

## **Broadband Alliance Public Outreach Meeting**

Friday, June 12, 2015 10 am

Mendocino Room at the EDFC building

Call in Number: 1-760-569-7225

Access code: 108 1131#

**Note: After July 1st watch for a new permanent call in number!**

### **I. Call to Order**

#### **A. Introductions**

**Mike Nicholls**, NBNBC Management Team member, Sonoma, **Brian Churm**, BAMC Technical Chair, **Jenna Burrell**, Associate Professor, UC Berkeley, **David Pai**, Mendocino College Faculty, Computer Science, **Maureen Mulheren**, Ukiah City Council member, **Howard Egan**, North Bay Association of Realtors, **Kerrie Lindecker**, District Representative, Senator McGuire, **Ruth Valenzula**, Field Rep for State Assemblyman Jim Wood, **John Kuhry**, Economic Development and Finance Corporation ED, BAMC Executive Committee, **Richard Lamken**, HR and Technology Services Director, MCOE, **Dan Hamburg**, Supervisor 5<sup>th</sup> District, BAMC Executive Committee, **Trish Steel**, BAMC Chair, **Diann Simmons**, BAMC Administrative Coordinator

#### **B. Approval of the agenda**

Add: Jenna will share what she's doing in her project on the south coast.

### **II. BAMC News**

- A. National:** Washington DC "Network Resiliency" Policy Briefing- Communications Chair Randy MacDonald, Public Safety Communications Chair, was invited on behalf of several advocacy groups to a policy briefing for Congressional staff. He presented on network resiliency and erosion of our 911 system. Read his presentation on our site:  
<http://www.mendocinobroadband.org/wp-content/uploads/Network-Resiliency-Policy-Briefing.pdf> . View on YouTube:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cgBYrZcezUY&noredirect=1>

**State:** In 2013 the California Public Utilities Commission required a landline infrastructure audit due to findings that AT&T and Verizon had failed for years to meet required service standards, resulting in a high number of outages. CPUC President Picker just lifted that obligation indefinitely. This may impact Mendocino and our continued outages. It's being challenged by The Utility Reform Network (TURN).

**Local:** Verizon is selling their exchange assets to Frontier. (The cell business of Verizon is separate.) We have 7 landline exchanges in the northern area that include Round Valley, Dos Rios, Longvale, Laytonville, Branscomb, Leggett and Piercy. We don't know how this will impact service in these areas. Brian said that Frontier has bought up landline service in other parts of CA and the US. It operates a bare bones infrastructure. With a low cost operating model, it can

make profit. But their service practices include up to 3 months of wait for service installation, etc., according to people in Oregon.

CPUC Commissioner Sandoval is holding a series of public participation hearings (PPH) on the sale of Verizon to Frontier, and so far the closest hearing scheduled will be at the Benbow Inn in Garberville on July 6. **Trish will attend and encourages others to attend as well (see below...)**

Brian expects it to be a one-way meeting, as the deal is set. The best questions would be “Why get rid of metrics for service quality and what leverage does the CPUC have in this [Frontier’s business model of offering less service]”? There was discussion about whether the CPUC has any leverage and the effect on smaller CLECs as the bigger ones neglect the copper more and more. Brian thinks this is why Sonic is building out their own infrastructure. The landline rates are regulated so the big companies can’t raise rates to pay for replacing copper lines. Trish wondered if Frontier, as a smaller company, would be willing to apply for CPUC funds to replace landlines.

Trish has found out subsequent to our meeting that in addition to the PPH there are also workshops held 2 hours prior to the PPH and there is an opportunity for people to tour in buses/vans and actually see the physical condition of the copper plant and ask questions of the Frontier engineer. **Comments made during the PPH, and statements from the Frontier engineer during the workshops will go into the record and will hopefully help craft the conditions for the transfer, with comments from the engineer receiving greater weight. Getting the engineer to answer specific questions about service quality, who gets service, outage communication, redundancy, back-up powers, etc. during the workshop, is critical (again, it is part of the record), and anyone with expertise or interest in this area should please contact Trish or plan to attend.** Mike Nicholls said that TURN has comments for these hearings that are very complete.

