

# Southern Oregon Business Journal

SouthernOregonBusiness.com

The Journal for Business in Southern Oregon

September 2022

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# OREGON BROADBAND

SPECIAL EDITION

OREGON CONNECTIONS: NAVIGATING THE FUNDING FLOOD  
OCTOBER 6 & 7, 2022 - ASHLAND, OREGON



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**Founder**  
 Greg Henderson  
 ghenderson703@gmail.com  
 Greg started the Southern Oregon Business Journal in 2015 and retired in 2020.



A Few Words from Jim

September 2022

### Rural Oregon Broadband

This month's issue is almost all about Broadband. It's the second annual Oregon Connections Conference Special Edition. This year's conference is in Ashland on October 6-7. The theme for this year is Oregon Connections: Navigating the Funding Flood. Find out more at [OregonConnections.info](http://OregonConnections.info).

The 2022 conference presenters and attendees will explore how Oregon can leverage the current historic and extraordinary funding programs available to meet the broadband needs of its local communities and to close the Digital Divide.

Topics include the array of available funding programs, state and local community engagement, competing technologies, digital equity, digital inclusion, keys to success, managing expectations, and public sector, private sector, and public-private partnership solutions.

This issue is filled with related articles from the keynote speakers, panelists, and special guests as well as stories from members of the **NWTA** (Northwest Telecommunications Association). Broadband impacts every business in Oregon and I'm excited to focus on it every year for you.

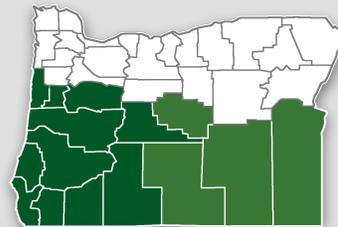
There are also stories by members of the NWTA (Northwest Telecommunications Association) about how they are bringing fiber to the communities they serve. In fact the Oregon based members serve 100% of the counties in Oregon. If your business needs fiber, I encourage you to reach out to the NWTA member that serves your community and see what they can do for you. Visit [NWTA.biz](http://NWTA.biz) for a list of members.

Last month I wrote about **Arcimoto** and just days after I published the story, the company made a series of major announcements. One of them was that **Jesse Fittipaldi** was promoted to Interim CEO after **Mark Frohnmayr**, the founder, was removed from the CEO position. I had no idea any of this was going on behind the scenes during my interview with them. I did end up buying a little stock before the announcement as I shared with you that I might and yes the stock dropped 38% after I did it. You should never base your stock purchases on my excitement about a company. That being said, I do have faith in Jesse and the board finding a way to come out of this.

Thanks for reading.

Jim

Jim@SouthernOregonBusiness.com



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Base cover photo courtesy of Hunter Communications. Page 14 All bubble photos from unSplash.com

# Southern Oregon Business Journal

A JOURNAL FOR THE ECONOMICALLY  
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# October 6-7, 2022 in Ashland



## Oregon Connections Telecommunications Conference

### The theme for this year is: **Navigating the Funding Flood**

The 2022 conference presenters and attendees will explore how Oregon can leverage the current historic & extraordinary funding programs available to meet the broadband needs of its local communities and to close the Digital Divide.

Program topics will include the array of available funding programs, state and local community engagement, broadband technologies, digital equity, digital inclusion, managing expectations, and keys to project success.

for more info visit: [www.oregonconnections.info](http://www.oregonconnections.info)

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## 2022 Keynote Speakers

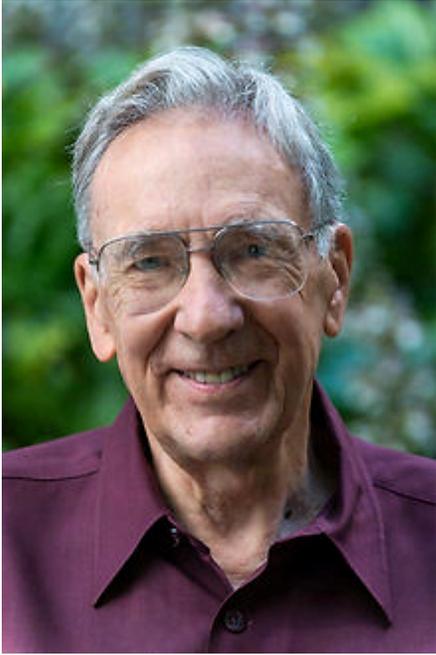


**Angela Siefer**  
Digital Inclusion Expert



**Russ Elliott**  
CEO, Siskiyou Telephone Company

By Ed Parker



**A**ccess to information services via broadband networks is essential for improving the quality of life of Oregon residents and improving the Oregon economy. Past investments in broadband infrastructure by Oregon telecommunications service providers created a solid foundation for future progress. Rural Oregon is now better served than many rural areas of other western states.

Other states are catching up fast and plan to use government subsidies to leap ahead. Keeping Oregon's competitive advantage will require significant entrepreneurial initiative, taking full advantage of new

## The Future of Broadband Services

government subsidy opportunities and the creation of public-private partnerships to serve locations too distant or too sparsely populated to be attractive for private sector investors.

Some large telecommunications companies may understandably focus their investment on urban and higher-income markets where the profit margins are higher. They may underestimate the pent-up demand in currently underserved locations. This will create good investment opportunities for smaller, more entrepreneurial businesses that can leverage currently available government subsidies.

How much broadband capacity will be needed? The answer is much more than is now available or estimated. The current rate of information technology application development and adoption is accelerating. Users need 100 megabits per second of symmetrical internet access to take full advantage of current videoconferencing, telemedicine, remote work from home and group gaming applications.

New applications are likely to fill present capacity and create demand for ten times that much. Think of home access to IMAX quality video entertainment, holographic three-dimensional videoconferencing and virtual reality group gaming applications. Think of reliability, latency and security specifications sufficient to permit specialist urban surgeons to perform remote laparoscopic operations on patients in rural hospitals.

Other applications include smart agriculture, water supply and other natural resource management, intelligent transportation systems with autonomous vehicles, smart cities, energy management, distance education and public safety services. When expanded capacity is available, entrepreneurs will develop new applications that were not previously possible.

The Covid pandemic accelerated a transition from working in an urban office to working from home. With good telecommunications, more people may live and work in environmentally attractive and less expensive rural communities while still

getting the benefits of urban entertainment, education and healthcare opportunities.

Broadband policy makers and entrepreneurs should not just think of providing advanced information services to all Oregonians in their homes. Consider the economic opportunities for information-intensive agriculture with sensors monitoring the moisture and fertilizer need of each patch of Oregon farmland.

Consider the potential forest management benefits of

remote monitoring of forest temperatures and soil moisture in critical locations and of fully automated fire lookout stations. Most of that remote connectivity would be wireless but fiber optic lines will be needed to bring the data back to centralized office locations.

Providers of remote connectivity could benefit from the additional opportunity to provide mobile telephone service for forest workers, visitors, emergency service providers

and for travelers on Oregon's rural roads.

Now, there is a window of opportunity to expand telecommunications infrastructure throughout the entire state with sufficient capacity for future needs. Business entrepreneurs and rural communities should take full advantage of the current availability of massive government subsidies to future-proof the Oregon economy and rural quality of life. We may never get another opportunity like this.

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By Russell G. Elliott, Siskiyou Telephone. CEO

## Access to communications technology is critical infrastructure



I am writing this as my company is in the middle of a state of emergency here in northern California, right up against the Oregon border, where we are seeing a serious loss of homes, infrastructure, and lives. There is no one to blame, it is part of the risks of living in rural America. What we can do is leverage these

tragic events as opportunities to learn and improve.

I am teased often and sometimes joke about it myself, the fact that my rural telephone company still offers a landline, however that landline may have just saved lives in our rural region. Something we all should take note of and remember as we

determine the future of our communications infrastructure across America.

The way I see it, there is no silver bullet that will solve our country's communications challenges, rather it will take a multitude of solutions to make significant inroads (lots of tools in our toolbox). In order for that to happen, private



agendas need to be set aside and we need to rally around a national focused mission and vision.

Perhaps that is to ensure every citizen of our country has access to scalable, reliable, affordable communications technology. Where we hit snags is when we get caught in the finer points of that statement. We seem to always get bogged down on the perfect definition of scalable, reliable, and affordable (sometimes justified, but most times done to stall progress).

The fact is, there is no perfect definition that will address these for all regions of our country, short of mandating fiber to every home and that beast is a financial discussion

that is not easily digestible. The other challenge here is that government is not great at making these decisions for us as a country, they tend to err on the safe side and not cause waves, as waves create disputable policy.

Fear is not going to get our issues fixed -- we need leadership and vision.

I remember my first month working in government policy and being directed to focus on what I could not or should not do rather than on building a strong program. That was my first introduction to "public service." However, my task was to build an office for the state that would close the digital divide. That task, if done 'right,' would require creating

challenging conversations and controversial solutions (winners and losers). This may be why we as a country are still trying to solve the homework gap?

In my opinion, private sector businesses end up succeeding because they are not afraid to fail, and they are not afraid to build a mission/vision and do everything they can to see that mission/vision accomplished despite the heat and controversy.

Let's shoot for the moon and if we land a little short, at least we are focused on a shared goal and will outperform our small accomplishments of the past. Let's start with a few more yeses, and how, versus no way.

# Oregon Broadband Advisory Council Welcomes New Members

The Oregon Broadband Office (OBAC) welcomes nine new members to the Broadband Advisory Council. The council consists of 13 members, 11 of which are appointed by Governor Kate Brown, along with one representative each from the state House of Representatives and the state Senate.

