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## **Quilt members receive \$5M for exciting WildWEST project**

*NSF award boosts work by Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) to create multi-state team aimed to improve the way we study and understand the environment in the western United States*

**SEATTLE, Wash., and LAS VEGAS, Nev. (Sept. 12, 2024)** – [The Quilt](#), a consortium of regional Research and Education (R&E) networks throughout the United States, today announced that the [Nevada System of Higher Education](#) (NSHE) has received a \$5 million grant for the WildWEST (Wild-area-networks Wireless Enabling Science Team) project, an innovative collaboration with other members of The Quilt aimed at improving the way we study and understand the environment in the western United States.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) Office of Advanced Cyberinfrastructure released the award in August for the project ([NSF Award Abstract # 2416870](#)), which will be led by NSHE's NevadaNet in collaboration with the Utah Education and Telehealth Network (UETN) and Arizona's Sun Corridor Network (SCN), both of whom will receive sub-awards. WildWEST promises to drive wireless innovation, enhance real-time environmental data across multiple disciplines, and facilitate collaboration to help address the myriad field science and management challenges in the mountain west.

“What makes this region special is also what makes it a challenge to work in and to support our talented scientists,” explained Dr. Scotty Strachan, principal investigator for the WildWEST project, pointing out the remote and rugged environments in which field work takes place. “But with the injection of this award, the physical obstacles we face – in field systems design and digital connectivity, for example – can be addressed more systematically by a new regional team of experts, delivering advanced technologies in areas that have never seen scientific instrumentation.”

[NevadaNet](#), in collaboration with its regional partners, has formed a coordinated team dedicated to creating new research technology professional roles to deliver advanced technologies and connectivity to remote areas. Over the next five years, the WildWEST project will focus on:

- **Workforce Development:** Coordinated recruitment and training of field engineering and Internet-of-Things professionals, along with new student trainee positions, in Nevada, Utah, and Arizona.
- **Data Transport Solutions:** Designing and implementing end-to-end data transport solutions for science in remote and challenging environments.
- **Sharing Best Practices:** Developing and sharing best practices for field science networks with the national community.
- **Field Network Testbed:** Setting up a cooperative testbed across state lines to encourage new team-based science opportunities.
- **Workflow Evolution:** Leveraging existing partnerships with national cyberinfrastructure and regional supercomputing centers to simplify workflows for existing and emerging field science communities.

“This grant recognizes the many innovative approaches that members of The Quilt take to address complex challenges in order to advance the frontiers of knowledge and empower future generations,” said Jen Leasure, president and CEO of The Quilt. “The WildWEST project will not only develop new technological advancements for field network access but also create large-scale science education opportunities, attract new talent to the science infrastructure research field, and serve as a model of regional network partnerships.”

“Using RENs as the backbone of this effort allows us to capitalize on existing relationships ... providing technical and personnel capabilities that support work that is stable, sustainable and scalable,” added Jim Stewart, chief technology officer at [UETN](#) and co-principal investigator for WildWEST along with Derek Masseth ([Sun Corridor](#)) and Joe Breen (University of Utah CHPC).

More information and conversations about WildWEST are sure to surface later month at The Quilt's Fall Member Meeting on Sept. 17-19 in Hartford, Conn. [View more about the event.](#)

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## About The Quilt

The Quilt is the national coalition of advanced regional networks for research and education, representing 38 networks across the country. Participants in The Quilt provide advanced network services and applications to more than 900 universities and tens of thousands of other educational institutions throughout the United States. Visit [www.thequilt.net](http://www.thequilt.net) and follow on [LinkedIn](#) and [X\(Twitter\)](#).

## Keywords & Tags

The Quilt, RENs, broadband, NSF, WildWEST, NSHE, UETN, Sun Corridor, technology, networking, news

## Graphic Assets

