Broadband Bulletin July 2023

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Bringing Connectivity to Rural Communities

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BROADBAND BULLETIN

July 2023

The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion is pleased to an exciting New Mexico with a comprehensive broadband plan to connect every New Mexican to high-speed internet. The bulletin is a quarterly and monthly high speed internet service with passionate leadership that strives over the next decade to connect every New Mexican to high-speed internet. The bulletin is a monthly bulletin to share with the public the work of our team and our partners and gather ideas and feedback.

From the Director's Chair

Jeff Lopez

As I begin to learn how to connect Rural Communities and Tribal Communities to Internet, I am reminded of the important relationships I have developed over decades. Especially in the Rural Communities, I have developed relationships with people who I have known for years, and I know they are good people who want to do what is best for their communities. I am also reminded of the importance of the work we are undertaking to ensure that our Rural Communities are not left behind and are connected to New Mexico.

Since I last wrote, the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) has connected 10 Rural Communities. We have also hired 3 Regional Managers who will be the point of contact for these communities as they work to connect their communities. We have also hired Broadband Technical Assistance Providers who will be the point of contact for the work with CCD providers.

We have also completed our first round applications that were modified and supplemented. In collaboration with the advisory board we have approved the first round of applications. We have also completed our first round of grants for Tribal Communities. We have also met with Tribes and communities through the Native NM group.

Tour

Tour Picture

Lunch & Tour

This Office of Broadband is committed to working with every applicant willing to construct broadband infrastructure in Underserved Communities. We are ready to work with Tribal Nations with our broadband office and provide the broadband to communities. Internet connectivity is a key to the future of our Tribal Communities. We are prepared to work with all tribes to expand broadband building across and will be used to enhance high speed internet access in Tribal Communities and Rural Communities.

All entities broadband technologies are welcomed to the BEAD applications.

These BEAD submissions follow our federal over-announced last month that selected the initial broadband technologies that will be used to connect the unserved and underserved locations. These 10 applicants were submitted in just two weeks, demonstrating great interest by providers willing to bring broadband to New Mexico.

- As the first round of broadband award commenced, 20 entities have reported the:
  - 10 broadband providers
  - 3 Tribal Nations projects
  - 1 Rural Cooperative project
  - 1 Academic entity in partnership with an electricity provider

The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) is pleased to announce that on the BEAD Programmatic Policy Notice and subsequent Notice guidance bulletins published by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) the first approved.

The state has met September 4 to implement the new guidance and submit the final Initial Proposal Volume 1 (IPV1) and Initial Proposal Volume 2 (IPV2) documents to the federal government. The state has 90 days to review and approve the documents.

Any questions or comments, please contact the OBAE at broadband@newmexico.gov

If you have any questions about the BEAD program, email OBAE at broadband@newmexico.gov

High-Speed Happenings

OBAE Receives Scores of New BEAD Applications!

Application Reviews and Scoring are Underway for $271 Million in Federal Broadband Grants

State Awards $1.1 Million to Bring Fiber Internet to 1,370 Rural Homes

OSHS, Nascent Networks, Level and Rural Offices Break Ground for Large Project

OBAE, Nascent Networks and Fiber crews break ground on the ceremonies under the Cooperstown

The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) joined Nascent Networks and Fiber Crews in Cooperstown, Montana to break ground on a project that will connect 1370 Rural Homes and businesses to high speed internet. Nascent Networks received a $1.1 million grant from the OBAE to bring fiber to the homes and businesses in the small rural community located in Fergus County.

OBAE Director Jeff Lopez and Nascent Networks President Jeff Lopez

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The Nascent project will connect 1,127 homes, 120 businesses, 96 farms, and 31 community anchors such as hospitals, 911 dispatchers and libraries.

Nascent Networks President Jeff Lopez said, "We are very pleased to be able to bring fiber to our New Mexico, Fergus County economic development and telehealth opportunities to Nascent Networks customers in Cooperstown."

Cooperstown Mayor Vincent Cooper said the groundbreaking was a BIG THING that was celebrated in 2021 through the Cooperstown New Mexico Day.

CLICK HERE to watch a video of the Nascent groundbreaking and groundbreaking

State Broadband Office Grants Grant to Connect Hundreds of Rural Students in Grant City School District

Grant City

Last month the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) announced that its Board approved a grant to the Grant City School District to connect its students and their families who have been excluded unserved or even underserved for years.

The funding comes from the $271 million Student Connect program designed to provide broadband connectivity to students who live in areas where the internet is not available or where there have access is the internet.

With this grant, OBAE will work with the Grant Consolidated School District to connect 300 students and their families in Grant City.

The project will change how its students, their family members and even some people in the community access the internet. Students will be able to do their homework, and students are able to fully participate in the classroom, whether they are at school or doing homework at home. Students will be able to participate in online classes.

Grant City will use the grant from the Broadband Office to install fiber optic cables and provide modems. It's designed student homes. Participating students will staff also receive a free laptop and technical support.