Trish pointed out that in an effort to reduce “information overload” she is no longer listing links to information in the agenda. Instead, she strongly encourages everyone to visit our Facebook page or our website to see these interesting articles/news updates. She is concerned about the low number of people viewing our Facebook page and is open to suggestions to increase visibility. It was suggested to get other local groups to link back to our page by sharing posts from other groups. Please visit, make comments, and “like” our page at <https://www.facebook.com/BroadbandAlliance>

**Jenna’s project:** This past semester, with UC Berkeley professor Yahel Ben-David of Further Reach/DeNovo, Jenna offered a class on issues of the digital divide. Focusing on the new area that FR is serving on the coast, students looked at service ranging from low quality to very fast. They conducted research projects, which uncovered 3 useful insights from this area which will be further surveyed at the end of the summer.

1. In areas where the access is low quality, people piece together their access, such as using the library computers part of the time, getting up at 3 AM when use is not restricted, etc. Restricted use creates a hardship for people trying to work from home (also called telecommuting, virtual offices, and teleworking). The students are interested in how wide spread these practices are.

Trish mentioned that we also piece together our living to survive in rural areas.

2. There is a great variance in how people connect - some use mobile phones, others computer access. John mentioned talking to young adults in Humboldt County who are happy using only cell phones for internet access. They don't require a computer.
3. Another theme that is emerging is the community connection within rural communities with internet. Internet access gives new ways to interconnect when there aren't institutional supports. The internet connection allows rural communities to get more things done such as volunteer work, using google doc to organize transport for an ill community member without transportation, etc.. Trish mentioned the new article for the newsletter that talks about how much retirees use the internet for staying involved as volunteers etc.

Our Adoption Report and follow up survey in libraries is designed to capture more data on who is using our public access computers and why. Jenna is interested and will look at both. She'll send Trish her report and Trish will help her contact more people to take the last survey on the coast.

#### B. Executive Committee update

The EC met May 1 to begin work on revisions of the Mission, Vision, Goals and Strategies. Committee members requested that Trish make the public meetings more relevant to who's attending and not overload the meetings with too much information. So, for starters, the links have been removed from the agenda. **Trish would like to get feedback by email of what to include to make the meetings more relevant.**

The committee met again on May 22, continuing to work on the revisions. The drafts are now posted on google docs for committee members to work on together. The on-going work of BAMC will be prioritized based on the final versions. Andy Gustafson, Chief County Planner, joined the meeting to talk about the coastal permitting process, including why the inland process was done first and issues relating to the revision of our Local Coastal Plan so that coastal permitting can be updated as well. The county is taking the lead and the BAMC will continue to work with them on it.

#### C. Planning Commission update

Good news: The Planning Commission approved the Wireless Guidelines and the Amendment of the Inland Zoning Code to create development standards for projects that could apply for an Administrative Permit. It now goes to the Board of Supervisors as a consent item. If passed, it will go into effect after a 30 day wait period. This will not help current projects in the coastal zone, but the amendment is setting a precedent for the coastal changes. Trish will let WISPs know about the amendment and guidelines once they are on the Supervisors' agenda.

#### D. Adoption program update

Diann is working on finding funding for two adoption programs – creating more public access hubs around the county at non-profit sites and offering computer classes. USDA is a sure source for equipment, but requires a match. A search for other sources has not yet brought up other

possibilities. She is working with Gayle Greene of the Community Foundation Board to meet with several non-profits to brainstorm a way to combine these ideas into a program involving youth, in order to approach the Bechtel Foundation. Diann would appreciate any tips on potential funders.

John asked, "What is the definition of adoption". Jenna said that the standard academic definition is weak – it only pertains to access. She thinks it should be broader and cover skills. The research shows that people who have home internet, versus ones who access it in places like libraries, tend to have much higher skills in utilizing the Internet and therefore get much higher benefits. John would like the BAMC Executive Board to decide on a definition for our purposes and he also thinks that accurate mapping of access is a key to understanding the issues of adoption.

E. Mapping Update - [http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planning/pdf/E-Broadband\\_Map-DRAFT\\_5-1-2015.pdf](http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planning/pdf/E-Broadband_Map-DRAFT_5-1-2015.pdf)

Brooke Clark, who isn't present today, has taken the lead in mapping our county broadband infrastructure. Some information is available; a lot is in people's heads. He's working with Russ Ford, the Cartographer Planner and GIS expert at the county. Russ posted a population density map on the county site that is quite interesting, but it is too large to send out or upload to Dropbox. Posting it on the county site makes it accessible to everyone and it has already been used by providers, as it allows them to see where it is most effective to build out broadband.

