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 ORS.SC.GOV

Meeting Minutes

Ref: Broadband Advisory Council Planning Session

Date: 04.11.2023

Place: ORS HQ – 1401 Main Street - Suite 900 - Columbia, SC 29201

BBAC ATTENDEES	Jim Stritzinger, Anna Berger, Brad Wright, Eric Budds, Gwynth R. Nelson, Madeline McGee, Melanie Barton, Ben Breazeale, Bernie Mazyck
ORS STAFF ATTENDEES	Emily Keys, Amy Marshall, Dawn Hipp, Georgeann VanPutten
GUEST SPEAKERS	Zachary Smith, Tony DeLisi
ATTENDEES	Sara Pincelli, Matt Hiatt, Cal Maddox, Travis Ward, Michael Oliver, Maura Greg

A meeting was held on 04.11.2023 from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM at the Office of Regulatory Staff Headquarters located in Columbia, SC. This document summarizes discussions and action items covered during the meeting.

DISCUSSION

- ORS Welcomed everyone; roll call was observed.
- ORS announced new mapping for
 - Best Available technology
 - These maps represent the different level of infrastructure
 - Areas of Need
 - Represents the speeds of internet in the state
 - Planning Map
 - This map represents areas that the state and federal government have already made investments
- ORS shared, since September 30th, 2022, there are 137,000 houses in the state without internet. With the investments the SCBBO has made, the number of homes without internet is projected to decline by 63,000 by December 2023.
- SCBBO broadband maps may be accessed here: <https://www.scdigitaldrive.org/>
- The South Carolina General Assembly approved \$400 million for Broadband investment on May 13th, 2022, there are two pots of money
 - State Fiscal Recovery Fund
 - \$214.2 Million
 - Capital Projects Fund (CPF)
 - \$185.8 Million

- On March 7th, 2022, U.S Treasury Approved the Capital Projects Fund
- CPF will still focus on priority areas for K-12 students, difficult development areas and no Internet Service Providers.
- There has been a new priority area added- Underserved Main Streets. The SCBBO hopes to provide underserved Main Streets with high-speed internet, to make these areas more attractive for business

- Accelerated Deployment Grant provides reimbursement funds to Internet Service Providers (ISP's) who placed fiber in unserved areas from March 15, 2021, to June 30, 2022.
- ARPA Capital Projects Fund begins May 1, 2023, applications will be coming in through July and the SCBBO hopes to award ISPs by November 30, 2023.

- On October 1, 2022, SCBBO got two planning grants for BEAD and DE programs. SCBBO is required to have their 5-year plan done by August 28, 2023.
- GetConnectedSC Survey was created to help write the 5-year plan. There are three different surveys
 - Residential Survey
 - Business/Organization Survey
 - County/Municipal Survey
 - Local Government Capabilities
 - 1 Survey per county/municipality
 - Infrastructure Inventory = Opportunities for investment

- Sara Pincelli with the Digital Equity office shared an update about the GetConnectedSC Roadshows
 - The roadshows have provided great feedback from residents in rural communities that do not have reliable internet.

- Tony DeLisi with Ernst & Young shared an update on the 5-year action plan
- The main components to the IJA planning process are
 - BEAD
 - BEAD is where the most money is
 - This specially refers to the infrastructure part of the program
 - Digital Equity
 - There is a smaller pot of money for this program
 - This refers to digital literacy, how to use the internet and smart devices
- These three documents will inform a more concise strategic broadband summary which will be submitted to the SC General Assembly
 - BEAD 5-Year-Action Plan, due on August 28, 2023
 - Digital Equity Plan, due by November 30, 2023
 - BEAD Initial Proposal, due on December 27, 2023
- Once the 5-Year-Action, Digital Equity, Initial Proposal and General Assembly Report are submitted in 2023, future activities include conduction a challenge process, the release of 20% of the total funds, the submittal of a Final Proposal, and finally the release of BEAD funding upon the final proposal
- The Digital Equity Capacity and Competitive Grant Program is expected to launch in 2024