"As a rancher, I realize high speed internet is a tool for connecting students with speaker access to digital learning tools, research resources, and real-time feedback," said Rebecca Lopez, Grant City School District Board President. "Our students have been underserved for too long and this grant will change that for some of our families, connecting the learning beyond the classroom walls and providing our students with the same opportunities as their peers in the classroom."

The statewide programs have their just Internet connection, access, and opportunity, said Alejandro Sweetland, Director of Broadband Access. The need is critical, and the impact is immediate. Students who have been underserved for years are participating in 21st-century learning. With the support, Silver School can better connect students and families to the resources they need to succeed in the classroom and beyond.

OBAE has approved 10 Student Connect grants, totaling $20.5 million with about 2/ 3 of the state's school districts. The program is expected to connect thousands of students.

Student Connect programs are funded by the $271 million Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment program, and its deadline, requiring only that proposals meet program criteria.

State Awards Broadband Planning Grants to Two Pueblos and Valencia County

The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) announced last month that its Board approved a grant to the Pueblo of Isleta and the Pueblo of Laguna and Valencia County to help them start connectivity and digital inclusion plans.

The Pueblo of Isleta received a $100,000 grant to develop a plan for a 10-year project beginning in calendar of 2024 with the goal of providing high-speed internet to all homes and businesses in the Pueblo of Isleta. Engineering and Consulting firm Dekker/Perich/Sabatini will help the Pueblo with the planning.

Pueblo of Laguna and Valencia County received a $100,000 grant to develop a plan for a 10-year project beginning in calendar of 2024 with the goal of providing high-speed internet to all homes and businesses in the Pueblo of Laguna and Valencia County. Dekker/Perich/Sabatini will also help the Pueblo with the planning.

This is the first OBAE award to the Pueblo of Isleta and the second for Valencia County and Pueblo of Laguna.

Last month, Pueblo of Isleta's application for OBAE's grants to the Tribes, local governments and cooperatives which qualify to take their private broadband to unserved locations.

Alejandro Sweetland, Director of Broadband Access and Expansion said, "Tribal and Pueblo communities in New Mexico have been underserved for decades, and this will help us deploy broadband connectivity."

Broadband planning grants are available to OBAE grantees, and the agency encourages Tribal governments, local governments, and broadband cooperatives and such entities to apply for planning grants to connect their communities to high-speed internet.

The maximum amount allowed for each award under this state program is $100,000.

To apply for a BEAD grant, please coordinate@newmexico.gov

For more information about the state grant program, visit https://broadband.nm.gov/grants.html

OBAE Participates in Governor's Cabinet in Year Community Conversations Underway in Lincoln and Otero Counties

Gov. Lujan Grisham speaks to Otero County residents and local leaders in Tularosa, New Mexico

Cabinet in Year Community conversations provided the Governor and her Cabinet an opportunity to meet with residents in Lincoln and Otero Counties to discuss their ideas and concerns about available state and federal resources. Otero leaders listed needed unmatched broadband infrastructure as an issue in their discussion.

Governor Lujan Grisham and Cabinet Secretary Jeff Lopez in Ruidoso, New Mexico

OBAE team leaders at the event, which began one phase by Department of Information Technology Secretary Jeff Lopez, included:

Above all people gathered OBAE staff joining the Mayor. Staff ended with each speaker and the Governor and her Cabinet. Mayor Lopez said, "Thank you for your time and for your efforts. I should expect that to assess maps showing where prospective infrastructure projects are and what is the state's broadband plan. Broadband is a necessity and is changed in cases when anyone has data.

Mona Bernard, Broadband Director for Tribal Affairs, Jeff Lopez, Mayor Lopez, Jeff Lopez and Governor Lujan Grisham

Mayor of Ruidoso Naomi Tewes, Governor Lujan Grisham and Cabinet Secretary Jeff Lopez

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OBAE Meets with Governor at Sam Ildefonso Pueblo

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, Jeff Lopez, Sam Ildefonso Pueblo Gov. Joe Talachy, Sam Ildefonso Pueblo Tribal Council Member Jerome Martinez

OBAE continues to work closely with Tribal communities. OBAE Director Jeff Lopez is meeting with Tribal Leaders and Tribal Councils to discuss the state's broadband plan and how it can provide a fiber and wireless broadband network to the Tribal Communities in New Mexico. Pueblos and Tribes. Tribal Leaders and Tribal Councils are due to the ceremonies soon. Clay Pierce Pueblo and Sub Tribes.

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, Jeff Lopez, Sam Ildefonso Pueblo Gov. Joe Talachy, Sam Ildefonso Pueblo Tribal Council Member Jerome Martinez

Project Progress

Connections Underway in Lincoln and Otero Counties

A number of Rural Communities in Lincoln and Otero Counties are connected to OBAE's fiber and wireless network. There are about 50,000 broadband subscribers across the Rural Communities in Lincoln and Otero Counties. Rural Communities and Tribal Communications offers and the provider is deploying broadband. Tularosa Communications, Inc. and Zia Fiber are the two providers. Tularosa Communications is installing 21st century fiber network and is upgrading equipment. Zia Broadband is the fiber network in Zia Pueblo. Zia Broadband is also installing a fiber network and is due to the ceremonies soon. Clay Pierce Pueblo and Sub Tribes.

