



**Latah County**  
**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

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*Kathie LaFortune ♦ Thomas C. Lamar ♦ John Bohman*

## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MOSCOW, ID—December 6, 2023**—Latah County has secured \$15 million in funding to expand broadband infrastructure and improve internet access for all County residents.

On December 1, the Idaho Broadband Advisory Board awarded \$120 million in Capital Projects Funds for broadband infrastructure from the American Rescue Plan Act. Out of 113 applications, Latah County's proposal ranked second.

"The Idaho Office of Broadband is excited for the opportunities that this grant brings to Latah County," said Idaho Broadband Program Manager Ramón Hobdey-Sánchez. "This is not only wonderful for the local communities in this area, but also for the State as a whole as we work towards connecting all Idahoans."

After two years of collaboration, coordination, and planning, the Latah County Broadband Coalition submitted a comprehensive plan for connecting all of Latah County with future-proof fiber infrastructure to the Idaho Office of Broadband for grant funding. The multi-phased approach aims to build a dark fiber network along identified major gaps where there is no fiber infrastructure. This involves constructing conduit pathways along public rights-of-way filled with multiple strands of fiber optic cables, the foundation of a true public-private partnership. These pathways – much like highways and roads – form the baseline infrastructure needed to enable private businesses to provide services. Any internet service provider will be able to use the infrastructure to compete to serve last-mile locations at speeds that exceed what's available today, which promotes competition and lowers prices.

"Building this infrastructure is not only a necessity for modern-day public safety, education, and healthcare but it will also set Latah County apart for generations when it comes to economic development and quality of life," said Latah County Commissioner Tom Lamar.

Because Latah County has roughly 6,000 locations outside of Moscow city limits that are spread out across 1,070 square miles of diverse terrain, connecting everyone will take a hybrid approach. The project proposes to eventually connect wireless towers with fiber – which will provide enhanced fixed wireless of no less than 100/20 Mbps for up to 4,500 remote locations. It also makes direct fiber connections to community anchor institutions, like city halls, fire halls, schools, and libraries, and within areas that are population-dense enough to make builds feasible and cost-efficient, which currently includes Deary, Bovill, Genesee, Potlatch, Helmer, Harvard, Viola, and Princeton, totaling roughly 1,500 locations.

"For far too long, rural communities have been left behind when it comes to getting connected," said Dan Smith, IT director for the Kendrick Joint School District. "We're thrilled that our students and educators who live and work in rural Latah County can now look forward to the fiber infrastructure they need to teach, learn, and flourish in a digital world."

An additional \$583 million will be distributed by the Idaho Office of Broadband in 2024 through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment program. Latah County plans to apply for an additional \$15-20 million to complete the multi-phased buildout.

**To view the Coalition's project plan, grant application, and more, visit our website: [grants.latahcountyid.gov](https://grants.latahcountyid.gov).**

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## **ABOUT**

The [Latah County Broadband Coalition](#) engages stakeholders across the County to communicate broadband needs and offer support in developing projects to address those needs. The Coalition's aim is to find local, state, and federal funding to facilitate the build-out of future-proof broadband infrastructure throughout Latah County.

Members of the Latah County Broadband Coalition include:

- City of Potlatch, City of Bovill, City of Genesee, City of Kendrick, City of Juliaetta, City of Deary, City of Troy, City of Moscow, Latah County Library District, Moscow School District, Kendrick Joint School District, Genesee Joint School District, Potlatch School District, Troy School District, University of Idaho, Gritman Medical Center, South Latah Highway District, Latah County

## **CONTACTS**

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