



Status Report to the Joint Interim Committee on Information Management and Technology

John Irwin, Chair, Oregon Telecommunications Coordinating Council
Brant Wolf, Vice-Chair, Oregon Telecommunications Coordinating Council

Introduction and History

The 2000 Oregon legislature created the Oregon Telecommunications Coordinating Council as an interim task force by SB 765. The legislative directive to the Council was to

- 1) Study alternative approaches to providing coordinated statewide, regional and local telecommunications services, including providing services to unserved or underserved areas of the state; and
- 2) Study the manner in which telecommunications investments can be coordinated to facilitate partnerships between the public sector and the private sector and between state and local governments.

The Council is directed to report its findings to the Governor and the Joint Legislative Committee on Information Management and Technology.

Membership

SB 765 established a 12 member Council, bringing in representatives from the state, local governments, private industry and regional consortia around the state. In accordance with the legislative direction, at its first meeting the Council added three additional members, including the Oregon Health and Sciences University as an *ex officio* member. The list of current Council members is attached.

Activities

The Council held its first meeting December 11, 2001. At that meeting the Council elected a chairman, John Irwin, and a vice-chair, Brant Wolf. The Council's selection of a Chair from a regional consortium representing a coalition of interests pushing for expanded broadband services and a Vice-Chair from industry was intentional. At both of its meetings the Council has continued to express its interest in hearing from all sides and

working closely together to advance the public and private interest in better telecommunications services throughout Oregon.

At its first meeting the Council also adopted rules of procedure and set a work plan for itself. Most importantly, the Council began the work of gathering information concerning the challenges facing it and Oregon. In addition to directing its representatives to consult with their constituencies about the most important needs to be addressed, the Council issued a general call to the citizens of Oregon for suggestions.

The Council established a Website (www.ORTCC.org) and included a survey of needs and issues on the Website. The Website contains agendas, meeting minutes, membership contact information, the work plan, and policies and procedures. Additionally, a list serve was established and is used to distribute background materials to Council members, to solicit input from Council members, and to model the use of email technology to expedite communications.

At its second meeting held on January 17, 2002, in Salem and via two-way video conferencing the Council agreed on a goal for desired outcomes, as follows:

To provide all Oregonians with affordable access to broadband digital applications that will improve the Oregon economy, improve the quality of life in Oregon communities and reduce the economic gap between rural and urban Oregon for present and future generations.

Council continued to hear from constituent groups concerning matters of importance. Included in the suggestions made were a need to examine and resolve the perception that public sponsored telecommunications services inhibit private activities, the need for continued or expanded encouragement of innovative public-private partnerships, and the need to address some matters left over from previous telecommunications legislation, such as expanded tax incentives and correction of some rate inequities.

The Council set the dates for its next three meetings (February 28, March 28 and April 25), with the possibility of additional meetings during this time, depending on the Council's progress. The Council agreed that at its next meeting it would begin to delve deeper into the details of some of the important issues facing Oregon telecommunications. Issues will be reviewed in the context of the legislative directives and the agreed to statement of desired objectives.

The OTCC study process is underway with much work remaining.