

RVBAT Meeting - April 2, 2025

Meeting Purpose

Discuss updates and collaborate on broadband and digital equity initiatives in Southern Oregon.

Key Takeaways

- Multiple organizations are expanding digital literacy programs, especially for seniors
- ARPA approval received for Shady Cove/Trail/Prospect broadband expansion
- Potential changes to BEAD program rules could impact funding allocation in Oregon
- Ongoing collaborations between libraries, Age+, and other partners on digital education

Topics

Organizational Updates

- Eric (JCLS Technology Education):
 - Department renamed from Digital Services to Technology Education
 - Hiring Community Engagement Manager
 - Expanding DART van capabilities (mobile telehealth)
 - Partnering with Oregon Child Care Alliance for Spanish language tech classes
 - Popular "End of Life in Your Online Accounts" class
- Keith (Hunter Communications):
 - ARPA approval for Shady Cove/Trail/Prospect broadband expansion
 - Timeline: 3-4 months for service rollout after permit approvals
 - Continuing fiber-to-home and commercial service expansion
- Ryan (Althea/T-Mobile):
 - Starlink beta rollout progressing
 - Free until July, then tiered plans
 - Limited picture messaging for some devices
 - Slow data use (1-2 Mbps) expected later summer
 - Voice capabilities potentially by year-end
 - E-rate application period closed
 - Project 10 Million wrapping up in May
- Steve (Link Oregon):
 - Successful E-rate season (K-12, colleges, libraries)
 - Tracking \$650 million BEAD program in Oregon

- Potential rule changes could impact funding allocation
- Advises preparing for fast-moving changes

Digital Literacy Initiatives

- Age+ and Senior Planet collaboration:
 - Pilot program in Talent (Jackson County Library)
 - 5-week course, 2 classes per week
 - Topics: Internet basics, cybersecurity, online shopping
 - 7 participants, \$150 stipend each
 - \$3,000 grant to cover instructor wages
 - Potential for expansion to other library branches and senior centers
- OBEC (Oregon Broadband Equity Collaborative):
 - Seeking rural community speakers for next meeting
 - Looking to increase membership (free to attend)
 - Exploring foundation funding for digital equity
- AI Oregon K-12 Collaborative:
 - Monthly meetings focused on AI in K-12 education
 - Running through school year (April-May, resuming in fall)

Next Steps

- Christina to follow up on digital navigator information from libraries
- Group members to suggest rural digital equity speakers for OBEC meeting
- Explore expansion of Age+/Senior Planet digital literacy program to other locations
- Investigate status of RASCALS program in Josephine County
- Continue collaborations between libraries, senior centers, and digital education providers

Action Items

- Reach out to libraries re digital navigator info; check website for self-research
- Find rural digital equity program speakers for next OBEC meeting
- Follow up with Lori Silverman (Age+) re digital literacy program expansion in S. Oregon