

Navigation

- Home
- Media Archives
- Submit Release
- Web Directory
- Privacy Policy
- Terms of Use
- About Us
- Contact Us
- XML Feeds

Ohio Projects Receive an Additional \$118 Million in Broadband Recovery Act Awards

COLUMBUS th Ohio Governor Ted Strickland today welcomed the announcement by Vice President Joe Biden that three Ohio broadband projects received more than \$118 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to extend broadband access throughout Ohio and create more than 430 jobs, and likely many more through indirect job creation.

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(Media-Newswire.com) - COLUMBUS – Ohio Governor Ted Strickland today welcomed the announcement by Vice President Joe Biden that three Ohio broadband projects received more than \$118 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to extend broadband access throughout Ohio and create more than 430 jobs, and likely many more through indirect job creation.

"These awards support our plan to create a seamless broadband infrastructure throughout Ohio," Strickland said. "Comprehensive Internet access is one part of our strategy to lay the groundwork for Ohio's long-term economic growth and improve Ohio's business environment. Because access to high-speed Internet is increasingly essential for businesses and is a gateway to connecting our students with the world. I want to thank the Obama administration and our Ohio Congressional leaders for their continued support of our goal to make sure that every part of Ohio has access to high-speed Internet services."

The Ohio awards are below:

Horizon Telecom, \$66.5 million: The project, with nearly \$28.5 million in matching contributions, will allow Horizon Telecom, a Chillicothe company, to offer affordable middle-mile broadband service in 34 southern and eastern Ohio counties. The project plans to directly connect 600 community institutions to broadband. As many as 1.7 million people stand to benefit as do 37,000 businesses. The project is expected to create more than 230 direct jobs.

OneCommunity, \$44.8 million: The project awarded to the Cleveland-based nonprofit will add nearly 1,000 miles of fiber-optic cable in 20 northeast Ohio counties. OneCommunity will connect an estimated 800 community anchor institutions, including schools, hospitals, government and public safety facilities, to the high-speed broadband network, and create 200 jobs in the counties it serves.

Connected Nation, Inc. \$6.9 million: This project, with more than \$3.1 million in matching contributions, will allow Connected Nation to encourage broadband adoption in Ohio by deploying up to 2,000 new public computer workstations, upgrading 317 computer centers, and conducting training sessions at community institutions throughout the state. Connect Ohio, a nonprofit public-private partnership established by Governor Strickland, will fully administer the grant.

Connect Ohio is a division of Connected Nation, a national nonprofit dedicated to broadband advancement. The award will allow Connect Ohio to work with telecommunication providers and communities to increase the adoption and availability of high-speed Internet service to Ohio residents and businesses.

Horizon Telecom, OneCommunity, and Com Net, Inc., which received a \$30 million broadband award in July, are members of the Ohio Middle Mile Consortium, coordinated by Ohio Academic Resources Network. The consortium forged an integrated and collaborative approach, with the support of Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown, Governor Strickland and Ohio Board of Regents Chancellor Eric Fingerhut, to expand broadband infrastructure needs across Ohio.

"The truth is that many businesses today simply won't go to a place where they don't have access to both a good workforce and a broadband network," said Congressman Zack Space, who provided critical support for Horizon Telecom's application. "There's no doubt that we have the workforce, and this funding will bring hundreds of jobs and provide the technology we need to attract new industry to Ohio."

Com Net's project will add more than 700 miles of high-capacity fiber to rural and underserved communities in 28 western counties. It will create 300 jobs and connect to about 900 anchor institutions, including schools, government and community organizations.

"Broadband must reach all of Ohio, including our rural, underserved and unserved areas, to prepare our future workforce to drive Ohio economic development," Chancellor Fingerhut said. "These broadband investments will enhance educational opportunities for Ohio's traditional students as well as displaced workers."

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