

# Agenda Item Number 12.a.

## Broadband Infrastructure ARRA Grant

**Presenter:** Milo Mecham

**Action:** None. Information Only

**Background:**

For over a decade, LCOG has provided staff support to the Regional Fiber Consortium—recognized at this year’s Appreciation Dinner as the Outstanding Intergovernmental Team. To realize the potential of the Consortium, however, a major additional step was needed. In order to “light the fiber” and provide broadband service to un-served and underserved areas of Oregon, money was required. To meet that need, LCOG sought and was awarded a grant from the US Department of Commerce. The grant was approved for \$8.3 million for a “middle mile” broadband improvement project in Lane, Douglas and Klamath Counties from the ARRA-funded Broadband Technologies Opportunity Program (BTOP).

Middle mile projects are intended to improve connectivity between communities and to improve broadband services to “critical community institutions in the communities being connected. The critical institutions are schools, medical facilities, police and fire services and libraries.

The LCOG project will improve broadband services to 110 critical institution sites in 18 cities and 7 unincorporated communities in a three county area. Examples of the planned service improvements include bringing broadband to the Days Creek school system, which was recently featured in a Consumer’s Report article on the problems of rural schools being separated from urban schools by a growing digital divide. The same grant will connect the Walterville elementary school to the Springfield school district offices, so that the Walterville School can participate in

the distance learning program developing in the Springfield schools. All in all, over 30 schools will have broadband internet access because of this grant. Similarly, Sacred Heart hospital, which is working on developing an integrated electronic medical records system, will get connectivity to all of its medical offices in Eugene and Springfield, and to its branch hospital in Cottage Grove. Over 25 medical facilities in three counties will be getting broadband services. A unique institution to be served is the Klamath tribal offices in Chiloquin. The Klamath Tribes need more broadband service to support their growing operations and make connections between the two medical facilities, one in Chiloquin and one in Klamath Falls,

The critical institutions being served by the LCOG grant fall into two categories, those institutions that could not get the broadband they needed at any price, and those who could not afford the broadband they needed. The ironic situation in many communities (large and small) was that some institutions may have had broadband while other facilities only a few blocks away lacked the same level of service. In some areas the basic broadband level of service, a DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) at speeds of 700 to 1000 KbPS (Kilobits Per Second) was not available. In today's environment, such speeds would not be adequate. Sending an x-ray would take hours. The LCOG project will make speeds available starting at 10 MbPS (10 megabits or 10,000 KbPS) and going up to 1 GbPS (a gigabit or 100,000 MbPS or 1,000,000 KbPS). While the LCOG grant focuses on the critical institutions, it will also establish the basic infrastructure to allow telecommunications service providers to use the facilities and connections to develop services to other customers in the communities now being served.

The LCOG grant will also develop an interconnection site where local and regional carriers can co-locate their facilities to allow better local services and better connectivity to the national internet providers.

The communities and facilities to be served include:

Eugene: schools, police, fire, community center, medical offices and clinics, low income housing

Springfield: hospital, medical offices and clinics, schools

Florence: City hall (police), state offices, LCOG (human services), medical clinics

Veneta: City hall (police), schools, medical clinics

Junction City: schools, state offices (prison and mental hospital)

Coburg: City hall (police) and school

Creswell: Medical clinics and library

Cottage Grove: Hospital

Lowell: City hall (police)

Oakridge: Schools, city hall (police), medical clinics

Douglas County: 8 communities, 10 schools, 5 city halls, 12 medical clinics, 4 county offices, 3 state offices (including courts), 2 libraries

Klamath County: 3 communities; 3 schools, 3 medical clinics, 2 libraries, 2 fire stations, 1 sheriff's substation, 1 tribal headquarters.