

RVBAT Meeting – July 2, 2025

Meeting Purpose

Discuss updates and challenges in digital skills training and connectivity initiatives across Southern Oregon counties.

Key Takeaways

- Digital skills programs expanding (e.g., Josephine County's LSTA grant, Jackson County's Age Plus collaboration)
- Funding challenges widespread; state budget cuts affecting various programs
- T-Mobile announces permanent Starlink service (Jul 23) and U.S. Cellular acquisition
- Jackson County Library sunsetting hotspot program; exploring low-cost alternatives

Topics

Digital Skills Training Initiatives

- Josephine County:
 - Secured LSTA grant for 2nd year
 - Expanding from 3 to 5 digital skills trainings (10 participants each, laptop incentives)
 - 2 trainings specifically for Spanish speakers
 - Monthly digital skills training at Illinois Valley library location
 - Continuing T-Mobile/US Cellular smartphone classes (Aug: Illinois Valley, Oct: Wolf Creek, Feb: Williams, May: Grants Pass)
- Jackson County:
 - Age Plus received additional funding for summer
 - Targeting Talent/Phoenix area with weekly MyChart/Epic help sessions
 - Hosting connectivity town hall on Aug 27 (2:30-4:30 PM) with OBEC representatives

Connectivity Updates

- T-Mobile:
 - Named "nation's best network" in recent speed tests
 - Permanent Starlink service launching Jul 23
 - Text, picture, voice memos initially; data usage starts October
 - 630-satellite constellation complete

- Available on various plans (+\$10/mo for some)
 - U.S. Cellular acquisition finalized (unofficial); customers transitioning to T-Mobile network
- Jackson County Library:
 - Sunsetting hotspot program through September
 - Researching low-cost connectivity alternatives (e.g., Human IT: \$14.98/mo)
- Library E-Rate alternative:
 - T-Mobile offering \$15/mo unlimited 5G hotspots for libraries that applied for E-Rate

Funding Challenges

- State budget cuts affecting multiple sectors:
 - SOESD: Significant staff reductions, uncertain program futures (e.g., CADRE)
 - RVCOG: Contract cancellations (e.g., ODOT, ODHS behavioral health services)
 - Federal funding gaps leading to state-level "robbing Peter to pay Paul"
 - Some active federal projects facing potential clawbacks

Next Steps

- Explore partnership opportunities for funding applications across counties
- Continue information sharing and program collaboration between Jackson/Josephine counties
- Monitor rollout of T-Mobile's Starlink service and U.S. Cellular acquisition impacts
- Next meeting: August 6th

Action Items

- **Research "Connected Senior" program by Beacon Broadcasting; share info w/ Eric & Shannon**
- **Prep for Aug 27 town hall meeting 2:30-4:30pm; connectivity focus, OBEC reps attending**