



**October 2024**

**IN THIS ISSUE**

- Legislative & Industry Activity
- Event Recaps
- Scholarship Foundation Association Activity
- Upcoming Events

# Connections

INSIGHT INTO **YOUR** BROADBAND ASSOCIATION

## Recap of the 2024 Legislative Short Session & A Look Ahead at 2025

I know this issue has been covered in a couple different places but, while the 2024 short legislative session did not deliver much for us we did get significant exemptions from paying permit fees to Oregon counties. Senate Bill (SB) 1566 did give counties the right to establish a fee schedule for permits along county roads. However, counties can only charge if work is not related to emergency repairs, vegetation management, routine facility replacement and other instances. Additionally, there is a 15 day shot clock for permit issuance or denial and a \$500.00 cap on any such fee. These are major concessions that OBA might be able to use to justify similar treatment from other local governments.

Looking ahead to the 2025 long session, we know there are several issues that will arise that we will need to address. For example:

- Oregon Department of State Lands will seek authority to levy easement fees and expand their ability to assess permit fees
- Oregon PUC will seek to purchase a new Lifeline database
- There will be legislation to address the demise of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

There will be other matters that arise and we are doing our best to introduce the OBA and all our members to the right policy-makers. We do this by meeting with legislators in their districts and by inviting them to our member companies for tours. This has proven to be an invaluable tool in our advocacy efforts.

Additionally, because we have a Political Action Committee (PAC) that our members fund, we are able to participate in the election cycle and offer support to those folks we feel are supportive of the work our members do. This is a great way to make sure legislators and candidates are aware that smaller broadband providers do exist and are doing great work in rural Oregon.

*Brant Wolf*

## Summer Foundation for Rural Service Congressional Staff Tour

This summer, the OBA played a pivotal role in organizing a tour of Oregon and Washington telco operations, attended by twenty-one congressional staffers. The tour was sponsored by the NTCA Foundation for Rural Service (FRS). The staff members represented a broad cross section of states and was bi-partisan in nature. The tour offered a unique opportunity for these staff members to explore key OBA and WITA member operations, including Kalama Telephone Company, WWest Communications (Wahkiakum West), Reliance Connects Mt. Hood operations site, Warm Springs Telecom, Cascade Divide Data Center in Bend and Stayton Cooperative Telephone Co. in Lyons.

The tour finished at the picturesque Wooden Shoe Tulip Farm, graciously hosted by Monitor Telephone Cooperative. The experience was not only educational but also instrumental in fostering relationships between congressional staff and local communities. OBA EVP Brant Wolf expressed his heartfelt gratitude to our members who actively contributed to the success of this trip, highlighting the importance of collaboration in promoting our industry's interests. This initiative showcases our commitment to engaging with policymakers and enhancing their understanding of the regions we serve.



**Left:** The group smiles for a photo at Freres Lumber Company, the same company that engineered the wood for in the new PDX terminal.  
**Middle:** The group gathers outside at Warm Springs Telecom  
**Right:** Tim York (Warm Springs Telecom) leads the group for a tour of operations.

## HAPPENINGS >>>

OBA Event Recaps

### 2024 Outside Plant Seminar

The recent Outside Plant seminar held in the breathtaking setting of Hood River, Oregon, was a resounding success, bringing together industry experts and attendees under sunny skies. This year's event featured a lineup of compelling presentations that delved into critical topics such as FTTH network installations, emerging fiber technologies, and the intricacies of upgrading broadband for Brownfield MDUs. Attendees gained valuable insights into the dynamic world of xPon and optical flexibility, while also receiving essential updates from NW Natural for 811. Special acknowledgments are made to Lee Sitton (Rep Com International) for his locator demo, Kevin Pantaleakos (PLP) for his expertise on network enclosures, and Tammie Davis (Irby Utilities) for steering an impactful discussion on the significance of fostering third-party partnerships. This seminar not only enriched knowledge but also strengthened networking ties within the industry.

