

October 2025

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# Connections

#### INSIGHT INTO YOUR BROADBAND ASSOCIATION

#### Legislative Update: Quiet Months, but Steady Work

The months following a long legislative session are usually pretty quiet - and 2025 is no different. Legislators are tired after six months of hearings, debates, and long nights, and most aren't eager to chat with your friendly association EVP. After a couple of months though, fundraising efforts begin with events taking place and phone calls being made. All of this provides a timely reminder to once again highlight the importance of supporting our Political Action Committee (PAC)—and to thank those members who already do so.

Our PAC is used to provide election support to a variety of people:

- Members of legislative leadership such as Majority and Minority leaders
- Chairs of legislative committees where our issues are (usually) sent for action
- Those individuals who are supportive of our members regardless of their status or committee assignment. For example, a rural legislator who might serve on committees totally unrelated to telecommunications but who also happens to represent several of our members.
- In addition, I try to connect with a few urban legislators who may not have direct ties to our industry but who are open to understanding our issues. That outreach has proved extremely valuable over the years.

Our PAC may be small by some standards, but we make efficient and strategic use of every dollar. As I've often said, some of the entities we compete with—for both customers and legislative support—can spend sums we'll never match. Our strength lies in our members and the good work we do in our communities that we then combine with our PAC dollars to leverage support on issues. It's worked well over the years.

As a quick reminder, Oregon is one of the few states that allow corporations to contribute directly to PACs. This allows our members to support the PAC more readily than having to ask individuals for personal contributions. The downside of course is that elections are outrageously expensive, creating a doom loop of ever higher contributions and expenditures.

Some may ask why we need to continue to raise PAC funds in an off-election year. The answer lies in the final sentence of the paragraph above. The chase for funding rarely takes a break and as mentioned there are events taking place most weeks until mid-December. It will pick back up again and end only with the short legislative session in February. I try to avoid giving too much in the off year; banking most of our PAC dollars until we know for sure who is running. The deadline for filing to run is in March when things kick off in earnest. So, once again... to those members who support the PAC - thank you. Your contributions truly make a difference. We recognize those members at our Annual Meeting with signage and other special designations, but please know your continued engagement is deeply appreciated!

Beyond our legislative work, the thing the OBA does is working to keep our members and our issues in front of people to stay visible in statewide conversations. For example, this month alone, the OBA has been on two panel discussions: one at the Oregon Joint Use Association annual meeting and another at the recent Oregon Connections Conference. The panels included me, the Oregon Broadband Office, elected representatives and representatives of the electric industry. These events really do help keep us in the public eye and relevant in policy discussions.

Finally, a note for members with a COLR obligation: please be thinking about that obligation and how it might look in the near future. Our current obligation to offer a voice service grows less relevant to more Oregonians every day. I have been approached by a serious and committed legislator to try and modernize the COLR statute in 2027. What it means to those we serve should be determined in large part by our members. Of course we will not have a blank check to do whatever we want. This will take a great deal of effort and perhaps no small amount of compromise and new thinking. Once we begin our new Legislative and Policy Committee meetings (I swear that's coming), we will start to work through some of these issues. If you haven't already, and are interested in serving on that committee, please let me know. We'll get started soon!

-Brant Wolf

## **Membership Announcements & News**

## Connecting Policy to Practice: SCTC Hosts OPUC Legislative Affairs Director

In August, The Oregon Broadband Association was pleased to welcome Oregon Public Utility Commission Legislative Affairs Director, Laura Tabor to SCTC for a firsthand look at their central office and outside plant operations. The visit provided an opportunity to see the infrastructure and daily work behind the delivery of broadband service to rural Oregonians and to discuss the real-world challenges small telecommunications companies face in maintaining and expanding these essential networks.

During the tour, SCTC leadership highlighted how local providers are bridging the digital divide through continued investment in fiber technology, workforce development, and customer service — often with limited resources and unique regulatory hurdles. The conversation also touched on policy issues impacting broadband deployment, from permitting timelines to workforce shortages and federal funding distribution.

The Oregon Broadband Association values these direct conversations between government representatives (such as Tabor), policymakers and service providers, as they help shape informed decisions that support equitable connectivity across the state. Please reach out if we can help coordinate a site visit or meeting between your company and state or local leaders. We'd love to get you involved!



Top left and right:
SCTC President/CEO
Erik Hoefer and
Central Office
Network Admin, Jess
Basl show the
Legislative Affairs
Director, Laura Tabor
(OPUC) the central
office operation.
Bottom left: SCTC
Outside Plant
Supervisor, Matt
Barrett illustrates
fiber jetting.



