

Washington uses stimulus funds expands broadband, smart grid

Washington broke ground on a project that will expand broadband access statewide. The Northwest Open Access Network (NoaNet) began construction on a massive project that will bring nearly one thousand miles of broadband service to nearly every unserved community in the state. Washington was awarded \$140 million in federal stimulus grants for the project.

The project will provide and improve access to hundreds of public agencies, schools, libraries and hospitals as well as providing the infrastructure for individuals and businesses to gain broadband service.

NoaNet's broadband network serves as the main "information highway" for the state, enabling telecommunications providers to connect with it to provide Internet service to local communities and organizations.

The project will make enhanced 911 services available to virtually every inhabited location in the state. The ability to transfer real-time data over wireless networks will allow EMTs to communicate with hospital physicians en route from injury sites. All told, the new network will reach more than 170 communities.

In addition to this project, a \$38 million pilot project is getting underway in in the city of Pullman, Washington, and the nearby community of Albion which will demonstrate the benefits of smart grid technology. The project, led by Avista Utility Corp utilizes a jointly developed smart grid solution from Tropos Networks and Itron Inc to demonstrate energy distribution system automation.

The project will provide a smart metering infrastructure for both communities serving Avista's 13,000 electric and 5,000 gas customers.

The pilot is part of the Pacific Northwest Smart Grid Demonstration Project, led by Battelle, which is funded through stimulus grants from the US Department of Energy and matching state funds. The project will take five-years and cost nearly \$20 million.

Related posts:

1. Florida and Carolinas to get smart grid
2. West Virginia looks to capitalize on smart grid technology development
3. Illinois broadband initiative gets \$13 million infusion