The group celebrated excellence in the field by honoring Bill Randall as the 2024 Outside Plant Employee of the Year, who was nominated by Cascade Utilities (Reliance Connects). This recognition not only highlights Bill's outstanding contributions but also underscores the commitment to quality and service within our industry. Join us in congratulating Bill for his dedication and hard work, which inspire us all to strive for excellence in our endeavors. His remarkable journey in the telecom industry exemplifies dedication, integrity, and an unwavering commitment to customer service. Starting as an OSP lineman in 1978, Bill's ascent through the ranks showcases his work ethic and leadership skills. He believes in providing the best services possible, ensuring customer satisfaction at every turn. Bill's approach combines a respect for the past with a forward-thinking vision, fostering a family-like atmosphere among his staff while embracing new technologies. His commitment to small-town values and professionalism has made him an example of excellence in our community, embodying the very essence of what the Oregon Broadband Association stands for. We celebrate Bill's valuable contributions and the positive impact he continues to have on the telecom landscape!



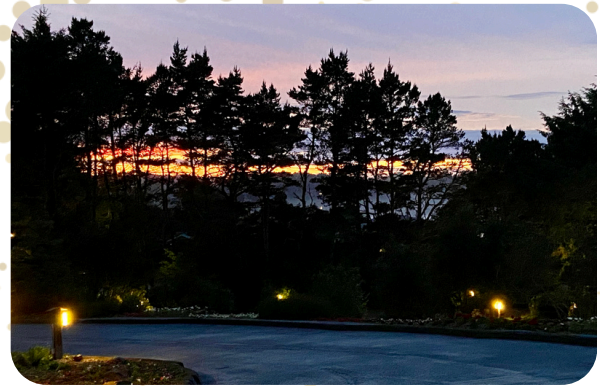
### The Sea, Trees and Tees at the 2024 Annual Conference

In June, we gathered at the picturesque Salishan Coastal Lodge for two days filled with both enjoyment and important business discussions. The event kicked off with a Monday morning golf tournament that attracted nearly 30 enthusiastic players who took to the stunning links. During the Annual Meeting of Members, we held a crucial vote to reelect board director, Geri Fraijo (Monitor Telephone Cooperative), for another three-year term. The evening festivities featured a warm welcome reception, an exciting annual raffle, and a silent auction benefiting our Scholarship Foundation, all culminating with a delightful coastal buffet dinner.

The general sessions provided valuable educational presentations covering various significant industry topics. Moss Adams initiated the discussions with insights on cybersecurity, while OBA EVP, Brant Wolf, along with representatives from NTCA, US Telecom, and WTA, updated attendees on the latest state and federal legislation and regulatory policies. Additionally, our friends from PGE shared valuable information regarding the impacts of natural disasters and new market entrants on joint use. Representatives from the Oregon Broadband Office, NTIA, and USDA field reps also contributed to discussions on BDP & BEAD, enriching our understanding of the current landscape. A special thank you to our breakout presenters from Calix, Dura-line, Moss Adams, and WBE Technologies. *(Continued on next page)*

## 2024 Annual Conference (continued)

Board Chair, Jessica Epley (Zipty Fiber) recognized the exceptional contributions of the Day family from Cascade Utilities (Reliance Connects) by presenting them with the OBA Board President's Award. This award celebrates their unwavering dedication and commitment to service, which has spanned generations. Representing the fifth generation of the Day family, Scott Crosby and Brooke Wheeler graciously accepted the award, highlighting the family's enduring legacy and impact on the community. Their commitment to excellence in service exemplifies the values that the OBA stands for, and this recognition serves as a testament to their hard work and devotion over the years.



**Top Left:** A panel discussion with NTCA, US Telecom & WTA on federal legislative and regulatory happenings.

**Middle Left:** Jared Wiener (Lumen Technologies) and Associate Member, Lance Fred (KLJ Engineering) head to the links.

**Bottom Left:** Brooke Wheeler, Matt Day & Scott Crosby (Cascade Utilities/Reliance Connects) accept the OBA President's Award on behalf of the Day Family.

**Top Right:** A group of golfers from SCTC (Erik & Janet Hoefer, Tadd Humphreys and Louis Basl) try to intimidate Chad Holzer from Moss Adams.

