

Broadband Alliance Public Outreach Meeting

Friday, May 1st, 2015

North Coast Opportunities

413 N. State St.

Call in Number: 1-760-569-7225

Access code: 108 1131#

I. Call to Order

A. Introductions: **Jim Moorehead**, retired BAMC Chair, **Dan Hamburg**, Supervisor 5th District, BAMC Executive Committee, **Russ Ford**, Cartographer, Planner, Mendocino County Planning and Building, **Mike Nicholls**, NBNBCB Management Team member, Sonoma, **Brooke Clark**, community member **David Pai**, Mendocino College Faculty, Computer Science, **Katie Gibbs**, BAMC Executive Committee, **John Kuhry**, Economic Development and Finance Corporation ED, BAMC Executive Committee, **Wally Clark**, Mendocino County Librarian, **Randy MacDonald**, BAMC Public Safety Communications Liaison, **Brian Churm**, BAMC Technical Chair, **Susanne Norgard**, Community Foundation Executive Director, BAMC Executive Committee, **Trish Steel**, BAMC Chair, **Diann Simmons**, BAMC Administrative Coordinator
Call in: **Shirley Freriks**, Mendocino Coast Broadband Alliance

B. Approval of the agenda

Approved

II. Items of interest "In the news"

A. Good website with telecom headlines: <https://www.benton.org/headlines>

The FCC Connect America Fund phase 2 is offering price-cap carriers (the largest telecommunications providers, such as Verizon, AT&T, etc.) a total of 1.7 billion annually to expand and support broadband services in rural areas, targeting unserved census blocks, with a goal of 100% service in those census blocks by 2020. The funding represents a 71% increase and is allocated on a state by state basis. If they decline, the funds will be offered to providers on a competitive basis. Brian said that because of the restrictions, including having to provide long-term service, the big companies may not be interested. They have 120 days (end of August) to make their decision on whether to accept the funding.

B. Comcast-Time Warner Merger is scrapped: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/04/23/comcast-time-warner-mergeroff_n_7129492.html

Brian has noticed recently that AT&T and Verizon are boosting their signals - increasing cellular speeds.

Trish mentioned that Verizon wants to build a cell tower in downtown Pt. Arena.

III. Legislative News

The Alliance has been invited to send a representative on May 12, to participate on a discussion panel in Washington, DC on rural broadband policy, sponsored by Congressman Huffman and hosted by Rural Strategies and Public Knowledge. This panel will provide education to congressional staff on what happens to communities that lack network reliability. Randy MacDonald, our Public Safety Communications Liaison, will be going. He will be talking about the Mendocino County outage in August 2014, about network reliability and the on-ground effect on residents. Before he leaves he wants to solicit feedback from the group about how best to get our message through in a 7 minute presentation of

a focus on key issues, to enable congress to look at these issues with a local perspective. He will urge them to not abandon the excellent emergency system already in place, along with broader issues. He will also make appointments to speak in person with the staff of Congressman Huffman, and Senators Boxer and Feinstein.

The GAO - US Government Accountability Office interviewed Randy, Brian, Trish and Peter Pratt of NBNBCB, by phone, concerning the IP Transitions and its effect on network reliability. Randy and Brian offered technical information and Trish felt it was an excellent interview. The underlying theme they emphasized was survivability and changes that could be made to ensure continued communication. Currently there is no regulation of cellular and internet services and the whole telecommunications system is moving towards no back-up. Title II could be used to regulate these systems.

A. Three bills that concern broadband:

1. AB 238 (Stone)

This bill would authorize the CPUC to revise the definition of broadband to match the new federal definition. This bill would make projects that provide last-mile broadband access solely to households that are underserved also eligible for CASF funding. For entities that are local governments, the bill would eliminate the requirement that the infrastructure projects be for unserved households or businesses.

Status: It didn't pass committee and has become a 2 year bill to keep it from dying. Consortia are asking the CPUC to take these actions on their own and not wait for a legislative mandate.

2. SB 486 (McGuire)

This bill would have changed reporting standards for 911 outages to the CPUC. It would lower the amount of user minutes for rural areas that would trigger mandatory reporting of an outage by the provider.

