Welcome

Thank you for joining us today!

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What's your biggest internet pet peeve?

A. The dreaded buffering 'wheel of doom'.

B. "You're on mute" comments.

C. When the kids watch streaming services on 8 devices at once.

D. Finding out your neighbors Wi-Fi is better than yours.

E. Finding the router... and it's blinking ominously.

Today's Agenda

Welcome	**1:30 PM**
Objectives and Overview	**1:35 PM**
Topic Introduction	**1:40 PM**
Poll Questions	**1:45 PM**
Wrap up	**2:15 PM**

We've developed the following facilitation guidelines to meet our shared objectives for today's discussion

Objectives for Today	Guidelines for Participation

1 Evaluate the need for additional middle mile infrastructure in South Carolina

2 Test appetite for public investment in a "Resilient Resource Network"

3 Gather feedback on alternative uses of funding and industry priorities

➢ Share honest and constructive feedback

➢ Use the WebEx polling tools to contribute

➢ Poll responses or comments will be kept anonymous and will not be attributed to a specific person or organization

We want your input as service providers as we continue deployment of broadband in South Carolina

BROADBAND OFFICE

Our Responsibilities

- Coordinate with federal, state, regional, local, and private entities
- Collect and publish information about state and federal programs
- Maximize resources to fund broadband expansion

Our Goals

Deployment	*Non-Deployment*
➤ Deploy high-speed internet to all homes, businesses, and community anchors.	➤ Create more resilient, redundant, and future-proof internet infrastructure ➤ Expand devices, telehealth, and workforce opportunities ➤ Improve digital training and engagement

The Federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program provides funding to eligible entities and territories to expand high-speed internet access.

$551.5M — South Carolina was allocated $551.5M in total **BEAD funding**
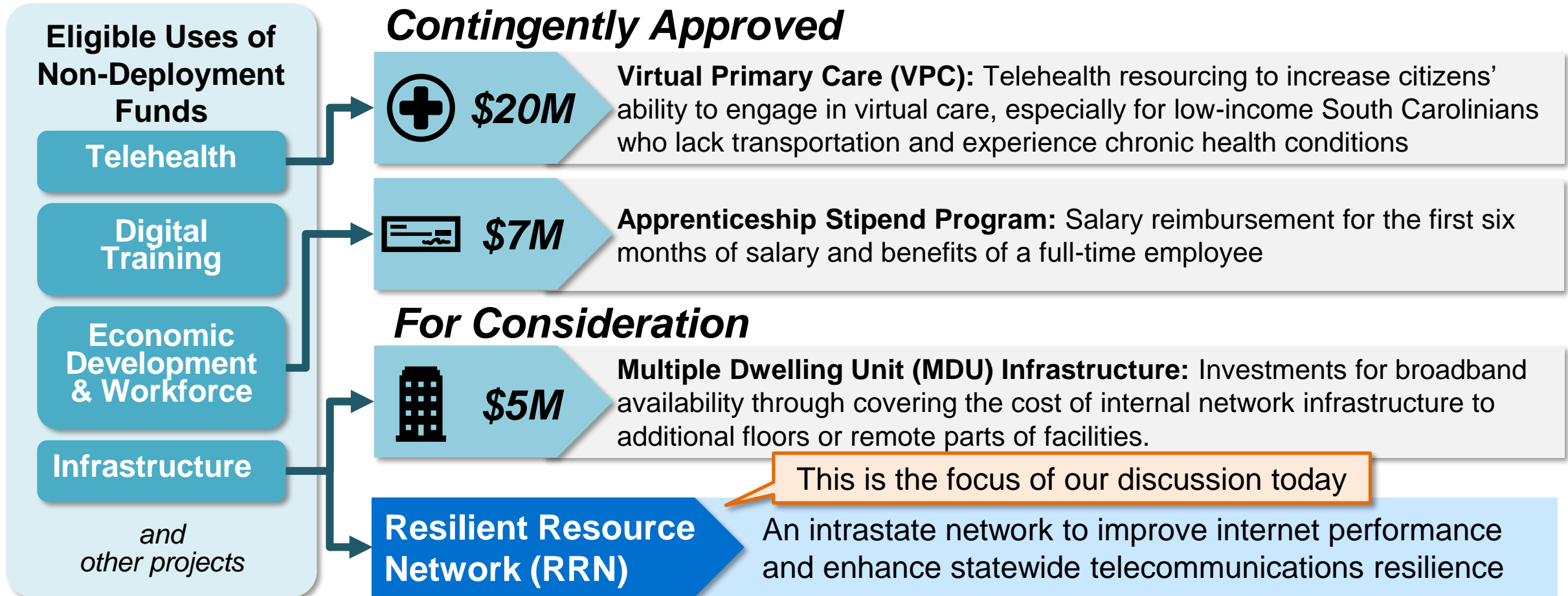
$300M — $300M is estimated to complete **deployment** goals (i.e., last mile fiber)

$ — States can use remaining funds for a wide range of **"Non-Deployment"** activities

More information on next slide

South Carolina has identified several potential uses for its Non-Deployment funds

Eligible Uses of Non-Deployment Funds

- Telehealth
- Digital Training
- Economic Development & Workforce
- Infrastructure

and other projects

Contingently Approved

$20M — **Virtual Primary Care (VPC):** Telehealth resourcing to increase citizens' ability to engage in virtual care, especially for low-income South Carolinians who lack transportation and experience chronic health conditions

$7M — **Apprenticeship Stipend Program:** Salary reimbursement for the first six months of salary and benefits of a full-time employee

For Consideration

$5M — **Multiple Dwelling Unit (MDU) Infrastructure:** Investments for broadband availability through covering the cost of internal network infrastructure to additional floors or remote parts of facilities.

