

RVBAT Meeting – January 7, 2026

Meeting Purpose

Share new year updates and discuss digital inclusion challenges.

Key Takeaways

- **Fiber Expansion:** Hunter Fiber is expanding service into Medford's underground neighborhoods via microtrenching and into the Salem area.
- **Digital Literacy Growth:** AGE+ is expanding its digital literacy program into four new counties (Grant, Washington, Multnomah, Marion), adding bilingual trainers to better serve Spanish speakers.
- **Funding Advocacy:** LinkOregon faces potential state budget cuts; an advocacy kit will be shared. A new "Oregon Tech Alliance" is being formed to create a unified voice for tech funding.

Topics

Digital Inclusion Challenges

- **Inconsistent Communications:** Spanish speakers report receiving official documents (e.g., from OHA) in English after initially selecting Spanish, forcing them to restart the language preference process.
 - **Impact:** This inconsistency is a significant barrier to digital inclusion and trust-building.

Service Provider Updates

- **Hunter Fiber:**
 - **Expansion:** Launching service in the Salem area.
 - **Medford Microtrenching:** Started microtrenching in East Medford to reach neighborhoods with underground facilities, which were previously inaccessible.
 - **Significance:** This enables fiber-to-the-home service for a much larger population.
 - **Challenge:** Initial progress is slow due to the need for permits and community approvals.
- **AGE+:**
 - **Program Expansion:** Adding four new counties to its digital literacy program: Grant, Washington, Multnomah, and Marion.

- **New Staff:** Hiring four new Digital Navigator Trainers, including bilingual staff to support Spanish-language materials.
- **New Partnerships:** Includes a partnership with Self-Enhancement, a housing development in Portland.

Funding & Advocacy

- **LinkOregon:**
 - **Budget Risk:** Faces potential cuts in the state budget.
 - **Advocacy Kit:** An advocacy kit is being finalized to help partners advocate for LinkOregon's funding.
- **Proposed "Oregon Tech Alliance":**
 - **Goal:** Create a unified voice for Oregon's tech sector to advocate for state-level funding.
 - **Rationale:** A stronger state foundation is needed to compete for federal grants (e.g., BEAD) and ensure stable funding.

Next Steps

- **Jackie Wirz:** Share the LinkOregon advocacy kit with Ann Marie for distribution to the group.
- **Ann Marie Alfrey:** Distribute the LinkOregon advocacy kit to the RVBAT group.

Action Items

- **Email Link Oregon advocacy kit to Ann Marie; she'll forward to RVBAT**