

Oregon Wireless Interoperability Network (OWIN) **E-Board Funding Request Denied**

On June 27, 2008, the Oregon Legislature Emergency Board did not approve the \$76 million in funding requested by OWIN necessary to build microwave, buildings, and towers in the Western half of Oregon in the effort to improve Oregon's outdated public safety communications capabilities. Governor Kulongoski is disappointed the funding request did not receive the majority vote necessary from the Senate members of the Emergency Board.

During the hearing, the Emergency Board heard testimony from representatives of Alcatel-Lucent, a microwave systems provider with an interest in securing the microwave portion of the \$76 million request. The total estimated microwave portion of the \$76 million is \$10.2 million. Alcatel-Lucent was advocating for a competitive bid process which had already taken place. The state testified that the competitive bid process had occurred and upon review by the Department of Justice, all laws, administrative rules and policies had been followed. The state is committed to competitive bidding and an opportunity to bid had been provided to Alcatel-Lucent and Harris Corporation. Through the competitive bid process, the state has contracted with Harris Corporation for microwave acquisition, as it has done the last three years.

Governor Kulongoski is committed to provide an interoperable public safety radio communication for the people of Oregon. Because the Emergency Board did not approve the request, the Governor is also committed to working closely with the Legislature to ensure the OWIN story is heard and the good work currently underway is supported.

The Governor would like to continue the already established partnerships between federal, state, local, and tribal governments for this effort. He continues to see the partnerships as a way of delivering the best public safety service and reducing the overall cost of the interoperable public safety communications system.

Therefore, Governor Kulongoski is planning another request for funding OWIN at the September 25-26, 2008, Emergency Board. It is important for Oregon to act now to prepare for implementation of a federal law change requiring the state to change its radio system from wideband to narrowband by 2013. Failure to do so can result in the loss of federal funding and retraction of previously approved radio frequencies resulting in significant setbacks to this effort.

The Governor is hopeful that at the September Emergency Board hearing the board will approve the request for funding so construction can begin as soon as possible and that the mutually beneficial partnerships between local and state governments will not be lost.