Resilient Resource Network (RRN) — An intrastate network to improve internet performance and enhance statewide telecommunications resilience

This is the focus of our discussion today

States across the country are investing in middle mile networks to meet state broadband goals

A **Middle Mile Network** is a construction of physical fiber infrastructure that connects local and community telecom networks to high-capacity internet backbone networks.
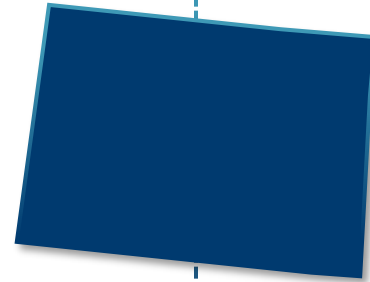
Merit *1966*	**MCNC** *1980*	**Project Thor** *2020*	**Excelsior** *2025*
Middle mile network that provides services for research and education.	Connects schools, health care providers, and highway patrol sites.	Regional middle mile network that connects 14 communities.	Planned 426-mile state-wide public middle mile network.

Today's Topic

We want to discuss potentially using broadband funds to build a middle mile network in South Carolina

Vision for the RRN

We are considering if we should use BEAD funds to **build a statewide middle mile network** of high-capacity fiber, expanding from existing fiber infrastructure. We think it should be **focused on bringing, or improving, service in rural areas** by:

- **connecting existing fiber network segments**, and

- **continuing to add new network segments** to close loops and improve speed or resilience.

Potential Benefits

- Reduced costs for ISPs
- Increased power and bandwidth to manage AI workloads
- Connect communities, agencies, and schools
- Lower barriers to last-mile deployment
- Support rural economic growth
- Resiliency for extreme weather events, challenging topographies, or routine fiber cuts

Potential Challenges

- Uncertain funding environment
- Interaction with private investments
- Governance challenges
- Connectivity to existing networks

We'd like your help to see if this is feasible and/or an idea we should pursue

How prevalent are capacity, utilization, and/or connectivity challenges with existing middle mile infrastructure in South Carolina?

Select one of the below

A. Not at all

B. At least once in recent memory

C. Some challenges, but not frequent

D. Frequent challenges

E. Unavoidable daily challenges

The RRN could be based off one of three scales

Independent of scale, utilizing existing infrastructure and assets would be a priority for build out

1	**Statewide Network**	A large scale, statewide build out of South Carolina's middle mile infrastructure, connecting all stakeholders including communities, state agencies, and school districts
2	**Regional Network in Targeted Areas**	Targeted middle mile infrastructure build out in the locations and communities of the state that have the most connectivity and resiliency challenges
3	**Individual Infrastructure Projects**	Discrete grants into select projects, such as updating K-12 school network designs or increasing cellular connectivity in specific areas of the state

If the RRN was developed, what scale would be appropriate to solve South Carolina's broadband access and connectivity challenges?

Select all that apply

A. Statewide (e.g., wide range build out across the entire state)

B. Regional (e.g., targeted build out in specific areas of the state)

C. Targeted, discrete projects (e.g., updating K-12 school network design)

If the RRN goes forward, industry participation is paramount and can take various forms

Partnerships

- Data and information sharing
- Private match
- Asset swaps
- Resiliency measures

Planning

- Future industry forums
- Email updates and correspondence

If the RRN were to go forward, what might the partnership between industry and the state require?

Select all that apply

A. Information sharing between industry and the state

B. Matching funds from industry to increase funding available for investment

C. State support for asset upgrades performed by industry

D. State support for resiliency measures performed by industry

How would a RRN change your future investment considerations?

