

For Immediate Release: July 30, 2021

Contacts:

Doug Toomey
University of Oregon Hazards Lab
drt@uoregon.edu
(541) 632 2526 (mobile)

Ben Shapiro
Emerald Broadband
ben@emeraldbroadband.com
(458) 221-7209 (direct)

Open Access Wildfire Camera Installed Three Weeks Ago Successfully Monitors Blaze East of Oakridge

Eugene, OR—Since the evening of July 29, a wildfire camera has been successfully monitoring a blaze sparked 8 miles east of Oakridge. The camera was installed by a consortium of private and public sector groups less than a month ago.

The camera is a collaboration among [AlertWildfire](#), the [Oregon Hazards Lab](#) at UO, and [Emerald Broadband](#). The first camera of this collaboration, each organization contributed specific elements to its implementation.

The camera is unlike many other wildfire detection technologies because it is open-access, allowing first responders, researchers, and communities to all view its video. Most early detection cameras are closed networks and monitored by employees of forestry management agencies. This camera system is also designed to allow machine learning, which aids detection.

AlertWildfire is an early wildfire detection and situational awareness partnership among the University of Nevada Reno, UC San Diego, and the University of Oregon. It is the only wildfire camera system built for both fire-related use and public availability. In California, Nevada, and Idaho, where the wildfire camera networks are more extensive (over 800 cameras), the cameras are routinely used to detect and monitor fires, providing first responders and the public with critical, up-to-the second information.

The Oregon Hazards Lab (OHAZ) at the University of Oregon uses science, technology, and community engagement to understand, detect, and mitigate multi-hazards within the Pacific Northwest. Doug Toomey, Director of OHAZ, notes that “Oregon needs a network of hundreds of cameras, similar to what exists in California and Nevada. Achieving this public-safety goal rapidly is enabled by partnerships with stakeholders such as Emerald Broadband.”

Emerald Broadband is a Eugene-based Internet Service Provider (ISP) and public benefit corporation. Emerald Broadband supplies the internet connectivity to the tower on which the camera is mounted, connecting the camera to OHAZ's cloud services. This is the first camera OHAZ has deployed using private-sector ISP bandwidth and tower space, allowing the lab to install the camera quickly and at minimal cost.

Emerald Broadband CEO Raymond Hardman emphasized the value of cameras like this one that provide widely available visibility: "It's really hard to protect what you can't see. Cameras like this provide broader coverage for our communities and help safeguard their wellbeing. As a company with its roots in rural Lane County, we're passionate about providing access to both residents and state and local agencies."

A team of employees and researchers from AlertWildfire, OHAZ, and Emerald Broadband installed the camera on July 6. The camera was added to the AlertWildfire network on July 12. Lane County Commissioner Heather Buch, Lane County Sheriff Communications Network Coordinator Brian Greig, and Michael Harmon, Lane County Technology Services Regional Radio Systems Manager visited the site on the day of the installation and learned about the collaboration.

####