

# Broadband Activity

Christopher Tamarin  
Oregon Broadband Office  
February 17, 2021



# Broadband as Essential Service

“Information and communications technologies have been the most disruptive and transformative technologies of the past one hundred years.

Oregon’s information and communication technology infrastructure and the capacity of Oregon to utilize these technologies for economic growth, community development and public safety is an important public policy issue. It will determine the state’s future economic growth and development.

The internet has become *the platform* on which the world works, and broadband *connectivity* is becoming a universal common denominator that is important and essential for all sectors of the economy.”

- *Oregon Broadband Advisory Council*

# Pivotal Years 2019–2020

- HB 2173 (2019): Established the Oregon Broadband Office in statute. Expanded and removed the sunset on the Oregon Broadband Advisory Council.
- SB 1603 (2020): Established the Oregon Broadband Fund with up to \$5 million a year to 2030.
- COVID-19 Pandemic.

# Opportunities

- Source of funding for planning, engineering and building broadband infrastructure
- Source of matching funds for federal and private foundation broadband loan and grant programs
- Technical assistance
- Data collection and reporting
- Networking (building a community of interest)
- Education
- Digital Inclusion

# Impacts of COVID-19

- The impact on broadband telecommunications has been profound
- Our strategic response to the pandemic has been to rely on telework, telehealth and distance learning for social distancing
- Telecommunication means communication “at a distance”
- The pandemic has been a hyper-accelerator for broadband public policy, applications, adoption, utilization and infrastructure deployment

# State of Oregon Response

June 5, 2020 - Emergency Board approves \$20 million in broadband funding from the CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund and designates funding

- Link Oregon - \$8.39 million
- School Districts - \$1.61 million
- Rural Broadband Capacity Program - \$10 million

# State of Oregon Response

- June 26, 2020 – Legislative Assembly passes SB 1603 in Special Session creating the Oregon Broadband Fund
- July 29, 2020 – Oregon Department of Education (ODE) announces the *Comprehensive Distance Learning Grant Program* with funding allocations to all Oregon School Districts.

# State of Oregon Response

- December 1, 2020 – Governor Brown's proposed 2021-2023 Budget includes \$100 million for broadband infrastructure and additional staff for the Oregon Broadband Office.



# Recent Federal Funding

- Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF): \$212,027,091.20 to ten bidders to be paid out over ten years for broadband infrastructure in Oregon.
- USDA ReConnect Program has awarded \$13.2 million to expand high-speed internet in rural Oregon. PEAK Internet LLC, received a \$6.6 million federal grant and \$6.6 million loan to build fiber network serving 10.2 square miles in rural Linn and Polk counties.

# Recent Federal Funding

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) chose 14 pilot programs in 11 states for the Connected Care Pilot Program, awarding applicants \$26.6 million for their proposed projects.

The largest award was \$5.8 million for the OCHIN Consortium based in Portland. The OCHIN pilot project will provide patient broadband internet access and wireless connections to approximately 3,450 low-income patients to access connected care services in Oregon, Washington and Ohio.

# Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act

- **USDA Broadband Programs**
  - \$635 million for the USDA Reconnect Broadband Loan & Grant Program.
  - \$60 million for the USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant Program.
  - \$35 million for the USDA Community Connect Broadband Grant Program.

# Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act

- **FCC Broadband Programs**

- \$98 million to implement the Broadband DATA Act to improve broadband mapping accuracy and accountability.
- \$3.2 billion Emergency Broadband Connectivity Fund to establish an Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, under which eligible households may receive a discount off the cost of broadband service.
- \$250 million for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program.
- \$1.9 billion to “Rip and Replace” certain unsecure equipment as directed by recent FCC regulations.

# Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act

- **NTIA Broadband Programs**

- \$300 million to implement a broadband infrastructure deployment grant program benefiting rural areas, prioritizing applications delivering 100/20 Mbps or better broadband service in areas without access to 25/3 Mbps broadband service.
- \$285 million to create the Office of Minority Broadband Initiatives at the NTIA, focusing on access and adoption for minority communities.
- \$1 billion to expand access and adoption of broadband on tribal lands. [On January 15<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. Department of Interior, Indian Affairs issued a National Tribal Broadband Strategy to bring broadband to Tribal communities]

