PRESS RELEASE

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OSU and Link Oregon Partner with Pioneer Connect to Light Pilot Segment of Statewide High-Speed Broadband Network for Oregon

Public-private agreement reflects the vital role of local telecommunication carriers in enabling broadband connectivity for universities and public-sector partners and organizations

Philomath, Ore., July 31, 2019— Pioneer Connect has worked closely with Oregon State University (OSU) and Link Oregon to establish a direct, high-speed fiber optic network connection between the OSU campus in Corvallis and its Hatfield Marine Science Center (HMSC) in Newport utilizing a segment of Pioneer Connect's 700-mile fiber optic network.

OSU is one of the five partners that recently formed the non-profit Oregon Fiber Partnership—a new organization that is now operating as Link Oregon. The other partners are the University of Oregon, OHSU, Portland State University and the State of Oregon's Office of the Chief Information Officer, all of which are investing the anchor funding to establish a fast, extensive, and reliable fiber optic network across the entire state.

"The connection between Corvallis and Newport represents a significant first step in our plan to improve broadband access for research, education, healthcare, and government organizations across Oregon," stated Steve Corbató, executive director of Link Oregon. "This initial part of our network delivers a high bandwidth connection to HMSC and can serve as the foundation for better connectivity for other public and non-profit entities in the Newport area."

The Link Oregon network will enable connectivity for statewide public facilities and communities such as K-12 schools, hospitals and clinics, Native American Tribes, and other public service organizations. Implementation of this pilot segment allows Link Oregon to gain experience with the technologies and partnerships it will need as it extends the network to serve sites spread across Oregon's nearly 100,000 square miles.

PEAK Internet, a subsidiary of Pioneer Connect, has a long history of collaboration with Oregon State University. "PEAK Internet was started at OSU some 30 years ago," noted Rick Petersen, CEO for PEAK Internet, headquartered in Corvallis. "When the opportunity came up to connect the main OSU campus with its coastal facility, we knew our parent company, Pioneer Connect, could make it happen."

Pioneer Connect—the state's third largest incumbent local telecommunications carrier and the largest operating as a co-operative—agreed to lease its fiber optic cable to OSU as part of its mission to serve

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everyone within its 1,300-mile territory—initially with telephone service, but now also with broadband via PEAK Internet.

"Because we're a cooperative, our motivation isn't the bottom line. It's serving the communities in our jurisdiction with top-notch technology," explained Mike Whalen, Pioneer Connect general manager. "When it came to connecting the OSU Corvallis campus to Hatfield, we already had the available dark fiber in place along the most direct route, and we were excited to be able to provide this capability to OSU."

Fiber optics not only allows for the fastest delivery of data and voice services, but it does so more reliably and with greater consistency than other data delivery methods. Faster network connections greatly facilitate collaboration between research organizations resulting in faster discoveries.

"This agreement is a prime example of the tremendous value we gain by partnering with local fiber providers," explained Steve Corbató. "Since PEAK Internet and Pioneer *are* local, they understand their communities and can tailor their offerings to the broader needs of the organizations in their service regions, such as the needs of Link Oregon founding member OSU for connecting Corvallis and Newport."

Having this capability is also a strategic advantage for facilities that compete to be the chosen site for new research projects. This new network connectivity offers these advantages to HMSC, and the resulting research opportunities will ultimately extend the economic benefits HMSC brings to the Newport area.

"This investment in connectivity removes the virtual distance between the Hatfield Marine Science Center and Oregon State University's Corvallis campus, and it eliminates barriers between HMSC and its government and university research partners," said Jon Dolan, interim CIO and vice provost for University Information and Technology at OSU. "HMSC will now feel like it's right next door not only to those in Corvallis but to researchers across the Internet. Real-time monitoring of experiments, observing systems, and managing data will no longer be constrained by the proximity of researchers to HMSC, and it will allow for greater use of the facility's unique, world-class research resources."

"One of our primary research tools is an imaging system that we tow behind a ship to capture high-resolution plankton images at a rate of 250 megabytes per second," explained Bob Cowen, HMSC director, who also oversees its Plankton Ecology Lab. "That research can produce roughly 30 to 50 terabytes of data during a 10-day research operation." Previously, processing and exchanging this large quantity of data required the team to store data on more than two dozen hard drives and physically transport them the 49 miles between the coast and Corvallis. "Now we can analyze and share the imagery far more efficiently."

Similarly, OSU's Department of Fisheries and Wildlife in the College of Agricultural Sciences also welcomes the enhancement. The increased bandwidth and direct connectivity between HMSC and its Center for Genome Research and Biocomputing in Corvallis speeds the transfer and processing of data from its gene sequencing research.

"Historically, many regions of Oregon, including the coast, have been *connectivity challenged* and, as a result, have been underserved or even unserved," noted Corbató. "Working closely with PEAK Internet, Pioneer Connect and our other commercial and public partners, we can now deliver services to more than 600 public and non-profit locations across the state. Even communities in the most remote areas of the state will benefit from improved information sharing and increased access to services"

About PEAK Internet

Founded at Oregon State University in 1986, PEAK Internet is a technology service provider dedicated to providing fast, reliable, and affordable technology to neighbors and friends in its community. Utilizing a hybrid network of fiber, copper and wireless, PEAK connects customers from the central Oregon coast to the Willamette Valley with internet services and provides top-notch local tech support. PEAK leads with the latest technology, from managed Wi-Fi in the home to gigabit fiber for business and enterprise institutions. Together with locally owned cooperatives Pioneer Connect and Consumers Power, PEAK goes the extra mile to get its customers connected. http://www.peakinternet.com/

About Pioneer Connect

Pioneer Connect is a broadband partner providing services to connect life—delivering phone, Internet, and more to its neighbors from the Willamette Valley to the Pacific Ocean. For over 68 years, Pioneer has gone the extra mile to make sure each member of its 1,300 square-mile service area has the technology they need; providing services to rural homes, businesses, K-12 schools and colleges. Pioneer Connect has built a 700-mile fiber optic network providing communities with essential phone services and partnering with PEAK Internet to provide the latest in fast and reliable Internet technology. We are proud to be Pioneers for you, our community. https://www.pioneer.net/

About Oregon State University

As one of only two universities in the nation designated as a land, sea, space, and sun grant, Oregon State serves Oregon and the world by working on today's most pressing issues. Our more than 31,000 students come from across the globe, and our programs operate in every Oregon county. Oregon State receives more research funding than all of the state's comprehensive public universities combined. At our campuses in Corvallis and Bend, at the Hatfield Marine Research Center in Newport, and through our top-ranked Ecampus online degree programs, we excel at shaping today's students into tomorrow's leaders. https://oregonstate.edu/

About Link Oregon

Link Oregon, the service name of the Oregon Fiber Partnership, is a non-profit organization founded in 2019 to support the statewide networking missions of its five founding entities: Oregon's four research universities—Oregon State University, OHSU, Portland State University, and the University of Oregon (including the Network for Education and Research in Oregon (NERO) founded there)—and the State of Oregon through its Office of the State of the Chief Information Officer. Link Oregon is developing a new statewide network and shared network services. These are being designed to meet the information-carrying capacity requirements of the expanded use of new technologies, which generate unprecedented amounts of data and offer the possibility of new insights into research and support for solutions that address public-sector challenges. https://www.linkoregon.org

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