

**OBAE Participates in Governor's "Cabinet in Your Community"**

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Bringing Connectivity to Your Community



**OBAE Travels to Mescalero and Ruidoso for Governor's Cabinet in Your Community Events**



OBAE Acting Director Drew Lovelace tells Mescalero residents about quick broadband restoration efforts after the Salt and South Fork Fires in the area



Gov. Lujan Grisham addresses Mescalero residents at Cabinet in Your Community

The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) participated in Gov. Lujan Grisham's *Cabinet in Your Community* events in Mescalero and Ruidoso on Friday and Saturday. The visits included town hall meetings and state government expos.

*Cabinet in Your Community* provided the Governor and her Cabinet an opportunity to discuss issues with constituents as part of an outreach program to help residents learn about available state and federal resources. State leaders helped residents understand various government services to get the support they need.

OBAE was among the many Departments and Agencies that interacted with residents, addressing their concerns and answering questions about state government and its services.

"These kinds of events are very important because we are engaging with the community," said OBAE Acting Director Drew Lovelace. "We want to make sure they understand what broadband services will be coming in their direction as we roll out more grant funding."

This *Cabinet in Your Community* tour was a particularly important visit by state leaders in the wake of the recent South Fork and Salt wildfires and the subsequent flooding. The wildfires burned about 25,000 acres and destroyed or badly damaged more than 1,100 homes, including about 230 lost in post-fire flooding.

Broadband service was also destroyed or disrupted in the area, but teams of workers and telecommunications providers worked tirelessly to restore service. More than 95% of broadband service is back.



OBAE Project Manager Bureau Chief Richard Govea and Project Manager Eric Moores talk broadband expansion and construction with a resident at the state expo in Ruidoso



Jennifer Nevarez of OBAE's Broadband and Digital Equity Support Team and Scot Henley of Digitunity watch as a Mescalero resident signs up for a donated computer



OBAE Acting Director Drew Lovelace and Project Manager Bureau Chief Richard Govea speak with Mescalero Apache Tribe elder Donalyn Torres at the state expo in Mescalero

Before the Governor held the town hall meetings, Departments and Agencies took part in expos where they set up booths. Residents talked with state agencies about their services and programs. OBAE had a booth where Lovelace and project managers discussed the Office's broadband programs, various grant opportunities, grant application details and the progress of projects across the state.

Digitunity, a national nonprofit, also attended the expo with OBAE. OBAE and Digitunity are teaming up to coordinate donations of computers to residents and organizations. At the expo residents signed up to receive free, refurbished computers. They will receive them next month.

Digitunity is a leader in the nation in getting computers into the hands of populations in need.

"Digitunity helps connect donors with organizations that can refurbish and distribute the computers," said Jennifer Nevarez, a member of OBAE's Broadband and Digital Equity Support Team, "and we are reaching out to companies and others willing to donate usable technology. This is a wonderful way to get computers to people who really need them."

If you have questions about any of these opportunities, please contact us via email at [Broadband@doit.nm.gov](mailto:Broadband@doit.nm.gov).

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