RVBAT Meeting – February 4, 2026

Meeting Purpose

To share updates on digital literacy, funding, and community challenges.

Key Takeaways

- **Digital Literacy:** AGE+ and Oregon Consumer Justice launched a comic book to teach older adults about scams.
- **Funding Gaps:** Grant funding for ed-tech at SOESD has sunsetted, creating a budget gap for instructional programs. Separately, the end of Project 10M hotspot rentals is forcing districts to find new, affordable connectivity solutions.
- **Community Challenges:** RVCOG reports that fear of government interaction is causing some minority clients to disengage from vital services like Medicaid applications.
- **New Tech:** T-Mobile's TSAT (satellite) service is enabling critical safety applications like Search & Rescue tracking in areas without cell coverage.

Topics

Funding & Budget Outlook

- **SOESD Ed-Tech Funding Gap:**
  - Two major ed-tech grants sunsetted (July 1, Oct 1), eliminating a dedicated budget for instructional programs (e.g., AI training).
  - This forces a "robbing Peter to pay Paul" approach, diverting funds from other priorities.
- **RVCOG Older Americans Act (OAA) Funding:**
  - OAA funding was extended via a Continuing Resolution (CR) that expired Jan 30.
  - The new Budget Resolution to complete the Federal fiscal year (Sept 2026) includes a small increase in one title fund, but inflation (food, staff) means flat funding is effectively a program cut.
- **Oregon State Revenue Forecast:**
  - The forecast was released today but was inaccessible online due to high traffic.
  - Early reports indicate a positive revenue outlook but also a projected $900M state budget deficit.

Community Challenges & Service Gaps

- **RVCOG Client Disengagement:**

- A pattern of minority clients "ghosting" case mangers after starting the OPI Medicaid application process, creating a significant barrier to accessing vital services.
- **SOESD Librarian Staffing:**
  - Districts are requesting in-person librarians (e.g., 0.3–0.4 FTE), but SOESD's current staff is virtual.
  - **Action:** Piloting a hybrid model (4 hrs/wk in-person) and considering hiring a local, licensed librarian.
- **Hotspot Program Sunset:**
  - Project 10M (T-Mobile) hotspot rentals ended after 5 years, leaving districts with sudden bills or disconnected devices.
  - **Action:** Ryan is working with districts on discounted rates ($10–$15/mo) for throttled 4G hotspots.
  - **Concern:** Throttling can render devices unusable in rural areas, making them an ineffective solution.

Digital Literacy & Outreach
- **AGE+ / Oregon Consumer Justice Comic Book:**
  - A new comic book (English/Spanish) on fraud/scams for older adults.
  - **Design:** Tailored for older eyes (font, spacing) and includes embedded QR code instructions.
  - **Distribution:** Free copies available via an order form; Eric plans to distribute at local libraries.
- **Medford Senior Fair:**
  - **When:** March 24, 9:00 AM–3:30 PM
  - **Where:** Rogue X, Medford
- **AGE+ Digital Navigator Program:**
  - **Curriculum:** Uses AARP's Senior Planet program.
  - **Goal:** Expand the program to Josephine County. Olivia will reconnect with Shannon at Josephine Community Libraries.
  - **Funding:** Awaiting a decision on the Rural Transformation Grant this spring to support expansion.

New Connectivity Tech: TSAT
- **T-Mobile TSAT (Satellite) Service:**
  - Enables low-speed data and calls in areas without cell coverage.
  - **Performance:** Signal is intermittent (e.g., 3 mins on, 30 secs off) as satellites pass overhead.
- **Key Applications:**
  - **Search & Rescue:** Agencies use TSAT for tracking and can ping a phone's satellite connection to locate a person.
  - **Law Enforcement:** Using TSAT for apps like ATAC and CalTOPO.