

# Agenda Item Number 15.A.

## Telecommunications Activities Update

**Presenter:** Byron Vanderpool

**Action Recommended:** Information only

### Issue Summary:

- LCOG's role in telecommunications assistance continues to change, with its assistance in the regulatory area decreasing while its assistance in developing telecommunications systems increases.

### Background:

LCOG has provided staff assistance to members and other local governments in Oregon concerning the review of cable television rates through staff support for the Regional Cable Commission (RCC) and the Metropolitan Policy Committee. Last year the cable company that was reviewed by the RCC, Charter, filed petitions with the FCC to be relieved of regulation in approximately 90 percent of the cities that were members of the RCC. Over the opposition of the RCC these petitions were granted. At the same time, Lane County, which was providing most of the funding for the RCC, was forced to redirect its funds elsewhere. The result is that the RCC has effectively ceased to operate. LCOG continues to provide requested staff assistance to the members of the RCC and other jurisdictions in their franchise negotiations with cable companies and other franchisees. LCOG continues to provide staff support to the MPC on regulatory issues, including rates, franchise fee payments, and other franchise matters.

LCOG's opportunities to assist state and local governments in the development of telecommunications systems continues to grow. LCOG works with EWEB to provide staff support to the Public Agency Network (PAN) a coalition of governments in the Eugene-Springfield area (cities, EWEB, LTD, SUB, schools) that has combined to reduce telecommunication costs and significantly improve services throughout the Metro area. Recently LCOG obtained support to connect the LCC main campus to the PAN. Through its work with the Fiber South Consortium and the Regional Fiber Consortium, LCOG has helped the University of Oregon establish broadband connectivity with Portland, a factor that has provided not only better communications throughout the state, but has also

improved the research capacity of the UO. Working with UO and ODOT, LCOG staff have helped facilitate arrangements that will add connectivity to OSU and create a robust system significantly improving telecommunications connections throughout the Willamette Valley. With grant assistance from Lane County, LCOG has been able to assist the Consortia to establish fiber optics connections that should, by early October, provide the Consortia's private partner, PCINW, the opportunity for broadband connections between Oakridge, Eugene and Florence. The consortia hope that within the next years new services will be extended to all of Lane County and beyond.