

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF WARM SPRINGS RECEIVES \$5.4 MILLION ARRA STIMULUS AWARD TO BUILD TRIBAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK**

New Tribally-owned Company Will Bring Broadband, Telephone and Video  
To Warm Springs Reservation

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WARM SPRINGS, August 4, 2010, TODAY - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced new Recovery Act broadband infrastructure projects including an award to the **Warm Springs Telecommunications Company (WSTC)**, a wholly owned enterprise of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, for a 50% loan and 50% grant package. The \$5.4 million package will be used by the newly formed WSTC to launch their reservation-wide broadband company. This award will enable the company to build out a hybrid fiber/wireless network throughout the Reservation that will provide all residents, businesses and government agencies on the reservation with high-speed broadband services, as well as basic telephone and eventually, video programming.

Typical of most Indian reservations, Warm Springs has been historically underserved as compared with the majority of America. It is estimated that 65% of tribal residents have basic telephone service, (as compared to 95% of all Oregonians, according to the Oregon Telecommunications Association) and less than half of those have access to broadband. This not only limits basic internet and email access, but as the world becomes more internet dependant, this further leaves behind tribal members from distance learning opportunities as well telemedicine applications.

Tribal leaders have been working on improving telecommunications since 2002, almost 10 years ago, when the Tribes first did a telecommunications needs assessment. That assessment determined that telecommunications services were severely limited on the Warm Springs reservation. “Back then, tribal leaders realized the importance of improving the telecommunications infrastructure on the reservation in order to enhance tribal economic development efforts”, says Jeffrey Anspach, CEO of Warm Springs Economic Development Corporation and the WSTC.

“Over the years, we have slowly but surely worked towards the creation of a telecom company. Now we are ready to go, with the creation of the WSTC, a strong Board of Directors and a great team comprised of Adam Haas as General Manager, Marsha Spellman

as our Regulatory Manager, and Rob Wilkinson, as Operation Manager. Now, this funding will give us the resources we need to build the new company. It is a great opportunity for Warm Springs, as we will soon have the necessary infrastructure to develop new businesses and new tribal enterprises.”

“In addition to the current round of USDA Rural Development Recovery Act funding, we have been working with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs since 2007 to get this project off the ground,” said USDA Rural Development State Director Vicki Walker. Walker explained that in 2007 and 2008, the Tribe also received funding through Rural Development’s Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) and Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) programs to conduct important pre-planning and feasibility studies for broadband on the Reservation.

“We are very excited to see this project advance to the next level,” Walker added. “It will help drive economic development in the community for years to come.”

This new company means more to Warm Springs than just cable in the ground, internet and phone access. For Warm Springs this company is a means to solving some long standing problems that plague the reservation. One chronic problem at Warm Springs is severe unemployment.

“Tribal leaders have long recognized the need for telecommunications as a means of solving some of the challenges on the reservation,” explained Sylvester “Sal” Sahme, Board Chair of the WSTC. “We need the ability to create more jobs here on the reservation. I see this new company as a source of employment for our young people, including the kind of jobs that our educated youth will find attractive,” Sahme said. “At this time in our history, we have the greatest number of young people in high school and now in higher education. We need to have a source of jobs, as well as opportunities for individuals to live on the reservation, and create other jobs which they will be able to do with high speed broadband accessible to all. It is also important from a tribal sovereignty standpoint that the WSTC is tribally owned and operated. The profits that this company will generate will stay on the reservation and leverage more economic development and improve our standard of living”

General Manager, Adam Haas, who previously was the Regional VP, GM for Rogers Cable TV in Portland, as well as the GM for a number of local and international telecommunications start-ups, is looking forward to the challenge that getting the money now presents. “We have been planning, studying, researching, conducting feasibility studies and strategic plans. Now the Tribes will be able to build out a new, state of the art, telecommunications company for their community that has been left out of the telecom revolution,” said Haas. “It’s particularly important to me that we develop and mentor tribal members to work for the company. My ultimate objective is for the WSTC to 100% tribally staffed.”

The fiber network will also support a number of the other priorities first identified in the original 2002 assessment, including the public safety interoperable radio network. Over the years, the Tribes have also received a number of Homeland Security grants that have enabled

them to slowly build out and improve the network to allow police and fire to better communicate on the reservation and with other local first responders, including the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office and the state of Oregon's OWIN network. Money from this ARRA award will also further the capability of this critical network to serve not only the residents of the reservation, but all Oregonians as they travel across Oregon through Warm Springs on Hwy 26.

The WSTC recently received its certification from the Oregon Public Utility Commission to offer telecommunications services in Oregon.

The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon is composed of 3 tribes: Warm Springs; Paiute and Wasco. The reservation covers more than 1,000 square miles from the top of Mt. Jefferson to the Deschutes River. There are 5,000 tribal members who live on the reservation.

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