicine

Sponsored by



Rylee Whitney

Eastern Oregon University

Business Administration

Ella Perez

Brigham-Young University Utah

Exercise Science

Sponsored by



Corbin University

Business & Accounting

Sponsored by



Landon Knox



Sponsored by



Elizabeth Young

Oregon Tech

Echocardiography

Sponsored by



Diana Coleman Memorial Scholarship Award Winner

Event Recaps

OBA Hosts Nearly 90 Members in Hood River for Spring Seminar

With mostly sunny skies and a touch of the infamous gorge wind, OBA welcomed nearly 90 members to the Hood River Inn in May for a few packed days of learning, updates, and connection. **Attendees dove into hands-on sessions covering splicing, fiber cleaning and scoping, and got the latest updates on 811 dig law and the newest developments in Wi-Fi.** The OSP Committee, along with guest and Hood River local, Erik Lundby from Blue Mountain Networks, hosted a roundtable and panel discussion on **best practices and alternative solutions for green and brown field MDUs.**

We were pleased to welcome an OSHA representative, who shared **key workplace safety tips and advice.** One highlight of the day came from the Congruex team, who traveled from Utah to offer a fresh perspective on **micro-trenching**—shedding light on its financial impacts and sustainable strategies for building stronger partnerships with diverse stakeholders. After-all, we want to be prepared for the future!

The Three Strands Global Foundation (3SGF) also joined us, delivering an important and timely message about **human trafficking.** Their call to action: See something? Say something. Their work centers around identifying trafficking through three main tactics—force, fraud, and coercion—used for both sex and labor exploitation. With many OSP technicians and installers regularly working in and around homes and businesses, our industry is uniquely positioned to make a difference. 3SGF offers complimentary training for businesses to help recognize the signs and take action.

If you're interested in scheduling this vital training (at no cost to you) for your staff, please reach out—we'd love to connect you.

A shout out to all who made our event successful: our sponsors and exhibitors, attendees, but especially our very own Central Office & Information Technologies Committee members! They work hard months in advance to bring relevant content to the membership community with networking opportunities.



2025 OUTSIDE PLANT SEMINAR

SPONSORS

We appreciate your generosity and support!

Oregon Broadband Association
WWW.OBA-TELECOM.ORG

Reflections on the Annual Conference: A Perfectly Imperfect Success

I'm not going to lie—as a veteran event coordinator with over fifteen years of experience, this year's Annual Conference felt different. It wasn't perfect... but somehow, it was perfect. I've never been prouder of the work of the Association, the Annual Conference Committee, and the Scholarship Foundation Board. Thanks to their combined efforts, we pulled off a dynamic and meaningful event that truly reflected the heart of our industry.

From a small but lively golf tournament to successful fundraising for scholarships, and from a world-class keynote speaker to a variety of educational sessions, the conference delivered on many levels. Attendees had access to valuable insights from our national peers—**NTCA, WTA, and US Telecom**—as well as thought leadership from our associate members and industry supporters. Highlights include:

- **Celebrating Brant's 25 years of service to the organization!**
- Keynote speaker and AI expert Steve Brown delivering a fascinating preview of the transformative potential of AI and encouraging us all to explore existing tools to enhance various aspects of our operations
- Lennie Blakeslee (**CoBank**) on the current economic climate
- **Moss Adams** providing a broad Oregon market update
- **Aldrich** outlining grant and loan programs and their ripple effects in relation to hidden costs
- **Calix** highlighting strategies for deeper subscriber engagement
- Mark Marion (**NTCA**) on building and sustaining higher-performing boards
- Jessica Epley presented the **Presidents Award** to Mandy Jundt from OBA for her commitment and support of the association. Since I'm writing this... I'll just say how much I love this community and its an honor to be apart of it!

It was a true team effort, and the positive energy was palpable. Thank you to everyone who made this year's event not only possible, but exceptional.



HAPPENINGS >>>

More Photos & Association "Stuff"



A day of sun and fun on the links! **From the top left to right:** The first foursome heads down the fairway. Look at that view! Golf coordinator, **Shaun Plummer (Core Telecom Systems)** welcomes participants and sponsors. **Derrick Mottern from SMTA, Glenn Taylor from Calix, Josh Bailey from Aldrich and Joshua Sharp from American Power Systems** get ready to tee off. **Middle:** The usual suspects... causing just enough "trouble" not to get caught... (**Brandi Sangster & Rusti Lattin from Eagle Telephone Systems and Erik & Janet Hoefer from SCTC**).

Bottom right: **Chad Holzer (Moss Adams) & Louis Basi (SCTC)**. The guys from **Woden, LLC** try to intimidate **Brian Burnett from ePlus**. **Jason Robinson from Hunter Communications, Derrick Owens from W-T-A and Caleb Dozier from Aldrich** all warm up at the range.

Save the Date




OREGON
BROADBAND ASSOCIATION

2025
**Central Office
& Information
Technologies**
Seminar
November 13-14, 2025*
Best Western | Hood River Inn

*Plan your arrival for Wednesday, November 12;
our seminar will start early on Thursday morning!



INFORMATION >>>

Association "Stuff"

Associate Members: Are you looking to expand your reach and connect with our service provider members? Place your message banner in one of our newsletters or on our (coming soon) website to capture the attention of potential customers. Whether you're launching a new product, promoting a special offer, or building brand awareness, our advertising spaces are designed to promote awareness and engagement. Contact us today to find out more about our advertising opportunities and how we can help elevate your business presence.

We want to recognize our **2025 PREMIER ASSOCIATE MEMBERS!**
Thank you for your elevated level of support of the Oregon Broadband Association!



ADVERTISE HERE!

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Officers & Board of Directors

Paul Hauer, **President** (Beaver Creek Cooperative Telephone)
Rusti Lattin, **President-Elect** (Eagle Telephone Systems, Inc.)
Brooke Wheeler, **Secretary-Treasurer** (Cascade Utilities | Reliance Connects)
Garrin Bott, **Director** (Rally Networks)
James Byerley, **Director** (Pioneer Connect)
Jessica Epley, **Director & Immediate Past Chair** (Zipty Fiber)
Geri Fraijo, **Director** (Monitor Cooperative Telephone)
Erik Hoefer, **Director** (SCTC)
Shaun Plummer, Associate Member **Director** (Core Telecom)
Jared Wiener, **Director** (Lumen Technologies)
Michael Wynschenk, **Director** (Hunter Communications)



We want to highlight more noteworthy information, awards, and events of our members!
Or maybe you are a hobby photographer with some amazing images to share? Reach out to us, to see if we can feature you!