Select one of the below

A. It would have **no effect** on my future investment considerations

B. It would **potentially affect** my future investment considerations

C. It would **likely affect** my future investment considerations

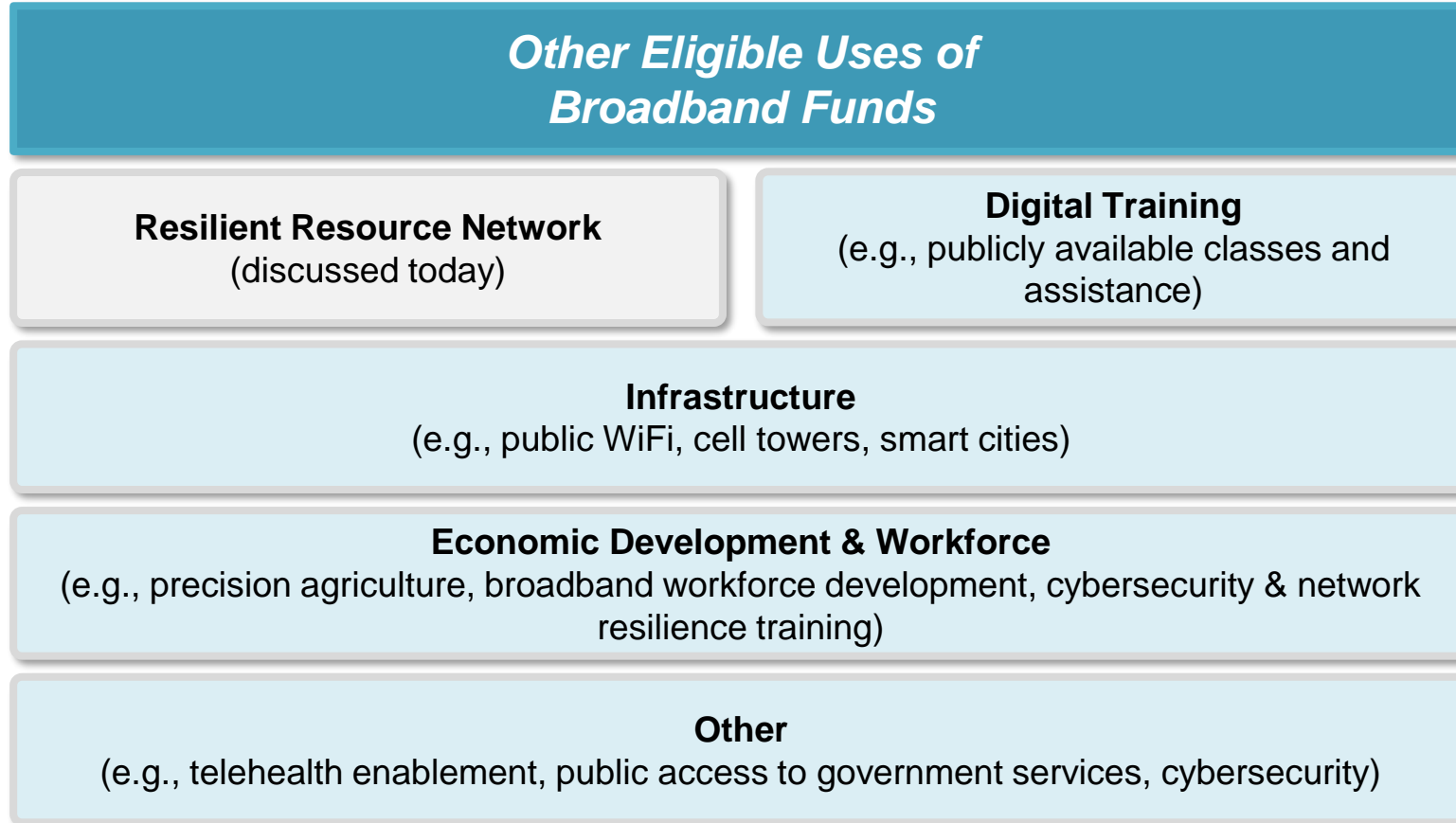D. It would **definitely affect** my future investment considerations

Please rate the following statement:

"If the RRN was developed, my organization would be interested in providing some level of private match to support new build out, where required."

A. Do not agree

B. Do not currently agree, but might reconsider under different conditions

C. Neither agree nor disagree

D. Agree, but with conditions

E. Agree

There are other ways to use funds to expand connectivity across South Carolina

Other Eligible Uses of Broadband Funds

Resilient Resource Network
(discussed today)

Digital Training
(e.g., publicly available classes and assistance)

Infrastructure
(e.g., public WiFi, cell towers, smart cities)

Economic Development & Workforce
(e.g., precision agriculture, broadband workforce development, cybersecurity & network resilience training)

Other
(e.g., telehealth enablement, public access to government services, cybersecurity)

Please rate the following statement:

"An investment in the RRN is the best use of broadband funds to solve South Carolina's access and connectivity challenges."

A. Do not agree

B. Do not currently agree, but might reconsider under different conditions

C. Neither agree nor disagree

D. Agree, but with conditions

E. Agree

Poll Question

If broadband funds were to be used for other additional projects in South Carolina, what else do you think should be funded?

Select all that apply

A. Digital Training projects

B. Other Infrastructure projects

C. Economic Development & Workforce projects

Wrap-Up

We will be following up with additional resources to continue the conversation

Be on the lookout for our survey following the RRN Forum

Participants in this session will have the opportunity for a follow-on session if interested

For those participating in BEAD, thank you and please be on the lookout for updates

Thank You!

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How would you like to stay engaged in this discussion?

A. Regular updates via email

B. Future industry forums

C. One-on-one discussions

D. Data and information sharing