OBAC's mission is to encourage coordination and collaboration between organizations and economic sectors to leverage the development and utilization of broadband for education, workforce development, and telehealth, and to promote broadband utilizations by citizens and communities.

This year, House Bill 4092, 2022 was approved and signed by Governor Brown on March 23; this bill modified the composition and duties of the council in preparation for historical federal broadband investment. Some of the modifications includes new representation for rural businesses, urban businesses, telehealth, and digital equity interests of historically disadvantaged communities.

Regarding duties, the council shall:

- Advise the Oregon Broadband Office on the development and implementation of Oregon's broadband strategy.
- Advise the Oregon Broadband Office on the scalability, resilience, and sustainability of Oregon's broadband infrastructure.
- Assist the Oregon Broadband Office in developing ideas to streamline deployment of broadband infrastructure and in ensuring continual progress toward achieving state goals.
- Review and update state goals regarding broadband service speeds in consideration of federal requirements and to ensure that Oregon residents and businesses are prepared for future needs.
- Advise the Oregon Broadband Office on best practices to guide the development and implementation of state grant programs, including project review, opportunities for appeal, and project accountability.
- Support local governments, providers, and stakeholders in project planning and development.
- Champion equitable statewide access and adoption of broadband services.
- Establish a grant application review committee for each grant cycle.

The new council members will work with the Oregon Broadband Office to complete planning and policy work, begin robust public engagement, and develop the BEAD Five-year Action Plan, BEAD Initial Proposal, and a State Digital Equity Plan. These plans are federal deliverables that will open the door for substantial federal investment. The OBAC meets every three months and the council containing the new members will have its first meeting on August 25, 2022.

More information about the OBAC including agendas and materials from past meetings is available on Business Oregon's website.

The State of Oregon has not yet received any federal broadband funds. The Oregon Broadband Office has not received any funding for any of the programs, nor has any award program been finalized. The Oregon Broadband Office is actively applying for BEAD, Digital Equity, and ARPA Capital Projects federal grant funding and is continuing to

scale up the office to be ready for the funds when they arrive.

The 12 confirmed OBAC members are listed below. One member appointment is still pending.

- David Yamamoto\*
- Tim Rosener
- Rick Petersen\*
- James Rennard
- Krystal Stone
- Cheri Rhinhart\*

- Nick Green
- John Roman
- Stepha Dragoon
- Marti Gaiter
- Rep. Pam Marsh\*
- Sen. Lee Beyer

\*Indicates reappointed

For more information about the Broadband Advisory Council, visit [biz.oregon.gov](http://biz.oregon.gov).



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The COVID crisis demonstrated beyond doubt that broadband is vital for our social, economic, emotional and physical health. Individuals and families who lacked access to broadband over the past two years missed out on public health information, remote work opportunities, online learning, health appointments, digital grocery deliveries, live-streamed religious services, and much more.

But there is a tremendous opportunity on the way. The federal government is poised to make once-in-a-generation capital investments to address broadband deployment in rural and urban areas. Oregon will receive more than \$250 million for broadband investments from the American Rescue Plan Act and the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act. That's a lot, but that's just the start. After the initial distribution, states will compete for billions of more dollars. This is a watershed moment, and we need to be ready.

In the 2022 session I introduced, and the Legislative Assembly passed House Bill 4092, an omnibus broadband bill to prepare Oregon for this work on multiple fronts.

Recognizing that we need guidance for the program, HB 4092 empowered the Oregon Broadband Advisory Committee (OBAC) to advise on the development and implementation of Oregon's broadband strategy. This includes authority to OBAC to create grant review committees.

HB 4092 also set a strategic planning framework that will guide state investment of federal monies. We need to be ambitious, and that means addressing issues such as funding leverage, system architecture, redundancy, project coordination, and cost-effectiveness. These are in the in-the-weeds issues that will make all the difference in how – or whether – our new broadband system addresses the needs of Oregonians.

The third piece of HB 4092 mandates development of a state map. One of the challenges of broadband development has been simply understanding where the gaps are. While the FCC is promising to provide much better data than it has in the past, we need mapping capacity on the state level to guide our own grant decisions.

Fourth, HB 4092 creates the Connecting Oregon Libraries Fund to enable libraries to capture maximum federal funding for broadband

projects. Several years back we established a federal e-rate program for schools, and districts in our most remote corners are now using that framework to obtain huge federal matches. Now libraries need the same mechanism.

Finally, HB 4092 requires the Public Utilities Commission to conduct a study of possible modifications to the Oregon Telecommunication Assistance Program (OTAP), often referred to as our Lifeline program. OTAP provides broadband subsidies to customers of our traditional landline companies. The PUC study will assess whether the fund should be modernized to provide ongoing subsidies to all Oregonians who need assistance. There is no point in building broadband networks if customers can't afford the service.

Thanks to federal funding, Oregon has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build a robust broadband network that will serve residents, businesses and communities in every corner of the state for years to come. I'm doing everything I can to make sure we are ready.



Representative Pam Marsh  
District 5 - Southern Jackson  
County

# Is Fiber Internet Worth Having in Your home?



Hunter Communications customers Elijah S., Grants Pass, OR

Internet providers around the nation are racing to build or upgrade their networks to fiber-optic technology, but many consumers are still asking if fiber is worth having in their homes.

From families to gamers, streamers to online workers, fiber provides the fastest, most reliable internet to keep every household connected.

## Benefits of Fiber

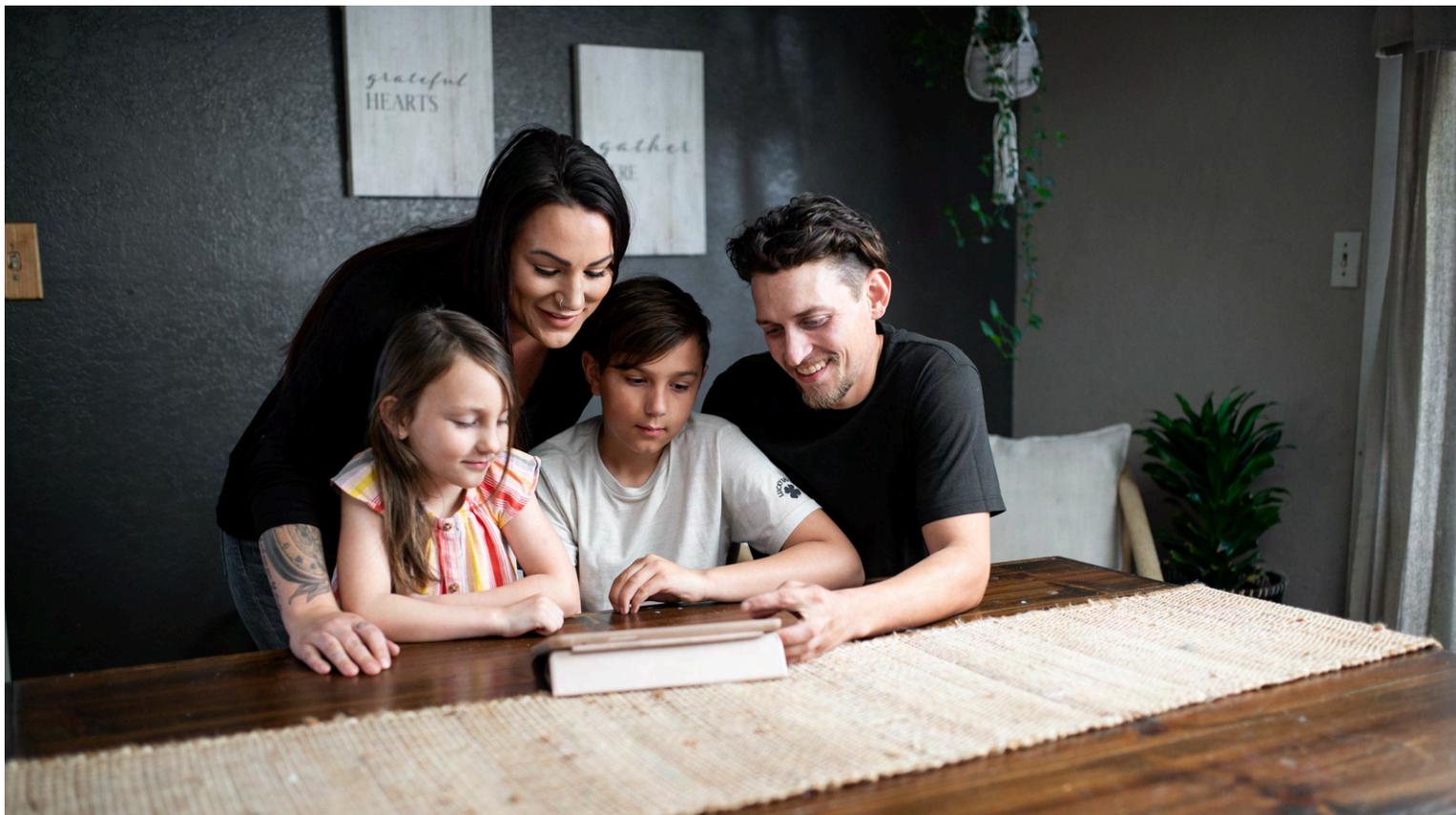
Because fiber uses light to transmit data, it provides the highest download speeds, upload speeds, and bandwidth. With fiber, Hunter Communications' customers can feel the difference.

Many providers are still using old copper technology causing reliability issues. Hunter Fiber customer Elijah S. from Grants Pass said, "I was having a problem with my previous

internet service provider, and I couldn't depend on the connectivity or the speeds to always be there when I needed them."

