

California Public Utilities Commission Approves \$29.5 Million Grant for LCB Communications LLC's Aromas-San Juan Project

The award supports the Aromas Project which aims to provide broadband access to 1,101 unserved locations across San Benito, Santa Cruz, and Monterey counties.

MARINA, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, June 25, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [California Public Utilities Commission \(CPUC\)](#) has approved grant funding of up to \$29,482,765.91 from the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) Broadband Infrastructure Grant Account to [LCB Communications LLC](#), a member of the Central Coast Broadband Consortium (CCBC). The award will support LCB's Aromas San-Juan (Aromas) Project, which aims to deploy a hybrid broadband network combining Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) and Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) to 1,101 unserved locations across San Benito, Santa Cruz, and Monterey counties. The project will deliver FTTH with speeds up to 5 gigabits per second (Gbps) symmetrical to 1,038 locations and FWA with speeds up to 600 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 100 Mbps upload to an additional 63 locations.



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*Tahra Goraya, Monterey Bay Economic Partnership
President and CEO*

The Aromas-San Juan Project will construct 3.63 miles of middle-mile infrastructure and 121.7 miles of last-fiber infrastructure, along with 63 wireless hubs. This infrastructure will bridge the connectivity gap in these rural areas, ensuring residents have access to reliable, high-speed internet.

The project addresses significant digital divide and accessibility challenges in the region by targeting underserved areas, particularly those with lower median household incomes and in hard-to-reach or inaccessible service locations. For low-income households, LCB will offer a low-income broadband pricing plan at \$15 per month for five years post-project completion. Additionally, the project area encompasses rugged and difficult terrains, including areas classified as fire threat areas and unincorporated communities, where infrastructure deployment is challenging but all the more crucial. By addressing these economic and geographic barriers,

the Aromas Project contributes significantly to the CASF program's goal of providing broadband internet access to 98% of California households.

"The solutions to narrow, and ultimately close, the digital divide are within our reach but require investments of infrastructure, funding, technology, and innovation," said MBEP President & CEO Tahra Goraya. "Affordable, reliable broadband is an essential tool for connection and innovation and a catalyst for economic development. MBEP is deeply committed to ensuring that no person or region is left behind in the digital landscape."

As the leading force behind the CCBC, MBEP has been at the forefront of regional broadband initiatives to enhance ubiquitous broadband access and digital equity. MBEP provides comprehensive, project-specific support from project conception through completion. This includes delivering detailed data analysis, technical expertise, and GIS mapping services during project formulation, guiding ISPs through the grant application process to ensure they maximize their projects' eligibility scores and resulting funding awarded, leveraging partnerships with CPUC officials and regional stakeholders to garner essential public and community support, and assisting with project management and progress reporting to ensure the successful deployment of broadband infrastructure projects.

About [Monterey Bay Economic Partnership](#) (MBEP): Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP) is a regional member-supported nonprofit organization consisting of public, private, and civic entities located throughout the counties of Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz. Founded in 2015, our mission is to improve the economic health and quality of life in the region.

About LCB Communications LLC: LCB Communications LLC, a subsidiary of South Valley Internet, Inc. (SVI), is dedicated to providing high-speed internet services to underserved communities. Founded in 1994, SVI was a pioneer in very high-speed digital subscriber line (VDSL) and single-pair high-speed digital subscriber line (SHDSL) technology in Morgan Hill and Gilroy, California. Together, LCB and SVI serve over 2,000 businesses, households, and anchor institutions in San Benito and Santa Clara counties.

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