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For Immediate Release

OSHEAN Receives \$21.7M Federal Stimulus Grant to put Schools, Hospitals & Libraries in Broadband Fast Lane

210 jobs for the region; 50x normal broadband for schools; 500x for “knowledge economy” researchers

North Kingstown -- OSHEAN (pronounced “ocean”) has been awarded a federal stimulus grant of \$21.7 million to bring vastly increased broadband capacity to the community anchor institutions of Rhode Island and Bristol County, Massachusetts. These include schools, libraries, universities, community colleges, hospitals and government agencies. The project will create an estimated 210 direct jobs over the first three years, and is expected to provide the infrastructure for many more “knowledge economy” jobs in the future.

Awarded as part of the American Recovery & Revitalization Act (ARRA) Federal Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP), the \$21,739,183 grant will be matched with \$10.7M in funds from private companies and those institutions connecting to the network. The funds will be used to build a 339-mile fiber optic network to include every county in Rhode Island and neighboring Bristol County, Massachusetts. The OSHEAN Beacon 2.0 network, as it is called, will bring fiber optic cable to over 20 community anchor institutions. The grant will provide improved access to hundreds of Rhode Island schools and libraries – potentially 383 K-12 schools and 72 libraries – through the Rhode Island Network for Educational Technology (RINET).

“Our members have been working together for almost a decade on ways to provide the advanced broadband needs of our colleges, universities, hospitals, courts, state and local governments, and schools and libraries. This grant will ensure our region’s students have data speeds that are second to none, and that we have a key piece of infrastructure for our emerging knowledge economy,” said George Loftus, President & CEO of OSHEAN.

“This grant not only help to take our understanding of biological sciences forward, but it allows Brown to extend high speed networking to its new facilities in the Jewelry District,” stated Michael Pickett, Vice President and Chief Information Officer for Brown University. “ Because of the massive amounts of data that must be collected and analyzed, the network is an essential part of modern research efforts. This grant will help to transform the Jewelry District into the Knowledge District.”

This dedicated fiber optic network will have an initial capacity of 400 Gigabits per second (Gbps). This will allow schools and libraries to connect at speeds of 1,000 Megabits per second (Mbps) or about 50 times faster than the speeds being offered homes in Rhode Island. Researchers at universities such as Brown University, University of Rhode Island, or the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, and hospitals will connect at 10,000 Mbps. These ultra-high speeds are critical for moving digital images and for gaining access to high performance computers used in research. The institutions will be able to better serve their respective communities with faster data transfer and connectivity speeds at affordable rates.

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“On of behalf CharterCARE Health Partners, we are delighted that the OSHEAN application was successful. We applaud all those involved in the application process, and thank our federal delegation for their support of this initiative,” said Kenneth Belcher, President and CEO of Roger Williams Medical Center. “The additional funding that OSHEAN will receive will ensure that CharterCARE, as well as every other hospital in Rhode Island, will have access to affordable bandwidth for years to come.”

This grant is the second awarded to OSHEAN as part of the BTOP. The first grant, awarded in February of 2010, was a \$1.6 million Recovery award, which provided over 600 computers/printers and 10 mobile computing centers to Ocean State Libraries, which includes nearly every public library in Rhode Island. OSHEAN’s dedicated fiber optic network will enable Ocean State Libraries to provide patrons with an enhanced experience of library computers for educational, developmental or personal purposes.

“We are very pleased to receive this significant grant award, and wish to thank Governor Carcieri, Lt. Governor Roberts, and our congressional delegation for its help. In particular we would like to thank Senator Reed, Congressman Langevin, and Mayor Cicilline and his staff”, said Joseph Pangborn, Chairman, OSHEAN Board of Directors. “Our members are the non-profit anchor institutions of our community with the greatest demand for broadband, however, they are the least likely to have the funds to pay for it. This grant will allow us to proceed with our initiatives to expand our network in order to bring affordable broadband capacity to OSHEAN members and the public they serve.”

About OSHEAN:

OSHEAN Inc., (pronounced ocean) is a consortium of non-profit organizations that was formed to foster the development of a communications infrastructure for Rhode Island’s research, educational, health care, and public service community. OSHEAN is committed to developing network expertise among its member organizations and to creating an environment that encourages collaboration through shared resources, information and expertise.