



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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**BLISS, IDAHO RECEIVES CARES ACT GRANT TO PROVIDE UNPRECEDENTED BROADBAND ACCESS**

*An event to celebrate the installation of the broadband tower will be held Wednesday, October 14, with speakers from White Cloud Communications, Idaho Department of Commerce and community partners*

BLISS, ID – October 13, 2020 – The City of Bliss, Idaho, is excited to announce they have received an \$840,000 grant to provide unprecedented broadband access to Bliss residents. A celebratory event at the new broadband tower will be held, Wednesday, October 14, at 2 p.m. This project is made possible through CARES Act funding and a Coronavirus Financial Advisory Committee (CFAC) Broadband Grant, and collaboration between Idaho Department of Commerce, Region IV Development Association (RIVDA), and Southern Idaho Economic Development. Broadband will be made possible through White Cloud Communications, who installed the tower today, October 13.

"This project will reach across the City of Bliss, providing important broadband access to hundreds of households and businesses," said Idaho Department of Commerce Director Tom Kealey. "Additionally, the expanded service will enable improved connectivity for distance learning, remote working, and vital public service providers including Bliss Fire and Bliss EMS."

The community is invited to attend the event, with speakers such as Idaho Department of Commerce Director Tom Kealey, and representatives from White Cloud Communications, the City of Bliss and RIVDA.

**WHEN:** Wednesday, October 14, at 2 p.m.

**WHERE:** Bliss, Idaho - *See below for directions*

**WHO:** Idaho Department of Commerce Director, Tom Kealey; Representatives from White Cloud Communications, the City of Bliss, RIVDA and Southern Idaho Economic Development

"Access to reliable broadband services across the State of Idaho is vital for economic growth opportunities and business sustainability, especially in our rural communities," said RIVDA President and CEO Jeff McCurdy. "It enhances community services, education, business, and our way of life. We are thrilled we have been able partner with the City of Bliss to enhance broadband services in their community."

The CARES Act funding received by the State of Idaho is funding projects like the one in Bliss that create and retain local jobs and result in purposeful outcomes, including distance learning, telehealth public safety, commerce, and overall well-being. This CFAC Broadband Grant initiative grant program (the

“Program for Telehealth”) is designed to meet the CARES Act criteria, and help Idaho rebound from the COVID-19 Emergency.

“This grant is a great example of a public / private partnership. The tower will make a huge difference for these residents down in the canyon below that have little to no internet access,” said White Cloud Communications Project Manager Eric Smallwood. “As we have seen with COVID, broadband speeds are becoming a necessity and this project will fill a critical void for these households.”

“We’re thrilled with the hard work from the Region IV team on providing critical broadband access to one of Southern Idaho’s rural communities,” said Southern Idaho Economic Development’s Rural Specialist Ervina Covcic. “Our rural economic development services are here to serve cities like Bliss, and it wouldn’t be possible without partners like Region IV Development and Idaho Department of Commerce.”

To learn more about Southern Idaho Economic Development and the Southern Idaho region, please visit us online at [southernidaho.org](https://southernidaho.org). For more information about Region IV Development, [click here](#). Visit White Cloud Communications online at [whitecloudcom.com](https://whitecloudcom.com).

To find out more about Idaho CARES Act distribution, visit [transparent.idaho.gov](https://transparent.idaho.gov).

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#### **DIRECTIONS TO THE EVENT AND TOWER SITE**

Dropped pin (Near Gooding County, ID):

<https://goo.gl/maps/1pqRB5kpBXejTBuo6> (pin will take you to the dirt road – go down the left of the two dirt roads)

From the Ziggy’s Gas Station in Bliss take Hwy 30 towards Hagerman. Travel approximately 1/2 mile then turn right on E 1950 S.



Take E 1950 S approximately ½ mile and it will turn back to the right. At this intersection go down the left of the two dirt roads. Follow the dirt road till it turns left and keep going until you reach the parking area. From the parking area you will see the crane set up at the tower site.

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### **About Southern Idaho Economic Development**

Southern Idaho Economic Development is a joint venture of public and private sectors throughout the Magic Valley, formed to help diversify and strengthen the local economy by retaining and attracting business to the Southern Idaho region. Southern Idaho Economic Development works closely with communities throughout the region to promote economic development through expansion of existing business and to implement a focused consistent program to attract new businesses and talent to the region. For more information about Southern Idaho Economic Development and/or the Southern Idaho region, please visit [southernidaho.org](http://southernidaho.org).

### **About Region IV Development Association**

Region IV Development Association, Inc. (RIVDA) is a private, not-for-profit corporation that was established to encourage the development and diversification of the economy in South-Central Idaho. The organization is recognized by U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration as the regional Economic Development District serving the eight counties of South-Central Idaho, including Blaine, Camas, Cassia, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka, and Twin Falls. As a result of this designation, RIVDA is tasked with preparing a regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and implementing the plans and objectives outlined in the plan. Through this effort, they foster partnerships and encourage collaboration among their stakeholders and community partners. They also assist small businesses in obtaining commercial financing through a variety of Federal programs they administer and manage. [rivda.org](http://rivda.org)