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SC Broadband Office Submits Five-Year Action Plan for BEAD Funding

COLUMBIA, SC — The South Carolina Broadband Office (SCBBO) has submitted the state's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Five-Year Action Plan to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

The **BEAD Five-Year Action Plan** is the first required planning step that documents South Carolina's broadband access, affordability, and adoption needs and sets forth goals and priorities for deployment. It is designed to inform the BEAD Initial Proposal, which is due to NTIA by December 27, 2023.

The **BEAD Initial Proposal** is the second required planning step that will be South Carolina's blueprint to reach all remaining unserved and underserved broadband serviceable locations. Both the BEAD Five-Year Action Plan and Initial Proposal must be approved by NTIA before any of the allocated \$551 million will be available for deployment in South Carolina.

"The development of the BEAD Five-Year Plan involved extensive stakeholder outreach, collaboration, and feedback from residents, businesses, and organizations statewide within a mandatory 270-day period," said Jim Stritzinger, Director of the SCBBO. "Without their help, this plan would not have accurately captured the needs, gaps, and barriers within our state, and we sincerely thank everyone who played a part."

Over 18,000 residential surveys were collected, in addition to feedback received from businesses, organizations, and local governments. Additionally, 23 face-to-face events were held throughout the state, along with interviews with nonprofits, governmental agencies, Internet Service Providers (ISPs), and outreach to tribal communities.

The vision for BEAD Five-Year Action Plan is for all South Carolinians to have access to affordable, reliable, high-speed internet, and to gain the necessary skills to benefit from this technology.

More information about the BEAD Program, including the plan itself, can be viewed at ors.sc.gov/broadband/investments/state/bead.

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The SCBBO is housed within the state's Office of Regulatory Staff. It serves as the central broadband planning body to coordinate with federal, state, regional, local, and private entities, to the extent practicable, to engage in the continued deployment of broadband in the state.