**Middle Right:** Derrick Mottorn (SMTA) and Michael Wyszchen (Hunter Communications) head to the links.

**Bottom Right:** The calm after the storm. A lovely sunset at Salishan Coastal Lodge.

A special thank you to our speakers for their investment of time and knowledge that they shared with our group. Our whole-hearted gratitude goes out to the individuals who helped with set-up, registration and tear down. We couldn't have done this without you! You are invaluable.

## HAPPENINGS >>>

Scholarship Foundation Report & Awards

### 2024 Scholarship Foundation Raffle, Auction & Award Banquet

We are thrilled to announce that the scholarship foundation board of directors successfully held its annual raffle, auction, and awards banquet during the June OBA annual conference. Thanks to your generous support and participation, over \$13,000 was raised to fund scholarships for the upcoming 2024-2025 award cycle! These funds are essential in our mission to provide financial assistance to our members and their families as they pursue further education. Your contributions, whether through direct donations or participation in the raffle and auction, play a crucial role in making this possible.

If you are passionate about philanthropy and interested in contributing further, we invite you to consider serving on the Foundation Board or assisting in other capacities. Your involvement can make a significant difference. For more information or to express your interest, please email [Mandy](mailto:Mandy)! Thank you for your continued support in empowering education within our community.

### 2024-2025 Award Recipients



**Amber McCraw**  
Ohio State University  
Neuroscience

Sponsored by DFN

**Gus Heidegerken**  
University of Washington  
Aerospace Engineering

Sponsored by WIN

**Kiana Hargens**  
Chadron State College  
Chemistry & Biology

Sponsored by Innovative Systems



**Payton Hollinger**  
Boise State University  
Kinesiology

Sponsored by CORE Telecom Systems



**Anna Cramer**  
Clackamas Community College  
Dental Hygiene

Sponsored by MOKALLA



**Jessica Florescu**  
Oregon State University  
Business Administration

Sponsored by DFN

**Ruby Heidegerken**  
University of Washington  
Physics & Astronomy

Sponsored by WIN



**Carter Nicholas**  
Clackamas Community College  
Computer Sciences

Sponsored by MOKALLA



**Jonathan Kostyuk**  
Oregon State University  
Electrical & Computer Engineering

Sponsored by ziplify fiber



**Samantha Shields**  
California State Fullerton  
Public Health

Sponsored by DirectLink



**Elizabeth Pizzuto**  
Chemeketa Community College  
Nutrition

Sponsored by SCTC



**Kaitlyn Christensen**  
Dakota Wesleyan University  
Biology & Psychology

Sponsored by Innovative Systems



**Stephanie Way**  
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University  
Aerospace Engineering

Sponsored by DFN



#### OBA Scholarship Foundation Board of Directors

**Geri Fraijo | Chair**  
Monitor Cooperative Telephone

**Janet Bailey | Vice-Chair**  
Consolidated Business Services

**Lindsey Godfrey | Secretary-Treasurer**  
Aldrich CPAs + Advisors

**Kim Breashears | Director**  
Clear Creek Communication

**Joyce Nelson | Director**  
Room Telecommunications/Varcomm

**Alex Brandt | Director**  
Pioneer Connect



Left: Diane Garcia (ITA Showcase Board of Directors) presented the Foundation Board a huge check! Literally!

## ASSOCIATION, BOARD & COMMITTEE REPORTS >>>

Association Activity & Dues Message

### Field Trip: September 2024 OBA Board of Directors & Small Company Meeting

Recently, our board of directors and members of our small companies convened in the picturesque town of Richland, Oregon, where we experienced not only stunning weather and breathtaking views but also the warm hospitality of Eagle Telephone Systems. This gathering was more than just a meeting; it was a celebration of our collaborative spirit and shared commitment to moving broadband forward in Oregon. After productive morning discussions, we had the opportunity to visit a remarkable 90-foot tower nestled atop one of the region's highest hills, showcasing Eagle's dedication to providing exceptional connectivity for miles around. Their unwavering commitment to serving the community exemplifies the values we cherish, and we are immensely proud to have them as a valued member of our organization.