# **Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act**

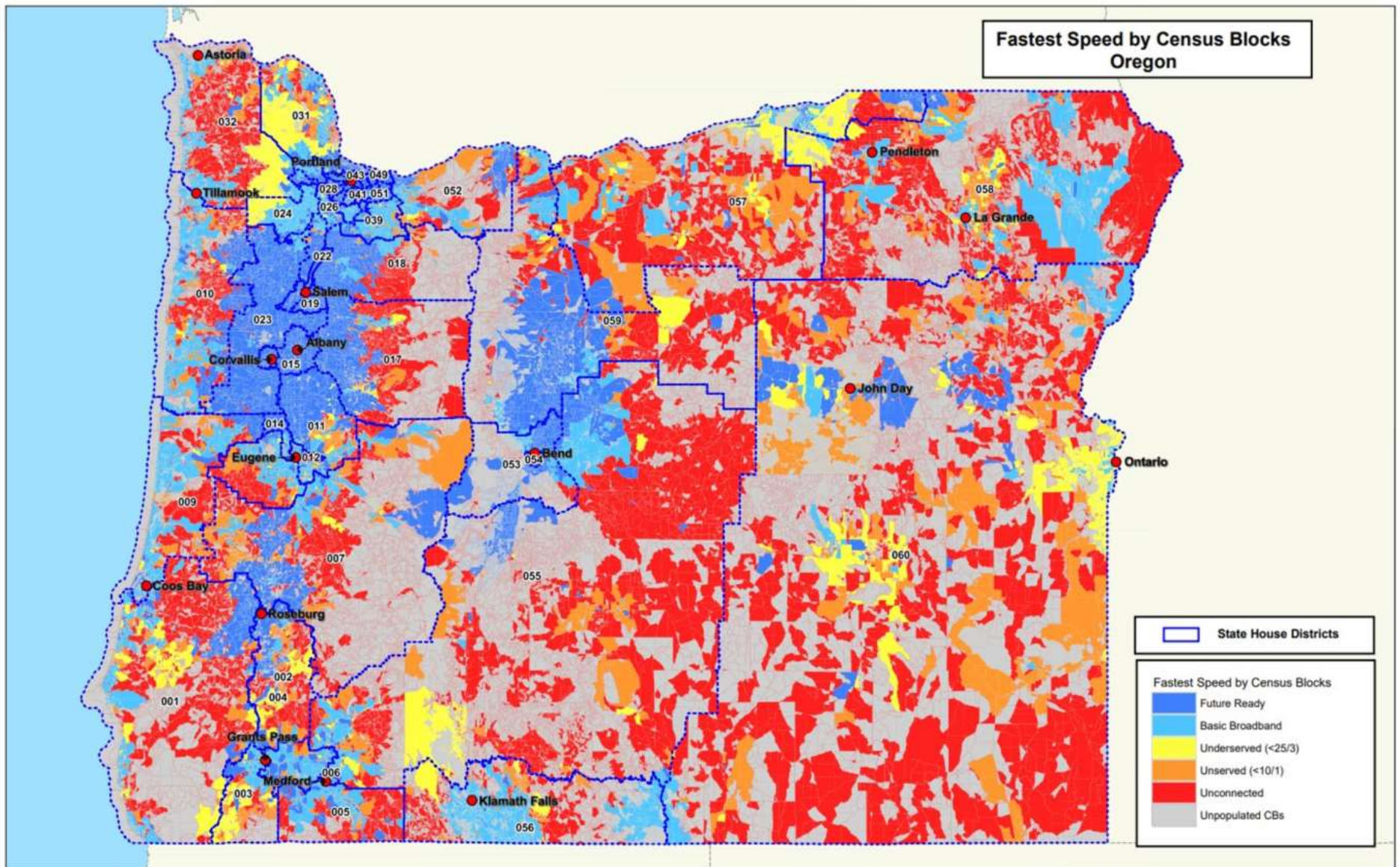
- **U.S. Department of Education was appropriated \$82 billion for continuation of CARES Act programs**
  - \$4.1 billion for Governors Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund.
  - \$54.3 billion for Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund.
  - \$22.7 billion for Higher Education Emergency Relief (HEER) Fund.

# Oregon Broadband Infrastructure

- 5% of Oregon's population live in areas that do not have basic broadband (at least 25 Mbps Download/3 Mbps Upload).
- May appear low, but only 54% of all Oregon census blocks have basic broadband access, reflecting the rural-urban digital divide.



# Continuing Digital Divide





# Oregon Broadband Infrastructure

Basic Broadband speed is defined by the FCC as 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload. Referred to as “25/3”.

- Future Ready (100/100 Mbps or better)
- Basic Broadband (25/3)
- Underserved (between 10/1 and 25/3)
- Unserved (10/1 and under)
- Unconnected No terrestrial service

# A Challenging Work in Progress

- Broadband infrastructure will always be a work in progress as technologies and applications change over time.
- What constitutes broadband, i.e., transmission speeds of millions of bits per second, or billions of bits per second will be a moving target.
- The Internet has emerged as the global platform for communication, business, government, education, information storage and distribution, and entertainment.
- Competitive high-speed access to the Internet and telecommunications networks is essential for Oregon's institutions including schools, businesses, government, health care and for Oregon's individuals and families.

# ***Thank You***

Christopher Tamarin  
Telecommunications Strategist  
Oregon Broadband Office  
Oregon Business Development Department  
121 SW Salmon Street, Suite 205  
Portland, Oregon 97204  
503 508-0178  
[christopher.tamarin@oregon.gov](mailto:christopher.tamarin@oregon.gov)