Lindsay Smith, Lincoln County Economic Development Director, Jeff Lopez, Governor Lujan Grisham

Mark Jake Jackson Northeast Fiber Fiber Director Lindsay Smith, Tularosa Mayor Jake Jackson, Tularosa Village Administrator Jeff Lopez, Governor Lujan Grisham

Tularosa Mayor Jake Jackson, Tularosa Village Administrator Jeff Lopez, Governor Lujan Grisham

Tularosa Mayor Jake Jackson, Tularosa Village Administrator Jeff Lopez, Governor Lujan Grisham

Tularosa has the 21st century fiber network and is ready for the Board work. The ISP will bring up expansion in services as they are ready, and communities in area have been working on a fiber network for years. Tularosa Mayor Jake Jackson.

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, Jeff Lopez, Sam Ildefonso Pueblo Gov. Joe Talachy, Sam Ildefonso Pueblo Tribal Council Member Jerome Martinez

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Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, Jeff Lopez, Sam Ildefonso Pueblo Gov. Joe Talachy, Sam Ildefonso Pueblo Tribal Council Member Jerome Martinez

OBAE will be attending the annual Mountain Connect Conference in Denver August 4-6.

The 3-day conference serves as an opportunity for industry leaders to address the challenges and future of broadband. The conference features workshops, exhibits and many speakers from around the region.

For more information and to register for the event, **CLICK HERE.**

OBAE Director to Deliver Keynote Address at Broadband Conference in Farmington

The 2nd annual Broadband Future Conference will be held on August 26 at the Henderson Fine Arts Center at San Juan College in Farmington. Four Corners Economic Development and the Alliance for Navajo Broadband are hosting the event.

OBAE Director Jeff Lopez will deliver the Keynote Address on the status and future of broadband in New Mexico.

Broadband leaders, industry experts and others will discuss the future of broadband for the Four Corners region. There will be discussions about state and federal legislation, job creation, economic development, education and other top issues impacting the broadband world.

To register for the event, **CLICK HERE.**

Broadband Submissions/Proposals Needed for Annual Infrastructure Finance Conference

New Mexico Infrastructure Finance Conference

The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) is urging broadband vendors, providers, industry leaders and other entities to submit proposals for workshops, sessions and presentations for the 28th annual New Mexico Infrastructure Finance Conference.

The event will take place at the **Albuquerque Convention Center November 3-7.**

The Conference will include infrastructure professionals, policymakers, and community leaders to address New Mexico's most pressing infrastructure challenges and opportunities.

The conference is now seeking proposals pertaining to all aspects of infrastructure. Broadband is a key component when it comes to infrastructure.

To submit a broadband proposal for the Conference this fall, **CLICK HERE.**

For more information on the New Mexico Infrastructure Finance Conference, **CLICK HERE.**

UNM-Taos Offers Fiber Optic Technician Certifications

UNM-Taos will provide an opportunity this fall to earn three fiber optic technician certifications. The sessions will be October 20-24. Details are below. For more information, please contact Elizabeth Campbell at 575-737-6278.

Broadband Workforce Pre-Apprentice Program with DWS Starts Aug 25

Santa Fe Community College and the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS) is offering New Mexico workers a pathway to hands-on training through the Broadband Workforce Pre-Apprentice (FIBER PA) program. CFOT/FOA courses are offered in Summer/Fall 2025, with the first NTCA-recognized course **Level 1: Broadband Customer Service Specialist Badge** set to begin on August 25, 2025. New Mexico residents may participate tuition-free and funding to pay for exams, tools, and travel associated with the training is available. Customized pathways are designed in partnership with New Mexico employers and include Field Technician, Service Technician, and GIS Engineering Technician career pathways.

Pre-Apprentices need to be engaged on an employer worksite 20 hours per week. Employers and workers who would like more information about this program should contact Monique Anair, (505) 428-1060 or **monique.anair1@sfcc.edu.**

Network News

All 56 States and Territories Receive Approval to Begin "Benefit of the Bargain" Round under the BEAD Program

Arielle Roth Confirmed, Will Lead NTIA During BEAD Rollout

More States to Open BEAD Application Portals Under New Rules

AT&T to accelerate fiber build after signing of Trump's big Bill

Iowa Launches New BEAD Bidding Round

State-by-State "Benefit of the Bargain" Round BEAD Update

Rural Fiber Providers, WISPs, at Odds on New BEAD Mapping

FCC focuses on satellite growth as BEAD changes loom

FCC Updates Pole Attachment Rules

New Mexico Touts Largest Increase in Broadband Access

Broadband Breakfast on July 30, 2025 - States and the Next BEAD Round

Texas BEAD Data Reveals Heavy Bidding from Satellite Providers

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Contact Information:

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If you have questions about any of these opportunities, please contact us via email at Broadband@connect.nm.gov.

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