Built for popular, heavy bandwidth activities like video chat, streaming, online gaming, and the use of smart home devices, fiber technology is able to meet the demands of the modern era.

Fiber offers consumers a seamless internet connection



Hunter Communications customers AJ and Rhiannon N., Medford, OR

that doesn't require throttling speeds during peak usage hours. "I was on [video chat] with my daughter in Mexico, and we didn't have any slow downs," said Hunter Customer Cindy B. from Phoenix.

### **Streaming More Than Ever**

According to Nielsen's Law of Internet Bandwidth, internet speeds increase by 50% each year. Streaming has been a major contributor to the increasing demand for more speed and bandwidth. In the past few years, streaming has become the most popular way to consume live TV, movies, and sports. Almost 75% of households in the United States subscribe to a

streaming service, and streaming represents 34.8% of television consumption (more than cable at 34.4% and broadcast at 21.6%).

Hunter Fiber customer Rhiannon N. from Medford said, "We do family movie nights once a week now. It brought us together more." With fiber, consumers can stream movies and tv shows without having to worry about buffering or if their connection will drop.

### **Remote Work is Here to Stay**

The COVID-19 Pandemic sent the workforce home in droves. Even though more and more employees are returning to the office, the employment

landscape has been forever changed. Researchers believe that 25% of white-collar jobs in North America will be remote by the end of 2022, and that number will continue to increase in 2023.

As an online teacher, Hunter Fiber customer Cindy commented, "The fact that I can teach a class and never lose a second with my students has changed the way I feel about the internet."

### **Upload Speeds Taking Center Stage**

Video chat and the increased demand for smart home technologies has fueled the need for more upstream bandwidth as well.



Hunter Communications customers Cindy and Mathew B., Phoenix, OR

Everyday activities are starting to require more upload speed. Cindy said, "We use it in our gym when we are exercising. I take online classes. We do Zoom three to five times per week with people."

By 2030, the average upload speed is predicted to be nearly 600 Mbps, and fiber is the only technology capable of meeting the demand for this growth in the years to come.

Because fiber internet has the ability to provide symmetrical download and upload speeds, many consumers opt for fiber

technology when choosing a provider. Elijah uses Hunter's symmetrical gigabit service, "Download and upload speeds are very important to me because I stream on Twitch and that uses quite a bit of data-especially if I want to push a higher quality stream which is something I strive for."

### **Better Connections Start with Fiber**

Ultimately, reliable internet is what keeps us connected to our friends, family, work, and school. Without speed or stability, consumers would not be able to stay connected. For

Hunter customer AJ N. in Medford, fiber has made all the difference, "We definitely feel more connected as a family with Hunter. We don't have to worry about the internet connection going out anymore."

For more information or to sign up for Hunter's fiber-optic internet, visit [HunterFiber.com](https://HunterFiber.com).

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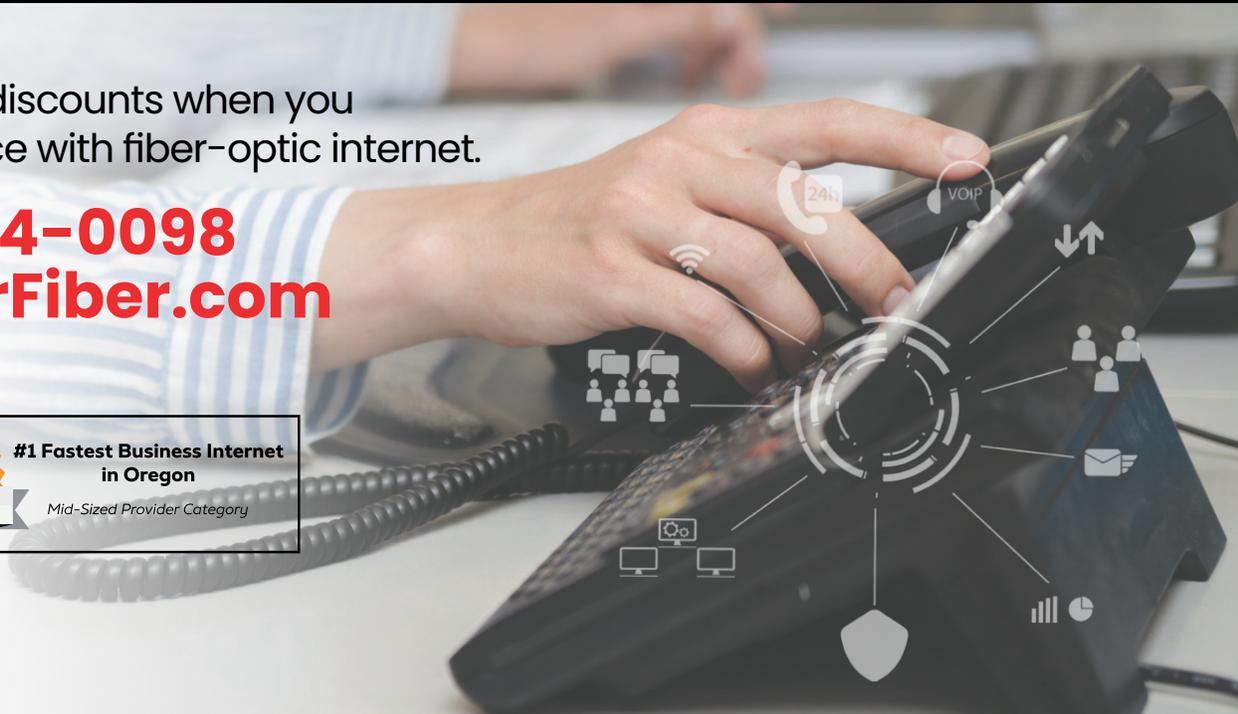
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By Yvette Scorse  
Communications Director  
National Digital Inclusion Alliance

# Broadband Is Just One Piece of the Bigger Digital Equity Puzzle



**D**uring the pandemic, we saw a lot of temporary solutions to digital inequities, from quickly distributing hotspots to free access to broadband for school-aged children, to handing out tablets to older adults.

Unfortunately, too many of these one-off tactics end up

being wasted investments. Why? We need more than available broadband service to bridge the digital divide. Holistic solutions address affordability of broadband service and devices along with access to digital skills training and tech support.

## What Is Digital Inclusion?

The National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) community defines it:

Digital Inclusion refers to the activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). This includes five elements:

1. Affordable, robust broadband internet service;
2. Internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user;
3. Access to digital literacy training;
4. Quality technical support; and
5. Applications and online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation, and collaboration.

Digital Inclusion must evolve as technology advances. Digital inclusion requires intentional strategies and investments to reduce and eliminate historical, institutional, and structural barriers to access and use technology.

Broadband solutions must involve all aspects of digital inclusion to be successful. This means many entities - businesses, community-based organizations, local governments, and people with lived experience - will have the most success when they work together crafting solutions.

### **Now's the Time: Oregon's State Digital Equity Plan**

Oregon is receiving funding from the National Telecommunications and

Information Administration (NTIA) to create its state digital equity plan during 2023. This will be one of the most important times to influence digital equity. It's the first step in the Digital Equity Act, which is part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

### **Local Participation in the State Plan**

Individuals and organizations, including from rural, urban and Tribal areas of the state, can add value to Oregon's digital equity plan, led by the Oregon Broadband Office. Consider the following:

- Participate in Oregon's engagement activities defining the future of digital equity in the state. Provide ideas/input for assessing impact and creating measurable objectives
- Asset Mapping:
  - Make your state aware of any existing digital inclusion assets
  - Conduct your own local asset mapping and share with the state
- Identify barriers for populations identified in the legislation (those living in low-income households or rural areas, older adults, veterans, racial or ethnic minorities, and individuals with disabilities, language barriers, or who are incarcerated).

- Collect data about access and use of technology in your location
- Support the state in its collection of data
- Direct the state to populations in need of affordable broadband service, devices, and digital skills training

- Provide ideas/input to the state on its implementation strategies for the digital equity plan. This can occur through the initial engagement sessions or through the public comment period for the plan (as required by statute) or directly with the state.

### **What's Next? Where Can I Learn More?**

For ongoing information on the Digital Equity Act and proven solutions to move toward digital equity, join the NDIA community. Membership starts at free levels for government entities, Tribes, and nonprofits, and there are opportunities for corporate supporters to join.

Now is a great time to get ready for Digital Inclusion Week, October 4-7. This is the perfect week to get involved in digital inclusion work and make your support known. Get more information at [digitalinclusion.org](https://digitalinclusion.org).



