



January 2026

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INSIGHT INTO **YOUR** BROADBAND ASSOCIATION

High Stakes in a Short Session

With a new year there will be a short legislative session here very shortly in February. As of the date of this newsletter we are aware of at least two bills that the OBA will be actively involved with:

- **Legislation to crack down on copper theft and the resulting destruction of infrastructure**
- **Legislation that if passed would impose a timeline for responding to search warrants**

Our OBA Legislative Committee has been monitoring and working on both of these issues. We will certainly support the first and work to ensure we can live with the second.

Additionally, there has been an unsubstantiated rumor that the legislature may attempt to raid the 9-1-1 fund of any reserve amount found there. This would not be the first time this has happened, if it is true. Whenever there is a shortfall of general fund dollars, the 9-1-1 fund is an easy target to go after. In the past, our association has attempted to push back—though without success—against legislative attempts to redirect these funds. Our attitude has been that our members collect those funds from our customers in good faith and they should be used for the intended purpose of supporting the 9-1-1 system.

Beyond that, there will still be a number of bills that are released early in the session that must be reviewed, though far fewer than the number of bills during a normal long session. This is due in part to the nature of a shorter session, as well as the simple fact that legislators are restricted in the number of bill drafts that they can ask for (as opposed to a longer session when there is no number restriction).

Once we review and identify any additional legislation to track, the Legislative Committee will meet and determine what position OBA will take on them. The hope is that there won't be more to track but if so, we'll address them as needed.

While it has been quiet on the regulatory front, OPUC staff are currently working on rules related to the Residential Service Protection Fund (RSPF) implementing changes passed by the legislature. Among other things, there will be a small but needed increase in the monthly support amount qualifying Oregonians receive.

What that said, this is your association, and we're here to advocate on your behalf. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any concerns, challenges, or thoughts—whether legislative, operational, or anything else on your mind. We want to hear from you and will do our best to help.

Brant Wolf

Membership Announcements & News

➤ High-Speed Boost: Hunter Communications Launches Salem Fiber Service

Hunter Communications has officially launched its high-speed fiber internet service in Salem, marking a major expansion of the Oregon-based company's network. The rollout began with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Pringle Community Hall, where local and state leaders highlighted the importance of reliable broadband for economic growth and community connectivity.

The phased deployment starts in Northeast Salem with residential customers, with additional neighborhoods and business service coming in 2026. Hunter CEO Michael Wynschenk emphasized the company's commitment to bringing fast, dependable internet to Oregon communities, noting that the investment strengthens both digital access and local quality of life.

State Representative Kevin Mannix and Salem Area Chamber CEO Tom Hoffert also spoke, recognizing the positive impact reliable fiber infrastructure will have on residents and small businesses.

Hunter's Salem project is part of its broader effort to expand its 3,000-mile fiber network across Oregon, prioritizing safety, reliability, and customer-focused service.



Right: Hunter CEO, Michael Wynschenk (third from right), along with Hunter staff, state representatives and city officials celebrate the expansion with a ribbon cutting ceremony. **Left: Wynschenk** is congratulated by Representatives Anderson & Mannix and OBA EVP, Brant Wolf.

➤ 22nd Annual CO-OP Luncheon

On January 14, the **Oregon Broadband Association co-hosted the 22nd annual CO-OP lunch** near the Capitol, bringing together cooperative members from around Oregon. This year's event saw its highest attendance yet, with over 100 participants. The luncheon highlights the cooperative spirit that supports the strength and resilience of Oregon communities. It also provides an opportunity to reflect on how CO-OPs positively affect local areas.

Attendees were able to network with each other and meet important government leaders, such as senators, representatives, and congressional staff. These connections matter because visibility is one of the keys to advocacy—being present helps ensure your voice is heard. By joining this event, CO-OP members showed their dedication to serving their communities and upholding cooperative values.

A special thanks goes out to **Beaver Creek Cooperative Telephone & DirectLink** for their attendance and for representing not only their company's, but the wider cooperative movement. Working together, we amplify our influence across the state and celebrate the cooperative ideals that bring us together.

