

## EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 9

**WHEREAS**, Broadband access has become an essential element of economic vitality and sustainability for new and existing industries, attracting and retaining well-paying jobs, increasing worker productivity, and serving as the conduit for reaching consumers in global markets;

**WHEREAS**, Broadband provides enhanced and immediate access to education, distance learning and worldwide research, through which both students and teachers can benefit from high-quality online learning solutions, making it possible for students to access information and for teachers to help students succeed;

**WHEREAS**, current and projected healthcare shortages, particularly in rural areas of the State, can be reduced through Broadband-enabled telemedicine, remote diagnostics and consultations with specialists, providing greater access to healthcare services for unserved and underserved populations;

**WHEREAS**, Broadband is critical to public safety as it provides enhanced situational awareness from first responders in emergency situations; improves access to medical records, site information and other video and data information useful for emergency responses; and enables first responders to better communicate and save lives;

**WHEREAS**, Alabama's ranching and agricultural industries contribute to a stable economy and a steady source of employment in many rural areas of the State, and a robust broadband network can serve as a catalyst for economic development and help farmers and ranchers conduct business;

**WHEREAS**, Broadband enhances tourism by serving as a conduit through which we market and more effectively promote Alabama's beauty, history and adventure opportunities;

**WHEREAS**, electronic or e-Government made possible through Broadband can help streamline citizens' interaction with government agencies and provide access to benefits and programs;

**WHEREAS**, Broadband can overcome geographical and financial barriers to provide access to a wide range of resources, leveling the playing field between those living and working in rural Alabama communities and those located in urban areas of our great State;

**WHEREAS**, the basic requirements for successfully accessing these resources made available through Broadband include (a) access to reliable broadband services at affordable costs and at speeds adequate for current and future applications; (b) access to computers that are privately owned or leased, or provided at public locations as a public benefit; and (c) knowledge to effectively use computers and the Internet; and

**WHEREAS**, Broadband infrastructure has been deployed in a vast majority of communities across the State; however, too many areas still lack adequate and affordable access to this crucial resource that can enhance the quality of life in all Alabama's communities.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, based upon these considerations and for other good and valid reasons thereto, I, Robert Bentley, Governor of the State of Alabama, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of Alabama, do hereby establish the Office of Broadband Development (the Office).

**BE IT ORDERED**, that the Office shall be managed by a Director, who shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDERED**, that this Office, under the leadership of the Director, shall serve as a resource to directors, secretaries and commissioners of State agencies, as well as to local and county governments, Broadband service providers and other stakeholders in related efforts, such as accessibility, adoption and applications for economic development, distance learning, telehealth, public safety, tourism and more.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDERED**, that there is created an Advisory Board on Broadband (the Board), which shall be comprised of the following sixteen ex-officio members, or their officially named designees, where appropriate, and three members of the Legislature.

1. Director, Alabama Department of Commerce
2. Director, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs
3. Director, Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel
4. Secretary, Alabama Law Enforcement Agency
5. State Health Officer, Alabama Department of Public Health
6. Commissioner, Alabama Department of Mental Health
7. Commissioner, Alabama Medicaid Agency
8. Commissioner, Alabama Department of Corrections
9. Commissioner, Alabama Department of Labor
10. Commissioner, Alabama Department of Senior Services

11. Director, Alabama Department of Transportation
12. Secretary, Office of Information Technology
13. Director, Alabama Office of Rural Development
14. Superintendent, Alabama State Department of Education
15. Executive Director, Alabama Commission on Higher Education
16. Chancellor, Alabama Community College System
17. One member from the Alabama Senate, appointed by the Governor
18. Two members from the Alabama House of Representatives, appointed by the Governor

**BE IT FURTHER ORDERED**, that additional members, including representatives of the broadband service providers in this State and other related industries and associations, may be appointed to the membership of the Board, in a non-voting capacity, as shall be determined by the Governor. The Governor may designate a Chair of the Board or leave the decision up to a vote of the Board at its first meeting.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDERED**, the Board shall advise the Director on the operation of the office and may report its evaluations of the office to the Governor. The Director may pursue grants on behalf of state agencies and local governments. Grants may include those from the federal government, corporations, foundations and other sources for the development of broadband in Alabama.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDERED**, that the Board shall collect and share information related to Broadband accessibility, adoption and applications, as well as challenges, opportunities, funding, resources, programs, and public policies and procedures that enhance or hamper Broadband deployment and usage.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDERED**, that this Executive Order shall become effective immediately upon its execution and shall remain in effect until amended or modified by the Governor.

**DONE AND ORDERED** this the 16 day of July, 2015.



Robert Bentley  
Robert Bentley  
Governor

ATTEST:

J. H. Merrill  
John H. Merrill  
Secretary of State