By Kim Lamb Gast,  
Regional Sales Manager, SLED, Pacific NW & Rockies  
Netskope

# It's Time: Security as a Critical Component of Essential Broadband Infrastructure

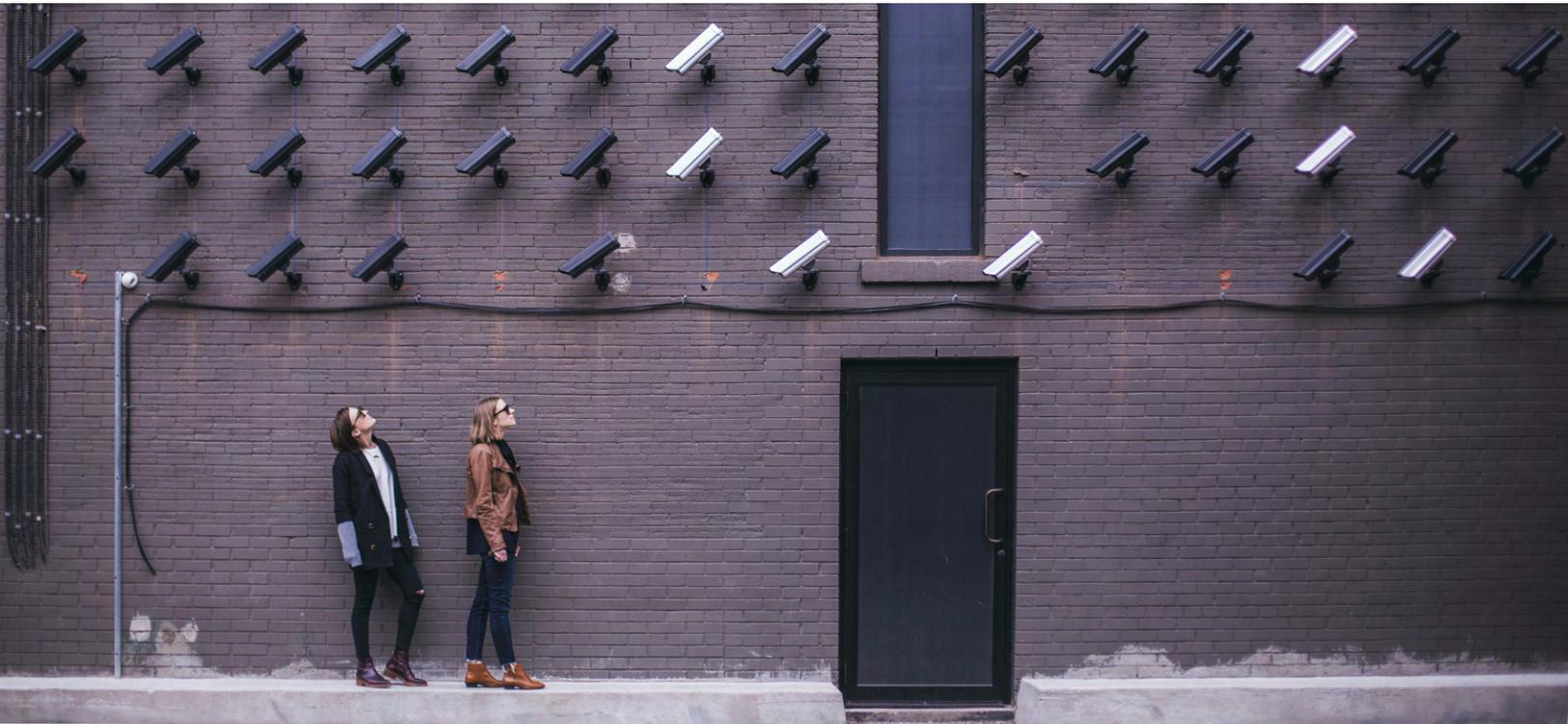


Photo By Matthew Henry On Unsplash

It's time to treat security as a mission critical component of our essential broadband infrastructure. It's time to have security lead everything we do; versus being overlaid as a reactive patch for problems and processes our current business and networks were never designed to manage. Security isn't just a network and security team responsibility; it is a C-suite responsibility. Security affects every sector--- public and private--- location, and person across the globe.

The evolution of networking and broadband has hit a critical juncture where legacy broadband enabled networks

no longer efficiently, effectively, and affordably scale to serve the cloud-enabled world we live in. From inception, security was never a design requirement. Today, we are all in the cloud, whether we realize it or not, and the resultant data sprawl will continue to exponentially outpace the technology and people we are able to throw at it. Think MS Office 365, Google Suite, and Salesforce just for starters, then add social media and other operational, specialized development, or Internet of Things (IoT) tools served up as Software as a Service (SaaS) apps via the cloud. We live in a world where

reactive policy management, inconsistent patching, and Virtual Private Network (VPN) routing activities are no longer sufficient to provide effective network security.

### **A Business Team Exercise Challenge**

If you agree that security is a mission critical priority, I offer up the following Security Adjective Exercise (SAE) for your entire executive team.

In this SAE, and starting with your vision and mission itself, create a list of the services and promises your company or organization provides. And for

the overachievers in the group, go a step further, and have your department heads do the same. Then go back and insert "Secure" as an adjective in front of each service, value or promise. Examples of before consideration include:

- <Secure> Broadband connectivity, services
- <Secure> Emergency management & disaster response
- <Secure> Critical infrastructure design, support, services
- <Secure> Public transportation
- <Secure> On-site/Remote workforce development and training
- <Secure> On-site/Remote education
- <Secure> Healthcare, telehealth programs and services
- <Secure> Internet of Things
- <Secure> Backup, archival and restoration

As a group, read them aloud, discuss, and discover new meanings that might reveal themselves. How has adding security as an adjective re-engineered or affected all that you do or need to do every day because of its addition? And when removed how does that in turn affect your organization, priority or project analysis? I believe this exercise and analysis should be happening across every sector and division of your organization.

## Cybersecurity is a shared responsibility

Currently, cybersecurity and networking are separate industries, departments, budgets and SIC codes; isolated in strategies, models and even funded separately by federal programs and initiatives. The fundamental tenants of cybersecurity should be a shared responsibility model where user and provider share in their part and role for the benefit of all.

Potential questions to raise for the greater broadband community are:

- What level of security should ISPs design and incorporate into their services, and what should they have available for added services?
- What role should ISPs play in educating their customers on security best practices (use, shared responsibility, support etc.)
- How can federal and state funded broadband expansion efforts be better used, integrated into, and coordinated to build out the required secure next-generation cloud network models that will expedite cloud-transformation efforts?

Billions of federal dollars are flowing into states from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to address these changing needs and security concerns. Unfortunately, these newly created programs are leaving organizations and tribal/communities responsible for developing/designing or trying to meet their cybersecurity concerns but often they lack the knowledge, ability and resources to do so.

As a cybersecurity professional specializing in the public sector, I am concerned that if we don't all start to bring security to the forefront of our strategic planning and investments, we will be missing the mark of our missions to improve quality of life for all with access to secure quality broadband.



Kim Lamb Gast  
Regional Sales Manager,  
PacNW & Rockies

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## As PEAK Internet Expands Its Investment in Fiber Broadband, It Continues to Grow Opportunities for Its Communities



Oregon is an amazing place to live as we are blessed with beautiful natural surroundings like forests, lakes, and mountains. The flip side, however, is that it can be challenging to get access to the same services

enjoyed by people living in more urban areas.

During the pandemic, few services became more important than a fast, reliable internet connection. In 2021, approximately 38 million people were working

remotely. This is expected to be the norm for 15% of American workers. That's roughly triple the pre-pandemic rate.

Historically, in many parts of Oregon, only a few organizations have invested in



building fiber-optic networks—the best infrastructure for providing telecommunications services. One of those is PEAK Internet, located in Corvallis and Lebanon, Oregon, which serves more than 20 communities across the state.

As we first reported in October 2021, “**PEAK Internet closes digital divide for rural customers**”, PEAK Internet is a local company that’s been providing connectivity to homes, businesses, schools, libraries, universities, hospitals, and veterans homes for

decades. In 2012, they started investing in a fiber-optic network infrastructure that now spans over 100 miles in Linn and Benton county.

PEAK Internet is a wholly owned subsidiary of Consumers Power, Inc., a member owned electric cooperative serving over 23,000 members in parts of six counties in Oregon. “Fiber is a really important part of service to our members but also for the operation of the electric utility” says Roman Gillen,

President & CEO of Consumers Power.

“Fiber is the best technology for delivering telecommunications services, which is why we continue to invest in building future-proof networks,” says Rick Petersen, President & CEO of PEAK Internet. “But just as important for a local company that’s dedicated to our communities is providing great customer experience. We do that with a team of local technical experts who are available on a 24/7 basis.”



and field athletes from more than 200 nations in a celebration of diversity, human potential and achievement.

In its ongoing effort to provide Oregon with the best connectivity possible, PEAK recently launched new, ultra-fast Internet packages in Corvallis, Lebanon, and Albany, offering

Working from home isn't the only growing trend. Without organizations like PEAK investing in delivering fiber-optic connections to homes in rural parts of the state, it would be extremely difficult—if not impossible—for children to learn from home. A slow, unreliable connection also presents challenges for accessing remote medical and mental health services, banking, or entertainment.

