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**OSIT Receives \$188,000 Grant to Improve Broadband Connectivity in Rural Schools**

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The Governor's Office of Science, Innovation and Technology (OSIT) announced that it has partnered with the William N. Pennington Foundation to improve broadband connectivity in three rural school districts. Funding from the \$188,231 grant will improve connectivity speeds tenfold in eight rural schools that enroll a combined 1,891 students.

"Access to broadband is essential in facilitating high-quality digital learning and preparing all of our students for careers and life in the New Nevada economy. I would like to thank the Pennington Foundation for its generous grant," said Brian Mitchell, Director of OSIT.

The grant will move the State closer to meeting the goal of Governor Sandoval's Nevada Connect Kids Initiative that every K-12 school is connected to the internet at speeds that meet the standard established by the Federal Communications Commission. Through this Initiative, OSIT provides customized technical assistance to schools and districts with designing broadband networks, applying for federal broadband funding, and procuring services.

More than 34,000 students in Nevada currently attend schools without the fiber-optic connections necessary to meet the FCC standard. For rural students, in particular, broadband is the connection that makes available a world of educational resources previously only available to the most privileged students in urban areas.

The three school districts that will benefit from this grant are Lander, Lyon, and Pershing Counties. In each district, the increased speeds will provide the bandwidth to carry out the districts' digital learning strategies, including beginning to provide internet connected devices to every student, providing access media-rich websites, and access to classes through distance learning only offered in larger districts.

In the Lander County School District, grant funds will be used to purchase equipment that will increase connection speeds from 100 Mbps to 1Gbps at Battle Mountain High School, Eleanor Lemaire Junior High School, Battle Mountain Elementary School, and the District's administrative offices.

In Lyon County, grant funding will enable the District to upgrade the connection to Smith Valley K-12 School. Currently, this school lacks the broadband infrastructure of other schools in the District. Grant funding will build a connection to fiber that is more reliable than and twice as fast as the previous connection.

In Pershing County, the District will use grant funding to upgrade the structured cabling and wireless systems, including adding additional wireless access points, at Pershing County High School, Pershing County Middle School, Lovelock Elementary School and Imlay Elementary School.

**About OSIT-** OSIT is charged with overseeing and coordinating the planning, mapping, and procurement of broadband service in Nevada. Our goal, through the Nevada Connect Kids Initiative, is that every K-12 school in Nevada is connected to the internet at speeds that meet the standard established by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). OSIT is also charged with working with other community stakeholders to improve connections to rural health clinics and hospitals, libraries, public safety, corrections facilities, businesses, and residents.

**About the Pennington Foundation** - The William N. Pennington Foundation was formed by the late William N. Pennington, a gaming industry pioneer and philanthropist, and provides grants to Northern Nevada based organizations in the areas of education, community services, health care, and medical research. The foundation also supports the community and health services for children and the elderly, as well as providing financial aid to students in colleges and universities.