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the Lattin family for the warm welcome and generous hospitality – whether it was the thoughtful meeting planning, exploring the landscape or just simply sharing stories over our delicious meals.



**Top Left:** Over a dozen folks gathered in Eastern Oregon for the September OBA Board and Small Company Meeting, while a group joined virtually.  
**Middle:** A group caravanned to the top of one of the tallest hills in the area to share this 90 foot tower constructed to provide a broadband signal for miles. Pictured: Erik Hofer (SCTC), Mike Lattin & Rusti Lattin (Eagle Telephone System), Jessica Epley (Zipty Fiber) & Brant Wolf (OBA).  
**Top Right:** Mike Lattin shows Jessica Epley and Erik Hofer the equipment room at the base of the tower.  
**Bottom Left:** The office of Eagle Telephone System.  
**Bottom Middle:** Those able to stay and play got a tour of the nearby forest and were treated to the view of Eagle Cap Mountains. Pictured: Jessica Epley, Mandy Jundt (OBA) and Cindy Devereux-Wolf  
**Bottom Right:** These views for days!

### Membership Dues Process

Beginning earlier this year, an ad hoc committee of members has been discussing how the OBA assesses dues for members. Due to the changing nature of our business and with newer providers seeking to become members, this is a much-needed exercise.

Historically the OBA is of course an ILEC centric organization. However, those things that make the OBA ILEC centric such as a regulated voice service offering, are becoming less and less relevant. Meantime, the continued build-out of our high-speed fiber networks draws all our provider members closer to same common goal of less regulation and educating policymakers on our issues.

The goal of the ad hoc committee is not solely to increase dues; the association is not in a financial bind. Rather, the ad hoc committee will continue to meet and discuss how best to assess dues in a manner that is fair, consistent and reflects each member's business operations. This is no easy task so if you have ideas or thoughts on this matter please don't hesitate to reach out to Brant.

# ASSOCIATION, BOARD & COMMITTEE REPORTS >>>

Save the Dates, Recognition, Staff & Governance

## Save the Dates!

Register Now!  
Details on our  
website!

**Fall 2024 OBA  
Central Office & IT Seminar**

**Tuesday & Wednesday  
November 19 & 20**  
Best Western Plus | Hood River

**Spring 2025 ITA Showcase  
Industry Tradeshow**

**Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday  
March 11-13**  
Holiday Inn | Portland Riverfront

**Spring 2025 OBA  
Outside Plant Seminar**

Information TBD

**2025 OBA  
Annual Conference**

**Tuesday & Wednesday  
June 3 & 4**  
Salishan Coastal Lodge | Gleneden Beach

## Premier Associate Members

IN RECOGNITION OF OUR PREMIER ASSOCIATE MEMBERS WHO PLEDGE  
A HIGHER LEVEL OF SUPPORT TO THE OBA.

**Thank you!**



## OBA Staff

**Brant Wolf | Executive Vice-President**

[bwolf@oba-telecom.org](mailto:bwolf@oba-telecom.org)

**Mandy Jundt | Office Manager &  
Member Services Coordinator**

[mjundt@oba-telecom.org](mailto:mjundt@oba-telecom.org)

Heads up, folks! We're busy cooking up a shiny new website, so stay tuned! Until then, we're still doing our thing at [www.ota-telecom.org](http://www.ota-telecom.org). Keep your browsers warm!

## Officers & Board of Directors

Jessica Epley, **President-Chair** (ZiPLY Fiber)

Paul Hauer, **Vice-Chair (President-Elect)** (Beaver Creek Cooperative Telephone)

Rusti Lattin, **Secretary** (Eagle Telephone Systems, Inc.)

Garrin Bott, Director (Rally Networks)

Gerri Fraijo, Director (Monitor Cooperative Telephone)

Erik Hoefler, Director (SCTC)

James Rennard, Director (Pioneer Connect)

Jared Wiener, Director (Lumen Technologies)

Brooke Wheeler, Director (Cascade Utilities | Reliance Connects)

Shaun Plummer, Associate Member Delegate, Core Telecom

I wanted to share that I have moved from part-time to full-time status. I am eager to accomplish more for our members with more time! *-Mandy*