Status: It didn't pass committee, but has become a 2 year bill to keep it from dying.

3. AB 1262 (Wood)

Read the full text at:

http://leginfo.ca.gov/pub/1516/bill/asm/ab_12511300/ab_1262_bill_20150227_introduced.html

This bill would move \$5 million to the CASF Broadband Consortia Grant Account from the Broadband Infrastructure Revolving Loan account, where it isn't being utilized. Many consortia are at the end of their funding cycle and this would allow them to continue to work to improve broadband access across the state. NBNBCB had input on this bill and it was backed by the Mendocino Board of Supervisors.

Status: Out of committee and to Appropriations. It is expected to pass.

IV. BAMC News

A. Update from this morning's Executive Committee meeting

John K.: We worked on a lot of action items, but didn't get to all of them. We will have a second meeting to hone in on priorities, vision and mission and also consider funding design for a hybrid project for Road 409/408.

B. GAO interview on Friday 4/24/15 – Brian, Randy Trish, Peter (BAMC Advisory Committee) on the reliability of 911 services with the IP transitions
Already discussed under legislative news

C. Adoption programs
No discussion today

D. Rural Strategies/Public Knowledge invites BAMC to Washington DC for House and Senate Staff Rural Telecom Briefing to share about our 2014 outage
Already discussed under legislative news

E. Mapping Update
Brooke took the lead in developing a population density map for the county, which has already been utilized by a provider. He has included areas where Comcast offers DSL, which is accurate within a few miles. Public access to the map is an issue because of the large size - it can't be emailed or posted on the Alliance website. Russ said he can post it on the county website.

There was a long discussion about the importance of knowing where fiber is located in the county. Using input from various people who have verified its existence in particular areas, Brooke will add a fiber location layer to the map.

Brian brought up that underserved areas can be brought up to the next speed level with hardware upgrades. Currently only a low percentage of our county is even close to the new standards.

Many county Anchor Institutions were targeted by AT&T and provided fiber service without service being provided to the communities and residents around them. That makes it difficult to get CASF funding for these surrounding areas, as providing service to anchor institutions is important to such grant applications.

Mike demonstrated the cost difference between urban and rural with a comparison of infrastructure development in San Francisco at \$200/house versus the cost in some local rural areas of \$14,000/house. John K. brought up that a significant issue of getting providers into some of the unserved areas is OPEX – on-going operating expenses, even if the initial infrastructure costs are reduced with CASF funds.

The question was brought up – “Do all areas, no matter the cost, have a right to be served”? Broadband service came up as a top concern in a county wide survey done by the Community Foundation in the summer of 2014. Working locally was the discussion consensus as the most probable way to extend service in the rural areas. John K. described the joint Sonoma/Mendocino Economic Development District (SMEDD) as a possible solution. *(Currently specific items in the SMEDD are under final review from Mendocino and the final document needs to go to both Boards of Supervisors for approval; the next step is the formation of the 9-member District Board).*

John K. suggested that because the urban areas depend on the rural areas to provide food and water, there could be an equitable exchange by passing a tax (similar to the Library tax that passed in Mendocino) for the whole county to support broadband service in the rural areas. Trish confirmed that regional planning is a NBN/CBC focus.

F. Priority Areas
Shirley discussed the opportunity for service connection in Albion and other north coast areas (where less than 50% has any service) that is being threatened by the permitting issue. Permitting was identified 3 years ago as a significant problem in a meeting with the county. There's been a lot of work put into getting service and they are frustrated. She sent BAMC a letter detailing the situation

that Trish passed out to the Executive Committee. Shirley is asking BAMC to prioritize addressing the coastal permitting process as quickly as possible, as she fears that this service opportunity may be lost if the permitting issue is not resolved.

