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OSHEAN and Cox Business start new 385 mile cyber-infrastructure: Beacon 2.0 will connect 150 anchor institutions

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Surrounded by two fiber splicing trucks, a cherry picker and two seven foot tall spools of new fiber optic cable, U.S. senators Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse along with governor Chafee marked the launch of a new 385 mile cyber- infrastructure that will support robust growth of Rhode Island's emerging knowledge economy and will also connect a wide variety of non-profit anchor institutions.

"Improving broadband access is key to innovation and jobs," said Reed, a member of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee. "This initiative will give our teachers and students the teaching tools and access to research materials they need. It will harness technology to connect doctors, researchers, and patients and improve service availability at our schools, hospitals, and other vitally important public institutions."

"The Beacon 2.0 project is critical for improving and expanding Rhode Island's broadband infrastructure and will help to create hundreds of job for our state" said Whitehouse. "This is yet another example of the important work funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in Rhode Island."

The new network is funded by a federal stimulus \$21.7 million BTOP grant awarded to OSHEAN and \$10.7 million in private funds. The new cyber-infrastructure, called Beacon 2.0, will provide a fiber backbone that will pass through all five counties in Rhode Island. To that backbone, OSHEAN will connect 150 anchor institutions including hospitals, colleges, universities, community colleges, government agencies, schools and libraries.

"This new infrastructure is especially important for non-profit institutions since it will provide significantly greater broadband capacity at significant savings. It will enable us to connect school children across the state as well as computer users at public libraries," said George Loftus, OSHEAN president and CEO.

OSHEAN selected COX Business as its vendor for the Rhode Island project citing the company's high level of expertise in building and providing network capability and its ability to install the new network faster than any other potential broadband provider.

"Over the past decade, Cox Communications has built an advanced, full-service network throughout Rhode Island, making this one of the most broadband-ready states in the nation. Many of OSHEAN's members already choose Cox Business for our innovative solutions and commitment to service excellence," said Mark Scott, VP of Cox Business. "Through this collaboration, OSHEAN members and anchor institutions can leverage this new, dedicated network and Cox's existing state-of-the-art broadband infrastructure to develop and market a wide range of exciting new applications in the fields of medicine, education and government."

RI commissioner of Higher Education and Community College of Rhode Island president Ray

DiPasquale, said the ability to share research on the dedicated network will be especially important for colleges and universities across the state.

"Understanding and embracing technology for a 21st century higher education institution is a strategic imperative," said DiPasquale. "OSHEAN's leadership of BTOP and IT collaboration is a wonderful initiative for the citizens of Rhode Island and the three institutions of public higher education in particular. Preparing our students for the workplace of tomorrow and the challenges of a globalized economy require cutting edge technology and networks. Whether it is a researcher in a lab, a faculty member using technology in a classroom or administrators using ERP systems to make our organizations more efficient, BTOP will enhance our capacity to use technology to innovate, educate and prepare Rhode Island citizens for the jobs of tomorrow."

The new Beacon 2.0 fiber optic network will be completed by spring of 2013.

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