#### →Coltontel Celebrates Milestone with New Headquarter Building

Coltontel is celebrating an exciting new chapter with the opening of its brand-new office. After decades of serving the community from its original location built in the 70's, the company has reimagined its workspace to reflect its commitment to innovation, efficiency, and connection.

The new facility brings together modern technology, collaborative spaces, and a welcoming environment designed to support both employees and customers. It stands as a proud symbol of Coltontel's continued investment in the community it serves — honoring its deep roots while embracing the future of broadband in rural Oregon.

Coltontel hosted an open house at the beginning of October to welcome its clients to the new site! If you are in the area, stop by to see the gorgeous elongated windows, high ceilings trimmed with natural wood and beautiful agate flooring while showcasing the same warmth the small community offers.

**Right: Geri Fraijo, Manager of Coltontel,** reveals the brand new office space.



#### **HAPPENINGS** >>>

Membership News

### **Membership Announcements & News**

#### Copied From the 10/2/25 Business Oregon Newsletter

#### **Baker County Celebrates Major Broadband Expansion**

The Business Oregon Broadband Office is excited to announce that Baker County is among the latest communities preparing to expand broadband access! With a population exceeding 16,000 and spanning a vast 3,088 square miles, expanding high-speed internet is essential to support the county's economic growth and critical services, such as education and healthcare.

Through the Oregon Broadband Development Program (ARPA CPF)—funded by state and federal grants, the Oregon Broadband Office partners with organizations to deliver reliable, high-speed internet, bridging the digital divide and strengthening community connectivity. In collaboration with Oregon Telephone Corporation (dba Rally Networks), this expansion will ensure broadband infrastructure to communities across Baker County.

On September 10, 2025, the Oregon Telephone Corporation and the Oregon Broadband Office hosted a celebratory and informational event at the Oregon Telephone Headquarters in Baker City. The event marked the official announcement of Baker County's broadband expansion, along with an overview of the program and a project briefing by Oregon Telephone. Guests included representatives from Baker County, Senator Wyden's Office, Senator Merkley's Office, Baker City, and the City of Huntington, as well as representatives from Oregon Telephone Corporation, and Daniel Holbrook and Gus Burril from the Oregon Broadband Office.

The project includes \$10.1 million in grant funding from the U.S. Department of the Treasury. It will support the installation of 127 miles of fiber-optic mainline cable and extend broadband service to approximately 444 locations, primarily along the I-84 corridor, from southeast Baker City through the City of Huntington. This is a major win for Huntington, one of Baker County's smaller cities (population 682), and a significant step toward closing the digital divide in rural Oregon.

Fiber-optic internet in Oregon can cost between \$75 and \$150 per month, particularly in rural areas with limited internet service providers. In contrast, the BDP-supported service will offer 100/100Mbps speeds for just \$49.99/month, locked in for five years. To date, the program has funded 12,137 unserved locations, with 89% lacking a wired connection capable of 25/3Mbps—underscoring the importance of this initiative.



Pictured above from left to right: Casey Kenison (Rally), Garrin Bott (Rally), Colten Richards (Rally), Kara Miller (Baker City Community Development), Baker Co. Commissioner Michelle Kaseberg, Sam Farr (Rally), DeeDee Kluser (Rally) Shem Carlson (Baker County), Baker Co. Commissioner Cristina Witham, Robyn McKay (City of Huntington), Andrew Cutler (Sen. Wyden Field Representative), Jessica Key (Sen. Jeff Merkley Office), Gus Burril, Jonathan Cannon (Rally).

#### HAPPENINGS >>>

Membership News

#### **Membership Announcements & News**

Copied From the 10/2/25 Business Oregon Newsletter

#### Broadband Expansion Announced for John Day and Canyon City

The Oregon Broadband Office is excited to share that John Day and Canyon City are the latest Grant County communities to receive funding for broadband infrastructure. Bordering each other, these two cities are home to more than 2,000 residents. Known for their picturesque landscapes and ancient fossils, John Day and Canyon City are both rich in natural heritage and are popular destinations for tourists. Expanding high-speed internet in these rural areas is essential—not only to support residents and businesses, but also to help keep Grant County a flourishing and connected place to live, work, and visit.

Through the Broadband Development Program (OBDP), funded by federal grants, the Oregon Broadband Office has selected awardees who will deliver reliable, high-speed internet to bridge the digital divide and strengthen community connectivity. In collaboration with Oregon Telephone Corporation (dba Rally Networks), this expansion will ensure broadband infrastructure to support rural connectivity and economic development in Grant County.