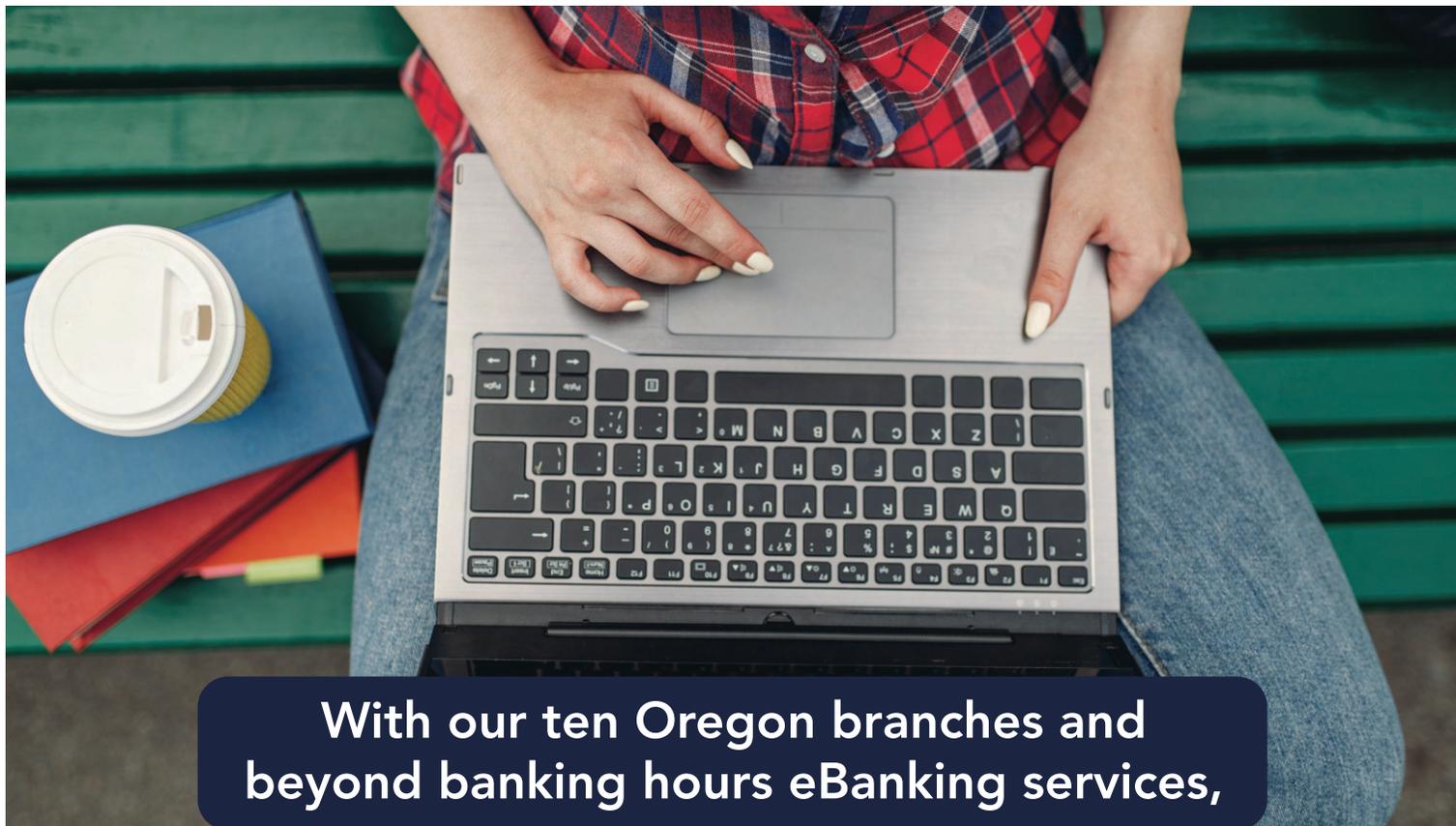
"We're proud to be working to eliminate the digital divide that exists in certain parts of Oregon," says Matt Webb, PEAK's Manager of Sales and Business Development. "We know that a reliable Internet

connection results in huge economic and social benefits for the communities that we serve. Small businesses can stay open thanks to online sales. Residents who used to travel for meetings can now join them from home. High school and college students can join virtual classes while their parents are working from home."

This summer, PEAK had the honor of providing internet connectivity to the broadcasters at the Oregon 22 World Athletics Championships held at Hayward Field in Eugene Oregon. This once-in-a-lifetime event brought together the world's best track

speeds up to 5 Gigabits per second. That's 200 times faster than the FCC's definition of broadband (25 Megabits per second), which is what many of the area's existing providers offer.

And this is just the beginning. PEAK Internet is committed to ensuring that all residents of its service area have access to a fast, reliable Internet connection—powered by fiber. PEAK fiber transforms Oregon into an amazingly desirable place to live, allowing people to enjoy the beautiful natural surroundings while they enjoy the conveniences often associated with living in more urban communities.



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By Ted Case on behalf of Beacon Broadband  
Members of the NWTA

## Bringing High-Speed Fiber Where No One Else Will Go



### ***History sometimes repeats itself.***

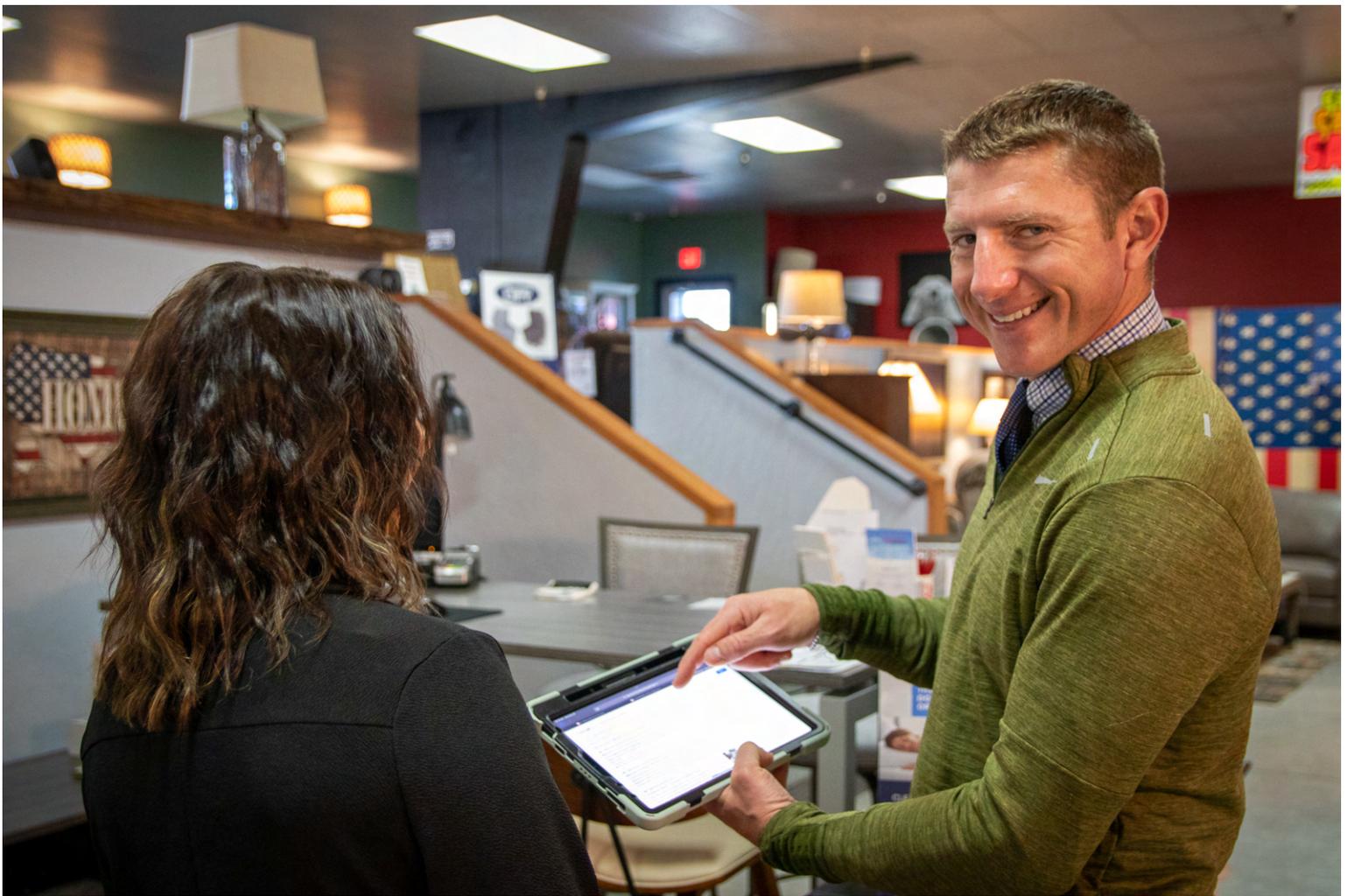
In 1939, Ivan Laird could not get electricity to his farm in Sitkum, a small town 45 miles east of Coos Bay on the Oregon Coast. Like millions of rural Americans, Laird was living a far different life than those in cities.

It was a tale of two Americas: one with the modern conveniences made possible because of electricity and one that was not far different than those that toiled in the Middle Ages.

Ivan recognized that for-profit electric providers were unlikely to serve remote areas of Oregon's south coast and decided to do something

about it. He organized a group of neighbors to establish what would become Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative, bringing electricity to south coast residents who had all but given up hope of having it.

Today, there is another gaping divide between rural and urban America that has ramifications for the



Terry Adams, owner of Barron's Home Furnishings in Brookings, educates his team on new technologies to better serve customers. The company was the first to receive service from Beacon Broadband. Photo by Kelsey Bozeman

descendants of those who electrified this nation.

Ivan's grandson, David, lives in the historic family home in Sitkum and cannot get reliable high-speed internet service. Like many others on Oregon's south coast, David is counting on the local electric cooperative to again transform the area.

On May 2, Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative's subsidiary, Beacon Broadband, flipped the switch on its new broadband network at a ribbon-cutting ceremony in

Brookings. The cooperative joined approximately 200 electric cooperatives nationwide that are providing or building out broadband.

The ceremony represented a culmination of more than three years of work by Coos-Curry Electric, Beacon Broadband and its partners to build the first sections of the network that will be available to all CCEC members and some neighboring areas—approximately 19,000 homes and businesses in Coos and Curry counties.

"Beacon Broadband will bridge the digital divide that exists right here in Curry and rural Coos counties," says Pete Radabaugh, Beacon Broadband's board president. "It will help bring economic, educational and social vitality to the south coast for decades to come, along with the same quality, reliability and affordability we get from the co-op."

Barron's Home Furnishings in Brookings has been in business since 1994. It was the first business member to receive broadband service



Beacon Broadband Splicer Justin Redding. Photo by Kelsey Bozeman

'40s, the broadband rollout will not happen overnight. However, Beacon Broadband has initiated a three-year fiber-to-the-home construction plan.