The new county ordinance for permitting of broadband is close to approval, but it is only for the inland areas and does not cover the coastal zone. Many people found this out only recently, or as with BAMC, well after the process had been started. Although the inland areas cover 98% of the county land area, the highest percentage of county non-service areas is in the coastal zone. Dan thinks that the coastal zone was pulled out of the ordinance because it is so regulated it would have slowed down the inland process. He also said it is important to complete a coastal zone broadband permit process before the Board updates the Local Coastal Plan (LCP). Randy thinks it's important to go to the Board of Supervisors with solutions, as they are also in support of this change. There will be a county planner at the next Executive Committee meeting to try to find a solution and process forward in the coastal permitting situation.

Trish would like to have a further discussion, separately, about advocacy – how to put our concerns and ideas into action - next steps.

Shirley shared that there will be a meeting in Pt. Arena of a UC Berkeley class focused on rural community development. Yahel Ben-David of DeNovo and Heather Gurewitz, Field Representative for Congressman Huffman, will participate. Shirley will provide us with an update.

- Request for a cost estimate for a hybrid wireless/fiber design for the Road 409/408 area from LightNet Engineering
The Executive Committee will continue their consideration of this request at their next meeting on May 22.
- Sherwood Road
Not addressed today
- Gualala
DeNovo is interested in serving the 1,000 households, and applying for a CASF grant, but is looking at the barriers of permitting length, timing and complexity of the CASF grant. Also, if an area is CPUC designated “underserved”, versus “unserved” as Gualala is, CASF gives the current provider an opportunity to upgrade, which could delay or jeopardize approval of a grant application.
- Westport
CPUC notified Trish that no start date has been determined, and that the project is not dead but delayed.
- Rancho Navarro
Not addressed today

VI. County Updates

- A. Executive Office update
Not available
- B. MCOE update
Not available
- C. Libraries update

Wally Clark: The County Library received the federal E-Rate grant approval, which covers a significant portion of the cost of internet service to the libraries. Along with that comes the Children's Internet Protection Act requirements. The library system has a year to come into compliance by holding public meetings and getting the proper filters in place. There is a tendency for some members of the public to react to censure. But actually, the filters will allow access to almost everything most people want. There may be one terminal at each branch, with the filters set super low, not available for youth to use.

One branch has the issue of a few people "pirating" the bandwidth – using up most of the signal. Brian said there are ways to block that and also brought up the issue of patrons accessing sites that are infringing on copyrights, which would be a big headache for the library to deal with.

Hoopla was just brought on-line today, allowing patrons to download films, music, audio books, e-books, and other entertainment. But Wally sees from Brooke's map that many county residents can't take advantage of this service. The library recently hired a new librarian who focuses on social media and the web page. There have also been recent improvements of the online catalogue, which those same people can't use because they don't have the speed or service at their homes. What he hears at these meetings helps him understand the frustration of library patrons. This becomes an issue of "right to access" information equally. The library web site offers things that aren't otherwise available on-line. "The library is a neutral country – we serve everyone and want them to be able to access all that we offer".

John K. asked if there is a way to capture the data for the number of library patrons who use library computers to access the internet because they don't have access at home. A simple survey approach was discussed which Wally is happy to work on and the Alliance will help develop it. Trish would like a further update on all of the services and information that are available through the county website.

D. Public Safety Update

Randy MacDonald: Preparation is underway for the fire season. The issue of redundancy is a big concern. We are advising communities in rural areas that may have outages and no back up, to figure out a way to communicate now. There hasn't been any progress on FirstNet. We are in a wait and see mode. We are working on enhancements of the radio system for fire.

E. EDFC update

John Kuhry: A direct public offering to mobilize money is in progress and could be used for matching funds for a CASF grant to build broadband infrastructure.

F. Technical Chair update

Brian Churm: Nothing to add

VII. Access Sonoma Broadband Update - Mike Nicholls

Smart Rail has put out an RFP to lay conduit with fiber between Airport Blvd. in Sonoma and Marin County. It could hold many strands to various sites and be a public benefit. There are islands in Santa Rosa with no broadband service.

VIII. Outreach

A. South Coast

Covered previously

B. Health care facilities, City Councils, Municipal IT departments, PSAPs

Not addressed today

IX. Final comments
None

X. Meeting adjourned at 11:45

Next meeting: Friday, June 12th, 10:00 – 11:30

Economic Development and Financing Corp.

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