On August 18, 2025, the Oregon Telephone Corporation and the Oregon Broadband Office hosted a groundbreaking ceremony and informational event at the Grant County Regional Airport in John Day, Oregon. The event marked the official announcement of broadband expansion for John Day and Canyon City, featuring a program overview and a year-ahead project briefing presented by Oregon Telephone. Guests included representatives from the City of John Day, the interim president of Grant County CyberMill, Oregon Telephone, and Gus Burril of the Oregon Broadband Office.

The project includes \$1.72 million in grant funding from the U.S. Department of the Treasury. It will support the installation of 13.9 miles of fiber optic mainline cable and extend broadband services to approximately 276 **locations** within John Day, Canyon City, and some of the adjacent suburbs.

You can find more information from the Oregon Broadband Office here: Business Oregon: Oregon Broadband Office.



Pictured from left to right: Cameron Mills, Rally Networks Broadband Deployment Inst/Repairer; Casey Kenison, Rally Project Manager; Chantel DesJardin, Interim President for the Grant County Cybermill, McKenzie Smith, Rally Engineering Assistant; Sam Farr, Rally Vice President of Human Resources; DeeDee Kluser, Rally Special Projects; Sherrie Rininger, John Day Mayor; Brad Hale, John Day City Councilor; Melissa Bethel, John City Manager; Colten Richards, Rally Vice President of Sales & Marketing; Jonathan Cannon, Rally Government Affairs Manager.

#### ASSOCIATION, BOARD, COMMITTEE & INDUSTRY INFO >>>

Association News

#### **Association News**

#### Powering Progress: Members Begin Electrical Licensing Pilot

The Oregon Broadband Association has officially launched a pilot program for its new Limited Energy Technician (LEB) Licensing Course—an initiative designed to help members fast-track the licensing process while reducing the cost and time barriers of traditional apprenticeships for long-time employees who have been working in the field for at least two (or more) years.

Developed in partnership with a credentialed industry expert and with the guidance from the Building Codes Division, the program blends a hybrid experience of classroom instruction, independent study and on-the-job experience for qualified telecommunications employees. The pilot group, comprised of two technicians from OBA member companies, will help refine the course before it's made available association-wide in 2026. We appreciate your patience as we iron out challenges to determine the appropriate length of the course, unforseen complications and how to best navigate through the hundreds of pages of material. Don't let this scare you! Our instructor is experienced and knowledgable on how to coach students on best practices for using the course material on the open book electrical exam. We look forward to the official launch to all members and anticipate quarterly offerings in a group setting!

Please reach out to Mandy Jundt, if you have any questions in the meantime!

#### → AMS & Website Launch is it Coming Soon?

We've done the due dilligence. We've worked on the back end creation of a new website and AMS platform. We've uploaded logos, photos, rearranged and reimagined a website that is simple and refined. But do you know what it is like to put your trust in a project, only to come across functions that significantly (and not so positively) impact the way you normally operate? That's us; we're there with the transition. While we are contemplating work arounds for those challenges, we apprecaite your patience so we can roll out something we are proud of and that will streamline some of our membership and event processes.

#### **Upcoming Events**

#### Beach. Broadband. Better Together: 2026 Annual Conference

Join Oregon's broadband leadership for learning, connection and a little s'more fun! We've invited our friends at NTCA, WTA and US Telecom to provide updates on a national level following the next legislative session.

Mark your calendar for the following: June 1-3 · Seaside Civic and Convention Center.

More information coming soon – watch for the program details, lodging and registration details on our website!



MORE INFORMATION IN THE COMING MONTHS!

#### ASSOCIATION, BOARD, COMMITTEE & INDUSTRY INFO >>>

Things We Need to Say

#### ANTITRUST POLICY OREGON BROADBAND ASSOCIATION

The following statements and principles shall guide and govern the Oregon Broadband Association ("OBA") and its directors, officers, employees, members, standing committees, subcommittees, ad hoc committees, and any and all other representatives of the association.

#### RECITALS

WHEREAS, it is the intention of OBA to comply fully with all laws and regulations applicable to its operations, and it is and has been the policy of OBA to comply fully with the various federal and state laws and regulations governing the area of antitrust; and

WHEREAS, the delivery of telecommunications services to consumers requires numerous complex contractual, technical and other business arrangements between companies, many of which are both competitors and suppliers to each other of facilities and services; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of OBA, in the course of its activities and functions, to prohibit conduct that might be construed to violate federal or state laws and to further avoid even the appearance of facilitating anticompetitive conduct;

IT IS, THEREFORE, RESOLVED, that the following Antitrust Policy is adopted by the Board of Directors of OBA.