When complete, the company will offer access to some of the fastest symmetrical upload/download multigigabit internet capabilities in the nation. The network is being built with redundant paths to ensure customers stay connected.

from Beacon Broadband. Owner Terry Adams plans to integrate interactive digital signage, visual displays and informational kiosks into his business—something he could not have done without high-speed fiber broadband.

“Broadband allows us to take advantage of integrating new technologies into our business,” Terry says.

“Connecting to Beacon Broadband’s service opens up the doors for rural communities like Brookings to gain access to more advanced technologies.”

Few Coos-Curry members are as excited to get broadband than those in the small, remote town of Arago. The town has never been served by

traditional internet, relying instead on a patchwork of fixed wireless solutions, cellphones and satellite.

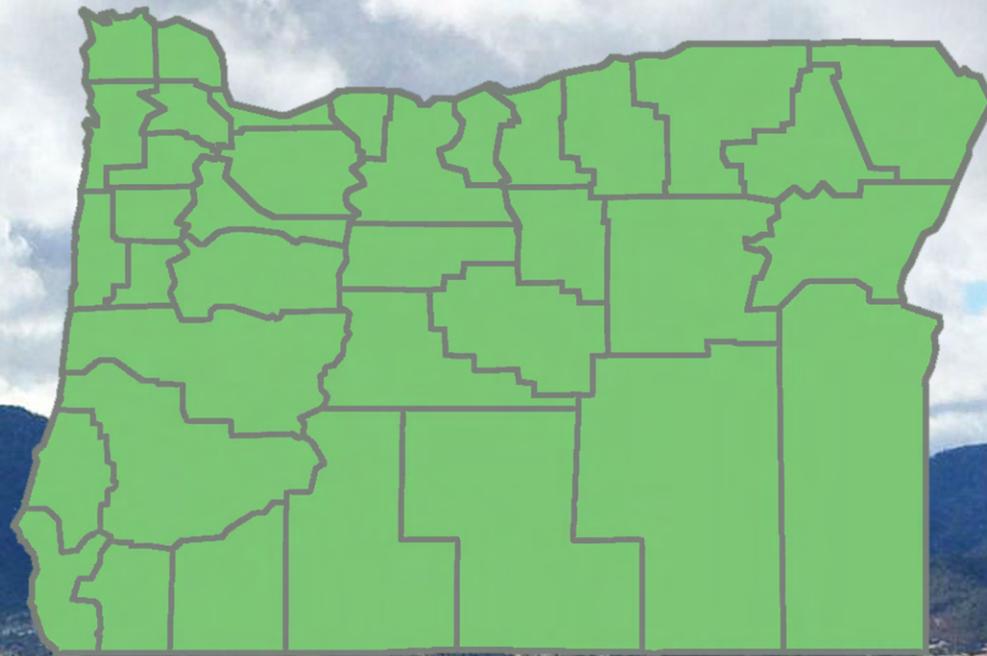
Arago resident Jerek Hodge anxiously awaits the speed and reliability of a fiber network. He is one of 1,800 people who have preregistered for Beacon services.

“Beacon Broadband will make it possible to work from home,” Jerek says. “We have homeschooled our five children and have found it difficult to download videos with the fixed bandwidth earlier providers have offered. We bought internet hotspots. We just make it work.”

Much like the advent of the electric co-op in the 1930s and

The key to success, however, is Coos-Curry’s local connection that started more than 80 years ago with Ivan Laird’s bold vision of electrifying the south coast. That is no less true today with Beacon Broadband, using the same motivation as the co-op’s founder: providing an essential service because no one else would.

To learn more about Beacon Broadband, visit [www.beaconbroadband.com](http://www.beaconbroadband.com).



# NWTA members provide broadband to 100% of Oregon counties

The Northwest Telecommunications Association serves to unify, promote, support and assist the Telecommunication Providers in the Pacific Northwest. Visit [nwta.biz](http://nwta.biz) for more info.



## Local Internet Edge Network (LIEN) Modernizing the current internet infrastructure with the State Of Oregon

David Hand has been involved in the Oregon Telecommunications business as long as I have, well over 25 years.

Over the years he has built a successful ISP (Mighty.Net) with his partners, as well as a data center in Southern Oregon (Data Center West) with Co-Lo operations in Ashland, Medford, Redding and Eugene. In 2012 he worked hard to get all of the Southern Oregon ISPs to peer exchange in his head-end under the banner of RogueNexus.

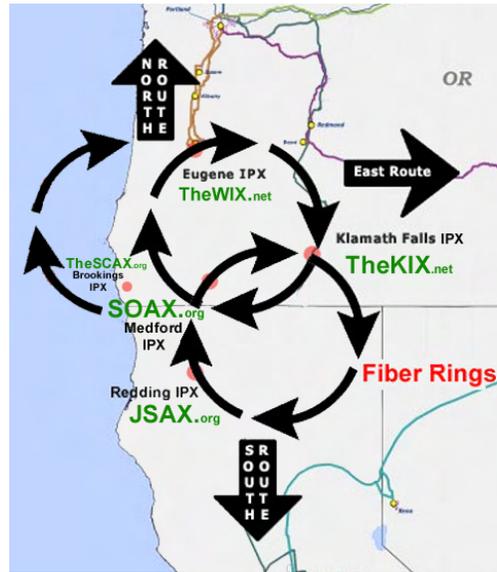
Unlike me, he has spent his career laser focused on telecommunications in Southern Oregon.

I saw him in attendance on a recent "So OR Broadband Touchpoint" Zoom call put on by Marta at Biz Oregon and I pinged him in chat to see if we could connect after the call.

The hours we spent in Zoom spread over the next two days is a blur. His rapid flow of ideas is fun and always intriguing.

When I asked him what he was working on now he told me about LIEN - The Local Internet Edge Network.

It's the next generation of the local peering exchange he championed a decade ago. From what I can understand he seeks to improve the speed and reliability of the internet by creating one local network in each part of Oregon (a local network directly peered with all local telecommunication carrier networks). In turn, these state wide Local Internet Edge Networks (LIEN) are then



interconnected together maximizing the speed and flexibility of all regional telecommunications networks.

Why do this? Because the Oregon telecommunications' fiber infrastructure current top down design model is outdated. Imagine that we have no local roadways or local freeway exits and that every time we wanted to drive between Ashland and Medford we were required to drive to Portland first only to turn around and drive back south to Medford. Imagine this is how we travel to see our doctor or access critical information. Now imagine how much faster, more efficient, smarter and reliable accessing online resources would be utilizing a local roadway, a local fiber telecommunications infrastructure? If there was a failure of the internet due to catastrophe such as fire or earthquake, he believes people and businesses in Southern Oregon would be cut off.

To make the internet faster/more reliable we must reduce the network latency and the number of points of failure.

The goal is to modernize the current WWW by enabling local internet traffic to remain local and return

telecommunications back to carrier grade design that was a requirement back in the day of POTS and dial tone.

He is reaching out to anyone that has power over the state's internet and pursestrings and trying to get them to understand.

I think I understood enough to share this with you and to commit to him that I will research more to see if this is in fact the case and help him get the word out.

The challenge is that we are all building more and more systems on to the "cloud" for many good reasons. David believes that we give up access in times of emergency. Critical data is useless if you can't get to the cloud. One example of this are the cameras I donated space on my towers and bandwidth for forest fire watching remotely. The videos are stored on the cloud and fire professionals access them from anywhere.

He is passionate about this and will be working hard to make sure we all know that a very small portion of the federal funds that are coming for broadband will be well spent on making the Local Internet Edge Network a reality.

David can be reached at [DHand@datacenterwest.com](mailto:DHand@datacenterwest.com) if you would like to learn more.



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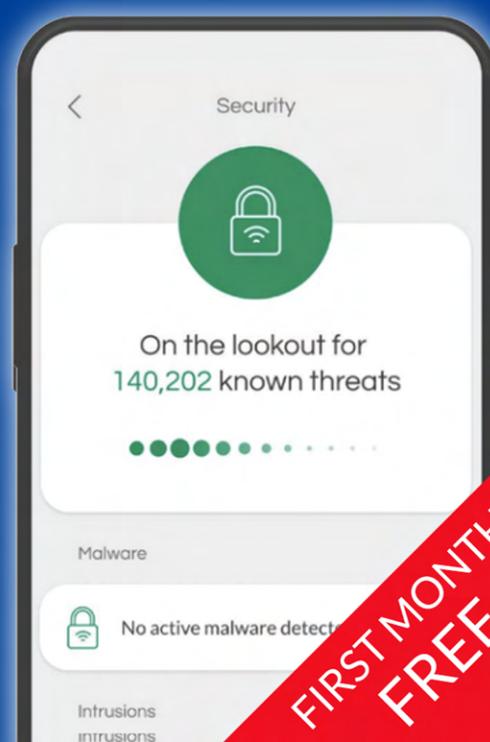
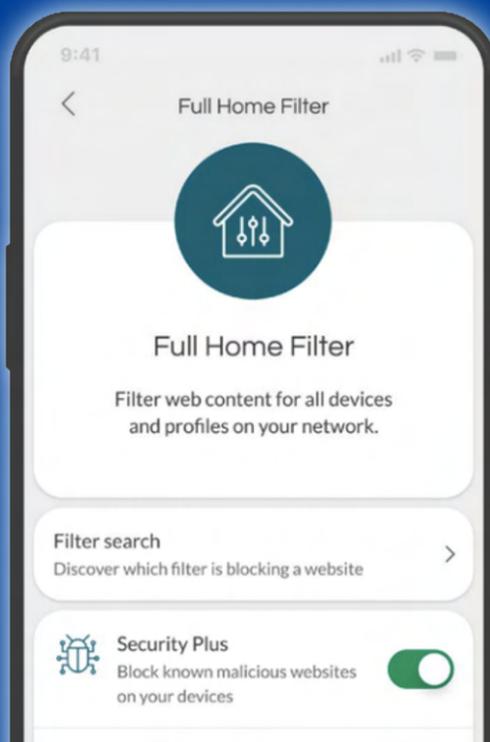
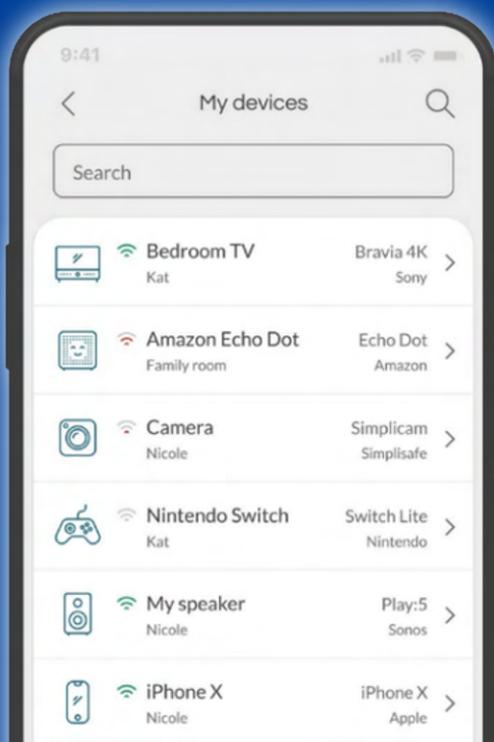
- ✓ Create family profiles
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## SOU's launch of new operating platform to save \$750K annually

