

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Maria Kelly, Interim Executive Director
[\(805\) 788-2013](tel:8057882013)

Economic Vitality Corporation
of San Luis Obispo County
501(c)(3) non-profit
www.sloevc.org info@sloevc.org

Economic Vitality Corporation Hosting Broadband Summit for San Luis Obispo County *COVID Impacts highlight challenges of broadband coverage in our rural County*

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIF. – (January 25, 2021) – The Economic Vitality Corporation, in partnership with the Pacific Coast Broadband Consortium (PCBC), are hosting a SLO County Broadband Summit, free to all registrants on Thursday February 18 and Thursday February 25, from 10:00AM to 11:30AM both mornings. Featured speakers, include Karen Ross, Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture and Sunne McPeak, President and CEO of the California Emerging Technology Fund.

As COVID highlighted the digital divide in San Luis Obispo County it is also presenting the opportunity to elevate the discussion that will help identify the path towards a sustainable solution. Representatives from government, education and telecom providers worked together to develop the Summit agenda and topics covered. The Summit's end goal is to determine to how to move forward and who wants to be involved.

“Expanding broadband access and closing the digital divide is critical to SLO County’s future, both in shaping the course of economic growth and recovery and developing our workforce,” said Maria Kelly, Interim Executive Director of the EVC. “Aligning our efforts with the state’s [Broadband Action Plan](#) will position us to leverage innovative strategies and funding solutions.”

The push to increase access takes on additional scope as the EVC consolidates under the [REACH](#) umbrella.

“Even before the impacts of COVID, improving broadband infrastructure was a key element in our 10-year REACH 2030 plan to drive job creation, and closing the digital divide is imperative to our aim to grow from within by preparing residents for the jobs of today and tomorrow,” REACH CEO Melissa James said. “Our approach is bringing people together to solve our most pressing challenges, and we look forward to carrying this important work forward.”

The goal throughout the planning stages has been to: *Increase stakeholder engagement, commitment and seek obligations for infrastructure in San Luis Obispo County to reduce barriers of “Broadband for All” initiative as stated in the California “Roadmap to Prosperity”.*

Our service challenges, due to topography and high cost to deploy, are critical hurdles to overcome.

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Registration information can be found on the EVC website and newsletters or by clicking the link provided. [SLO Broadband Summit 2021](#)

ABOUT the EVC -- Established in 1994, the Economic Vitality Corporation (EVC) serves all of San Luis Obispo County as a nonprofit economic development organization. We are committed to stimulating the region's economic vitality by creating jobs, fostering investment, and promoting business. (805) 788-2012 www.sloevc.org

ABOUT the PCBC - The Broadband Consortium of the Pacific Coast (BCPC) has as its primary purpose the expansion and improvement of broadband deployment, access, and adoption through the development of collaborative, stakeholder-driven regional strategies throughout the central coastal region of California. www.pcbroadband.org

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