#### **PURPOSE & APPLICATION**

This Policy is intended to establish guidelines for OBA and its members that will help ensure compliance with the antitrust laws and regulations and reduce the risk that even merit less antitrust claims might be brought against OBA or its members. Accordingly, in certain respects, this Policy is significantly more restrictive than federal and state antitrust laws.

This Policy shall apply to all OBA representatives, members and other attendees at membership, board, and committee and other meetings or informal gatherings sponsored by or related to OBA, and to all other meetings attended by representatives of OBA.

This Policy is not intended to be a comprehensive statement of either federal or state laws as those laws may apply to OBA or its members. Each OBA member, representative or attendee should individually seek his or her own counsel if there are any questions as to the permissible scope of activities.

#### **PROHIBITED CONDUCT**

Conduct that might lessen competition. OBA members, representatives and meeting attendees shall not take any action, or engage in any collective activity or discussion, that would or might lessen competition between or among firms in the telecommunications industry (whether or not members of OBA) or among such firms, suppliers or customers such as:

- Fixing or maintaining rates, prices, or terms and conditions of service with competitors or potential competitors in an unlawful manner;
- · Allocating customers or territories among competitors or potential competitors in an unlawful manner; or · Taking any other action that is or intended to be harmful to competition.

Discussion on competitive information. OBA members, representatives and meeting attendees shall not discuss Competitive Information (as defined below) in any OBA meeting or informal gathering related to OBA business.

"Competitive Information" as used in this Policy refers to all competitively sensitive information and includes, but is not limited to, information concerning

- · Competitive Territories: the plans, intentions or willingness of any member to offer service (or refrain from offering service) in any markets, areas or territories, or to any potential customers, except for discussions concerning existing or proposed network arrangements required for exchange of communications;
- · Competitive Rates: the plans, intentions or willingness of any member to raise, lower or stabilize any rate or price for, or to implement any term or condition of, any service that might be offered in competition with any other member or in competition with any other person present at a meeting;
- Competitive Strategies: the plans, intentions or willingness of any member concerning any current or future marketing or pricing strategies or cost structure or business plans regarding any service that might be offered in competition with any other member or in competition with any other person present at a meeting;
- Boycotts: the plans, intentions, or willingness of any member concerning any willingness to deal with (or to refuse to deal with) or to provide (or refuse to provide) any product or service to, any customer, supplier, or competitor;
- Other Matters: any other matters as to which companies in the telecommunications industry ordinarily compete with each other.

The foregoing shall not be construed to prohibit OBA representatives, members or attendees from participating in formal or informal legislative, regulatory, judicial or other governmental meetings or proceedings concerning matters that may affect the interests of the telecommunications industry currently or in the future, including issues relating to competition, rates and service areas, so long as such participation is conducted in accordance with applicable antitrust laws and regulations.

#### CONDUCT OF OBA MEETINGS

To foster compliance with this Policy, and to ensure that a formal record of meetings is maintained, OBA board and committee meetings shall, to the extent practicable, be conducted as follows:

Written agendas shall be prepared and distributed beforehand. If possible, agendas shall be reviewed prior to the meeting by the OBA President, and meeting topics shall be limited to the subjects shown on the agenda. Informal or unscheduled meetings of OBA board, committees and subcommittees should be avoided.

Copies of this Policy shall be distributed at least annually at a meeting of the OBA board, and of each committee, and OBA members, representatives and attendees are to be reminded of the provisions of OBA Antitrust Policy and shall be requested to ensure that the conduct of the OBA's business conforms with the policy.

#### NOTIFCATION TO OBA PRESIDENT OF ANY ANTITRUST CONCERNS

OBA members, representatives and attendees should promptly bring any antitrust concerns to the attention of OBA President. Because antitrust law and policy is legally complex (especially in view of the heavily regulated nature of the telecommunications industry), all OBA members, representatives and attendees are expected and instructed to seek promptly the advice of counsel for OBA in the event that there is any question as to whether any contemplated action, activity, proposal, or other course of action may be in conflict with applicable law.

OBA members, representatives and attendees should terminate any discussion, seek legal counsel's advice, or, if necessary, leave any meeting or discussion where improper subjects are being discussed and explain the reasons for departure to those still in attendance.

#### 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. <u>Contact us today</u> 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!





























MOSSADAMS















#### OBA Staff

#### **Brant Wolf**

**Executive Vice-President** bwolf@oba-telecom.org

#### **Mandy Jundt**

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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 (Ziply 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!