Southern Oregon University has begun a phased launch of a new operational software platform that is expected to eventually save the university more than \$750,000 in recurring costs each year. It will improve user experiences and modernize processes for both students and employees.

SOU's shift to the Workday platform - which will take three years to fully accomplish - will bring students streamlined registration options, an adaptable academic planner, and an integrated and effective mobile app, while employees will juggle fewer systems and see modernized and automated workflows, improved analytics and better security.

The university is seeking funding from the state to help cover \$7 million of the \$10 million pricetag to implement its new core information system, and plans to leverage its experience in implementing Workday to serve as a model - and potentially as a mentor - for other universities that shift to the platform. State funding of the move to Workday will save \$2.5 million that SOU would otherwise have to pay in interest charges.

"This is an opportunity for us to improve many day-to-day experiences for our campus community, save a significant amount of money each year and potentially generate revenue in the future as we pave the way for other universities to make this important transition," said SOU President Rick Bailey. "It is a terrific investment for SOU, and for the state of Oregon."

SOU's shift to Workday - from the outdated core information system it and most other universities currently use - began in early August with the planning and "discovery" phases of the new platform's Business Administrative element, which includes human resources, finance and payroll. All employees - including faculty and student employees - will be moved to electronic time entry, leave requests and reimbursement procedures, and many other processes will be modernized and streamlined.

Implementation of the Business Administrative functions will be a gradual process, with a "go-live" date for the full component scheduled for next July 1.

The shift to Workday's student module will then begin, and full

implementation is expected to last another two years. The new platform will affect how students view and register for courses, and will provide tools for them to create academic plans, manage financial aid and complete other functions throughout their academic careers. Most functions will be accessible on Workday's mobile app.

Workday also will become the primary portal through which the registrar will schedule and manage courses, and where faculty members and advisers will view and edit students' transcripts and course progress.

SOU has hired a vendor - Alchemy - which specializes in helping colleges and universities implement the various functions of the Workday system. The university will take on a similar mentorship role after completing its own implementation process, as several other institutions in Oregon and elsewhere have indicated they plan eventual transitions to Workday and are closely monitoring SOU's progress. Leaders of Oregon's seven public universities have agreed that the transition is necessary and inevitable.



*“Between the biology program and our Army ROTC program, SOU helped prepare me for my doctorate program at Texas A&M and leading my infantry platoon in the Texas Army National Guard.”*

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# Maintain Your Margins to Maintain Your Viability



Photo by Carlos Muza on Unsplash

In business vocabulary, the term 'margin' is a fairly important word to know, as it is connected with several concepts that speak to profitability. Understanding your margins and maintaining them in inflationary times is key to remaining in business. Understanding what 'at the margin' means is useful for informing your actions, while getting a handle on the 'contribution margin' each sale, item, or service provides you is important for

positioning your company appropriately. Failing to appreciate, calculate or keep an eye on any of these margins can cause hardship over time.

Of course, as we are talking about accounting, if you do not reconcile your books monthly and review your financials to monitor your margins, you are not ready to understand why your profits are slipping and where you need to make changes to correct the situation. In other words, you

are failing and will never know why.

So, the general term 'margin' measures profitability, is expressed as a percentage (of sales) and is calculated as net income / net sales. High margins are good while low margins can be catastrophic. Once calculated, margins for a company can be compared to peer companies in an industry to get a feel for how well the company is doing maximizing revenues and controlling costs as

compared to like competitors. These calculations can also paint a picture of success or impending failure, depending on what they reveal about margin maintenance over time.

Frequently in inflationary times, margins are eroded (lowered) when the cost of goods rises, along with supply chain issues that cause increased costs to be experienced. It can be difficult to raise prices to customers in concert with the increases in costs, which can cause margin shrinkage.

If you are doing a good job of reviewing your financial statements and know your fixed and variable costs, then you realize that once your fixed costs have been covered in an accounting period, additional sales result in outsized gains as only the variable costs need to then be covered. In other words, the increased sales have an outsized positive effect on profitability. The increased revenues are earned 'on the margin' and are desirable as a way to accelerate profitability. These transactions inform

your actions as it is rational to expect that you, as manager, would tend to try and increase sales once your basic costs have been covered in order to increase your overall profit margin.

Each item or service you sell contributes to your overall revenue figure. Each item or service sold generates money to add to the gross revenues generated by your company, thus adding to your company's net revenue. To fully understand what the contribution margin is of each service or item you produce or sell, it is necessary to fully understand what the total cost of each item is. This is calculated from your financial statements and from directly auditing the individual costs of each input, and if performed well, can give you the information you need in order to position your company to the markets you are in, with an eye towards how you plan to position the company in the future.

Once again, the key to forming strategies for the future, for determining where you make money and

sustain your company, and knowing what your profit margins are and from where they are made is critical to your success. This may sound like a lot to take in, so don't try to recreate everything accounting at once. Start with understanding your basic financial statements, audit them to prove they are totaling accurately and represent your operations correctly, and then do some cost accounting projects to determine the true costs of different products and services you produce. Now you are ready to put this information together and build a successful resilient business!

--

Marshall Doak is the Director of the Southern Oregon University Small Business Development Center and a huge supporter of innovation and the community that forms around innovation in the economy. In private practice, he works with businesses that plan to transition to new ownership within the next five years, assisting them to build value that can be converted to retirement income when the business sells. He can be reached through: [mdoak06@gmail.com](mailto:mdoak06@gmail.com) or 541-646-4126.

## Vets Can Help



Photo by Benjamin Faust on Unsplash

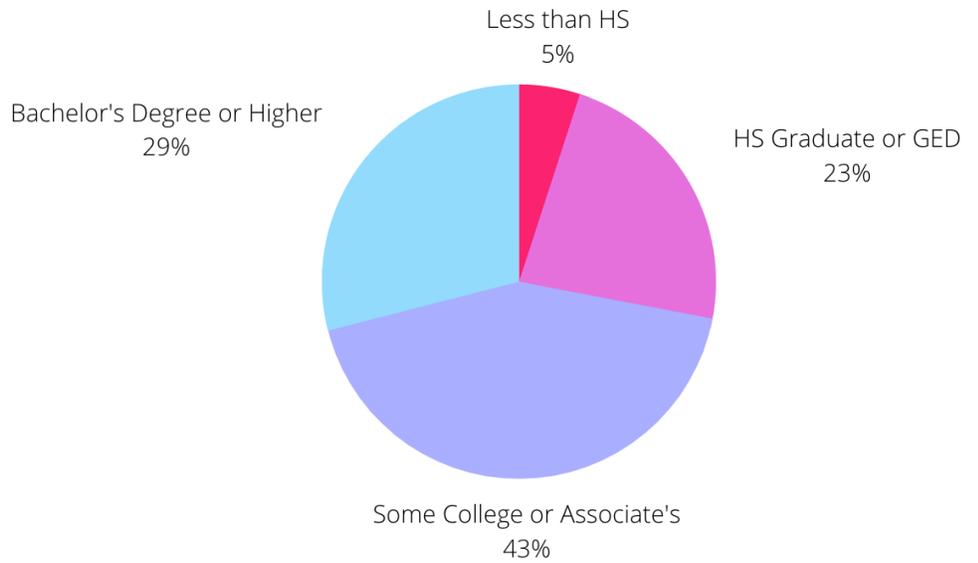
**B**usinesses throughout the US are facing a tight labor market, and small businesses in southern Oregon are experiencing it acutely as well. Focusing on specific job seeker groups year-round or

from quarter to quarter can help diversify your recruitment strategy. One specific group of job candidates that is easy to concentrate on is veterans. Luckily, there are resources dedicated to helping you

locate the best veteran candidates to fill your open positions.

