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\$500 Million in Federal Relief Funds allocated towards broadband infrastructure in Texas
Local Internet Provider excited about the expansion of broadband in the state

SHERMAN, TEXAS -

Allocation of federal relief dollars, which the state has under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, was among the items on Gov. Greg Abbott's special session agenda for the Legislature's third round that concluded this week in Austin.

Over \$500 million would go to the comptroller's office for broadband infrastructure, including \$75 million that would go toward the state's broadband pole replacement program. This will be managed by the newly created Broadband Development Office, headed by, Gregory Conte, a former analyst at the Comptroller's office as the agency's new leader.

JJ McGrath, the owner and operator of TekWav, an internet provider based in Sherman, Texas, is also the founder of Connect2Educate and state coordinator of WISPA (Wireless Internet Service Provider Association). McGrath has traveled to Austin many times over the past few months to speak with lawmakers on various topics related to broadband to help the Legislature understand the importance of this infrastructure and creation of a broadband development office, plan, and mapping across the state.

"I am very pleased by the allocations put forth by SB8 and our dedicated leaders in Texas to help solve the digital divide in our state and in particular here in rural-Texas where we tend to see our worst case scenarios play out in terms of connectivity." said McGrath.

McGrath's rural broadband advocacy group Connect2Educate has also worked with U.S. Senator John Cornyn and Congressman Roger Williams (TX-25) to craft language for The Eliminate The Digital Divide Act. This bill is a bipartisan measure that would create a \$10 billion State Broadband Program where governors receive funds based on the number of unserved individuals in their state and then partner with broadband service providers to build out networks.

Kevin Couch, spokesperson for Connect2Educate said, *"Texas leadership has shown us that broadband infrastructure is important and I am proud to be a Texan feel these steps forward provide meaningful reform and the means necessary to begin closing the digital divide."*

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