Membership Announcements & News

➤ **Beyond Connectivity: How New Broadband Services Strengthen Communities**

Across the state, our telecommunications provider members are actively implementing innovative service offerings that extend well beyond traditional connectivity. Initiatives such as smart town and community Wi-Fi networks, expanded broadband services for multi-dwelling units (MDUs), and strategically deployed outdoor Wi-Fi are delivering tangible benefits to residents and businesses alike. These investments represent a meaningful evolution in how broadband providers support the communities they serve.

Community and smart town Wi-Fi networks improve access to reliable connectivity in public spaces, downtown corridors, parks, libraries, and civic facilities—helping bridge digital access gaps while enhancing everyday experiences for residents and visitors. These networks also enable smarter public services, supporting applications such as traffic management, public safety communications, environmental monitoring, and real-time information sharing. The result is more connected, responsive, and resilient communities.

Expanded MDU broadband services are equally impactful, ensuring residents in apartments, condominiums, and mixed-use developments have access to high-quality, scalable connectivity. Reliable broadband in MDUs supports remote work, education, telehealth, and digital equity, while also increasing property value and tenant satisfaction. For providers, these deployments create efficiencies and long-term partnerships with property owners and municipalities.

Outdoor Wi-Fi further extends connectivity where it is needed most—supporting tourism, economic activity, emergency response, and community events. From downtown business districts to fairgrounds and waterfronts, outdoor connectivity strengthens local economies and improves public safety by ensuring reliable communications during peak usage and critical situations.

Taken together, these value-added services demonstrate the essential role our members play in strengthening communities around the state. The impact goes beyond faster speeds or broader coverage; it is about enabling opportunity, resilience, and innovation. Our hats off to you!

➤ **It's that Time! OBA Scholarship Foundation Releases the 2026 Application!**

The 2026 Scholarship Application is now updated and available! As part of ongoing efforts to streamline and modernize the program, the Foundation has made several updates to the application process for this year.

Beginning in 2026, all scholarship applications must be submitted digitally. Due to illegible hand written submissions, along with occasional inconsistent postal delivery, paper applications will no longer be accepted. This shift allows for a more efficient review process and helps ensure applications are received, tracked, and evaluated consistently.

The new [e-application](#) is live and ready to use on our [website](#). **Please be sure to share this update with your staff, colleagues, and immediate family members of any of our members who may be eligible or interested in applying.** We appreciate your help in spreading the word and supporting future applicants.



Association News

Electrical Licensing Pilot: Complete & Implementing Feedback

The Oregon Broadband Association has officially completed 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.

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. We are in the process of refining the course before it's made available association-wide in 2026. We have received feedback around course length, simplifying the material and aligning both student/manager expectations. If you are considering sending an employee through the course or are contemplating taking it yourself, it is important to understand the commitment it takes to be successful. Fast tracking the requirement does not equal the ability to fast track effort, for sure!

We will be looking for our next small group to start a 10-week course. Email [Mandy](#) or look for her email if you are wanting to get started.

CO-IT Seminar Recap

In November, the Central Office and Information Technology Committee hosted the annual CO-IT Seminar in the scenic town of Hood River. This year's program featured a timely and relevant lineup of sessions addressing the rapidly evolving broadband and technology landscape. Attendees explored emerging technologies, industry requirements related to cybersecurity, and practical guidance on XGS-PON testing and deployment.

The seminar also examined the smart town and community Wi-Fi concept, highlighting how connectivity can support public services, resilience, and economic development. Additional sessions provided a legislative update impacting the industry, along with focused discussions on emergency management preparedness and IT resilience—underscoring the importance of continuity and readiness in an unpredictable environment.

We extend our sincere thanks to all attendees, speakers, and vendors who contributed to the success of this year's seminar. Their engagement and expertise fostered a collaborative and informative experience for everyone involved. Special appreciation extended to our generous event sponsors and the Committee for their dedication and hard work in organizing the event. We look forward to continuing these important conversations and building on last year's momentum!