Contrary to popular perception, Oregon's labor force is larger than before the COVID pandemic. The Rogue

# So OR Veterans Educational Levels



Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020

Valley labor force has grown since 2020 at nearly the same rate as the state's. For the region from Lane County south, the total worker population has grown nearly 8% since 2010. How can you strategize now for fall and winter recruitments? It may seem counterproductive in a tight job market to focus on a small group of candidates. However, if you choose the right group to target, you could save time and money with a shorter, more productive hiring process. There is an opportunity for businesses to balance casting a wider net for applicants with recruitment and hiring efforts targeted to specific segments of the candidate pool. What makes veterans great applicants? Veterans may offer higher educational levels and good soft skills. Even better, sometimes there are tax incentives for hiring.

Overall, veterans make up about 9% of the Oregon population over 25 years old. At just under 12%, the veteran population of Southern Oregon is higher than in the rest of the state.

70% of the Southern Oregon veteran population has a high school degree and/or some college experience. Almost 30% have earned a bachelor's degree. Many have accessed additional training and educational advancement through the community college and university network and have specialized skills gained through their service.

Soft skills, such as teamwork, punctuality, and initiative are important too. According to an article in ANSOM [Army, Navy,

Supplies, Outdoor Merchandise],

Individuals who live the military lifestyle have a background of commitment: to themselves, to each other and to an employer who treats them well. This commitment and loyalty fosters their need to go above and beyond when asked to complete a project. They are prompt and used to reporting for work on time and know the importance of a professional appearance and presence.

Often, veterans have worked in very stressful, even life-

	Oregon	Southern Oregon
Population over 25	2,942,177	1,038,119
Veteran:	271,311	118,890
Nonveteran:	2,670,866	919,229

threatening situations and understand how to lead and respond under unexpected circumstances. Many are accustomed to working a nontypical workday and have been exposed to working evening or graveyard shifts.

Advantages of hiring veterans include:

- Increased retention
- Reduced employee turnover
- Reduced training costs
- Increased productivity
- Increasing company overall ROI
- Veteran employment tax breaks

Employers who hire veterans may qualify for the [Work Opportunity Tax Credit](#) if they meet all criteria.

Businesses which have already hired veterans are glad they made the effort. A key industry for Southern Oregon is wood products manufacturing. Bert

Young, Plant Manager at Allweather Wood LLC in White City, shared that the company is a proud employer of veterans. Bert commended their work ethic and readiness to work, "They come in, get their coffee and it is evident they are looking forward to working. They are ready to work and when it comes to processes on the manufacturing floor, they are ready to dig in and learn." Tasks at Allweather involve material movement as well as chemical treatment, and veteran hires learned these processes quickly and execute them well.

We interviewed Jerry Flores, the Regional Veterans Employer Representative with WorkSource Oregon. He shared how the Jobs for Veterans State Grant program, funded by the Department of Labor, works in Oregon. Jerry and his colleagues connect veteran job seekers with businesses that are ready to explore hiring skilled candidates who have served our country. The program successfully connects qualified and work-ready candidates with businesses via work of local Veteran Employment Representatives and Disabled Veteran Outreach Program specialists. Jerry and his team provide support services to veteran job candidates who

may be working to overcome barriers, such as a justice-involved background, or meet their specific training needs by furthering their education.

Jerry shared a recent success story where a veteran, unhoused at the time of accessing the program, was able to obtain his CDL with financial assistance available through the WorkSource' partners network, and is now working for a trucking company, while working towards permanent and stable housing. The transportation and logistics cluster in Southern Oregon has been a great industry for these connections and Jerry shared that exploring veteran career placement opportunities with a focus on advanced manufacturing companies might be next.

Jerry's team travels throughout their respective regions to work with candidates to get them work-ready. Jerry looks forward to hearing from you directly; contact him through the Recruit and Hire Veterans program webpage.

If you are ready to take your business to the next level and be featured in a national database of veteran-friendly employment opportunities, ask Jerry about the HIRE Vets Medallion program. Only 18 Oregon companies have

earned this prestigious qualification, and four of them are in Southern Oregon. This program offers a competitive advantage for employers by providing exposure and access not only to local veterans, but also to a qualified workforce ready to relocate after completing their service.

Want to learn more about hiring veterans, or making the transition from the military to civilian employment? There are plenty of resources at the library to help you. [Roslyn selected the best resources for you to get started.](#) If you do not have a Jackson County library card, take this list to your local library and ask them for assistance. Most libraries will have at least one or two of these titles.

*Other resources for hiring veterans:*

- [Worksource Rogue Valley](#) gives veterans and their spouses priority for job openings, and has a plethora of services for employers looking to interview qualified candidates. Call the Employers Hotline at (541)-349-4473 (HIRE) to contact an employment specialist.
- Society for Human Resources Management

(SHRM) has developed a free Veterans at Work 10-hour certification program, available on demand, to assist your organization in becoming more intentional about hiring veterans.

The first week of September is two months away from Veterans' Day. While your recruitment and job opportunity marketing efforts may need to be ongoing, there is merit in encouraging veteran job seekers to contact you with any questions about current openings and submit resumes for future consideration. Your Indeed or LinkedIn or social media page may encourage applicants to contact you for informational interviews year-round, and you may include a note encouraging Veterans to consider applying for jobs in your company with your social media post appreciating their service on this important holiday or when you recognize someone on your team who is a veteran on social, with their permission.

***Finding the Best is a collaboration between Roslyn Donald and Marta Tarantsey to highlight some of Southern Oregon's hidden gems - programs and people who help our region's business ecosystem thrive.***

## About the Authors



Roslyn Donald is the business librarian for Jackson County Library District. Her mission is to support residents in reaching their economic potential. The business librarian is trained to help small businesses, nonprofits and job seekers find the information they need to make decisions. When you [Book a Librarian](#), you will be connected with resources and services that match your needs.



Marta Tarantsey supports Southern Oregon communities and businesses as the Regional

Development Officer with Business Oregon. While her team's work shifted heavily towards pandemic economic response and business and community fire recovery in 2020, she continues to support start-up and existing business support ecosystem efforts.

"Hiring veterans: How your company can benefit." *ANSOM* [Army, Navy, Supplies, Outdoor Merchandise], vol. 66, June 2011. *Gale OneFile: Business*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A265037945/ITBC?u=jacksonpl&sid=bookmark-ITBC&xid=7620bfa3. Accessed 1 Aug. 2022.

"Why Hiring Veterans Is A Smart Business Move." *PRWeb Newswire*, 20 Jan. 2013. *Gale OneFile: Business*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A315566207/ITBC?u=jacksonpl&sid=bookmark-ITBC&xid=ab26236d. Accessed 1 Aug. 2022.

*a Fine Line* \_\_\_\_\_

by Greg Henderson

# Boarding the Ark



**B**eing next is the best place to be.

Standing in line waiting my turn can be an incredible opportunity to make new acquaintances, learn new things and be inspired to live another day with altered feelings. I can start my day a little grumpier than I should. It's a "got up on the wrong side of the bed" excuse kind of thing. Never acceptable, even to me.

Spotting a line I'm destined to join can exacerbate my crummy attitude until I adjust and accept the inevitable, the line is part of life - join the party.

Standing there in the midst of my fate is an opportunity to become a slightly better human being. A bit of courtesy to fellow line-mates never is a bad thing.

One thing is for sure; once you reach the station in line when the cashier says, "Next" and you realize you are the target of the invitation, a heart thumping pride of the promotion, what an exciting position to hold. Its tempting to shout, "Look at me! I'm Next!" Life is good.

Congestion will often cause hypertension. Heart rates quicken with an increase in blood pressure and more

rapid breathing. Our intent is to avoid congestion and impolite crowds as often as possible. We believe its healthier in many ways. Leave early.

Don't tolerate lines and slow people. Its okay to complain. It must be, we often do. We like the adrenaline rush; it feels like exercise.

Snails are not known for their speed. By their nature they usually don't appear to be in any great hurry. Perhaps they are better at scheduling and keeping appointments than most of us. I read that it was perseverance that got the snail on board the Ark. They probably started their journey to the ark quite some time before the cheetahs. Cheetahs, I believe, are rather short on patience. But the snails and the cheetahs all made it on board the Ark in time for its departure. The cheetahs got ulcers while the snails took a nap.

Life among humans these days is quite like getting on board the Ark must have been. Chaos is an adrenaline builder, and healthy or not, adrenaline is often addictive. Let's agree that addictions can be bad.

"Sagacious" and "Perseverance". Add those two words to your familiar vocabulary and try to live

them. It will be good for all of us.

Sagacious means "having keen mental discernment and good judgement". Like thinking before you speak or looking before you leap.

Perseverance is defined as "steadfastness in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success". Never give up, keep trying, remain focused... get knocked down seven times, get up eight.

It's hard work to think, and certainly demanding to always keep going even after being knocked down. So hard, in fact, that far too many assign those tasks to someone else. Parenting often has been assigned to everyone but the parents; teachers, police officers, social workers, and doctors bare the burden of making quality citizens of our children. So far, it doesn't appear to be working very well. We need to get in line and do our part.

Even the snail eventually gets promoted to the coveted status of "Next". Please step onto the ark.



*Greg Henderson is the retired founder of the Southern Oregon Business Journal. A University of Oregon graduate and a six year U.S. Air Force veteran. Contact him at [ghenderson703@gmail.com](mailto:ghenderson703@gmail.com)*

# **Project A**

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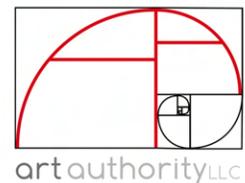
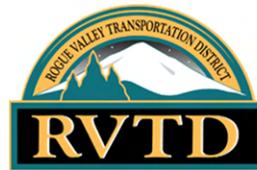
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