As a side note, the Committee has decided to move the annual seminar to earlier in the year for the next event. In order to allow the necessary time to make that adjustment, there will not be a seminar in 2026, but look for details announcing a Q1 seminar in 2027!



Upcoming Events

Register Now! 2026 Outside Plant Seminar

The 2026 Outside Plant Seminar is set for May 14-15 in sunny Central Oregon at the Riverhouse Lodge Conference & Events Center. Join industry peers and experts for two days of valuable insights, networking, and the latest in broadband innovation.

The committee is working hard to bring you emerging information on **Oregon 811/OPUC, wireless technology, an in-depth panel on MDUs, PON testing and fiber splicing, along with intentionally crafted presentations on employee safety, behavior and professional out in the field.** We promise connection, conversation and belonging. Mark your calendar and sign up today! Registration and lodging are open.

On that note... we need your help! We want to recognize outstanding Outside Plant employees who consistently show up, speak out or spark change! Do you know a OSP rockstar? Please consider nominating an employee, a co-worker or industry colleague [here](#)! Nominations are due by Wednesday, April 1. No fooling!

[REGISTER FOR OSP NOW!](#)

Beach. Broadband. Better Together: 2026 Annual Conference

Join Oregon's broadband leadership for learning, connection and a little s'more fun! Mark your calendar for the following: **June 1-3 • Seaside Civic and Convention Center.** Save the date postcards went out to the broadband providers in November to share with staff and/or board members. Here are the basics:

- **Monday, June 1:** Early arrivals & afternoon board training and development session
- **Tuesday, June 2:** Morning social activity (golf tournament), exhibitor set up, Annual Meeting of Members welcome reception and scholarship foundation auction/raffle and awards banquet
- **Wednesday, June 3:** All-day sessions, evening VIP reception for OBA Board of Directors/Premier Associate Members and Platinum event sponsors

More information on registration and lodging will be distributed by the end of next month! Stay tuned.



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.

ADVERTISE HERE!

Things We Should Mention

2026 Membership Dues & Directory Updates

We are currently in the process of renewing all 2026 memberships and collecting annual dues. This is an important time of year for us, as these renewals help sustain the association's efforts, programs, events, and resources that keep our organization strong. Your continued involvement ensures we can move forward together with energy and purpose.

Our community thrives because of the dedication of its members. When everyone participates, contributes, and stays connected, we build a collective foundation that benefits us all. Membership is more than a yearly formality—it's a commitment to the shared values and relationships that make our association resilient.

For our associate members, please remember to submit your renewal form as soon as possible. Timely submissions allow us to update the directory and ensure our records are accurate for the new year. Your prompt action helps us launch 2026 efficiently and stay organized from the start.

Thank you to everyone for your participation and support. We truly appreciate the role each member plays in keeping our community strong. Let's make 2026 a great year together!

Antitrust Notice

OBA members, representatives, and attendees are required to promptly inform the Board President of any concerns related to antitrust compliance. Given the complexity of antitrust law and policy—particularly within our highly regulated industry—all OBA members, representatives, and attendees are expected to assess whether any proposed action, activity, or discussion could potentially conflict with applicable laws.

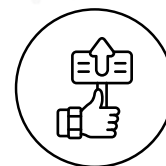
In the event that improper topics arise, OBA members and representatives are advised to immediately discontinue participation in the discussion, seek legal counsel, or, if necessary, withdraw from the meeting altogether.

To obtain a complete copy of OBA's Antitrust Policy, please contact the office or visit our website.

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Have exciting news or noteworthy updates about your organization?

We'd love to hear from you! Share your announcement with us, and we may feature it in an upcoming newsletter. Your stories help inspire and inform our community—so don't hesitate to reach out!

Officers & Board of Directors

Paul Hauer, **President**

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Rusti Lattin, **President-Elect**

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Hunter Communications