John brought up the issue of whether the Alliance should be working to get service to the sparsely populated areas of the county, when the long-term operating expenses don't pencil out. He is concerned that we give strong focus to the 20% geographical areas that house 80% of our population to make sure they are fully served, and have high adoption rates. But there is still the question of, "How can we get low cost areas to help fund low density areas?" His idea is to build support for a sales tax measure that would be dedicated to supporting costs of broadband in low density areas. The economy of the low density rural areas has a direct effect on the economy of the more urban county communities. Those rural areas also supply food, water and energy to the urban areas, so it's a fair trade, but enough people would need to buy into that perspective. It would take a lot of work and would need a range of proponents to actually get passed.

### **III. North Bay-North Coast Broadband Consortium update**

#### **A. Regional Planning efforts**

The Management Team sent a memo to the Oversight Committee concerning recommendations of a proposed strategy to address the recent SMART conduit agreement actions and the pending Sonoma County Wil-Tel actions and how they might impact the development of a middle-mile capability along the Hwy. 101 corridor from Marin to the Oregon border. Both entities made their decisions without public or NBNCBC input (Sonoma County put out an RFP) and both are currently negotiating with Sonic, which is seen as favoritism to some other providers. Neither the county nor SMART have made public whether they plan to open the fiber up to other providers. The NBNCBC Team is asking for disclosure of the details of the Sonic agreements and documents, and in the case of the Sonoma RFP a possible re-visit of the process with a larger

scope that has the potential for future regional development to meet the needs of the northern counties as well. A part of the solution could be the formation of a 7-county Right-of-Way Consortium.

Trish has been researching where the Wil-Tel conduit was installed in Mendocino County and what happened to the asset when Williams Communications went bankrupt. The condition of the Wil-Tel conduit is unknown and there is concern that in some areas it was crushed and isn't useable. Sonic is conducting an inspection of the conduit in Sonoma County before they actually get into a final contract with the county.

B. Oversight Committee meeting (public) - Thursday, June 18th, 2-3 pm at the county Building and Planning conference room

The Committee will be discussing the Memo (above) from the Management Team

C. Legislative Update

No updates

#### **IV. Priority Areas update**

A. Albion

DeNovo/Further Reach is now serving a few households within line-of-sight and are pursuing a CASF application to build out their network in the greater Albion area.

C. Rancho Navarro

North Coast Internet is starting to serve households and has indicated that they want to submit a CASF application.

D. Sherwood Road

No change - area still un and underserved and no interested providers.

#### **V. County Updates**

A. Executive Office update

No update

B. MCOE update

Richard reported the good news that AT&T promised that by the end of June there will be an upgrade in access from 1 GB to 10 GB at MCOE. This will really help all the school districts (with the exception of Leggett), especially during testing periods. Currently there is not enough speed to support all the districts' normal uses along with the testing, so this is an important upgrade.

Richard is moving out of the area, and will try to find another MCOE staff member as his replacement to participate in the Alliance meetings. We all wished Richard much success in his move and thanked him for all his past participation.

David from Mendocino College reported that the Computer Science Department at Mendocino College needs an Advisory Committee to recommend what to teach and how to improve IT networking and communications with digital media. Qualified people are encouraged to contact him. Richard mentioned that the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing is revising the credentials for computer science which might be interesting for the College to look at. David will get a copy.

C. Libraries update

Not available

D. Public Safety Update

Not available

E. EDFC update

No update

F. Technical Chair update

Brian's company has relocated and unfortunately for us, he is moving to Washington. However, he plans to stay connected and continue to support the Alliance and will be returning to Mendocino regularly for a while.

**VI. Access Sonoma Broadband Update - Mike Nicholls**

Ryan Dulin from the California Public Utilities Commission attended the most recent ASB meeting and discussed the Tele-Connect Fund. The list of potential eligible organizations includes community colleges, homeless shelters, libraries, health clinics, boys and girls clubs, other non-profits etc. They would all be eligible for this fund if they directly offer some specific services to the community, such as health care, job training, referral services, or educational instruction (among others).

Mike also reported that AT&T is donating \$12,000 to non-profits in Sonoma County. Diann and Trish will follow up with Barbara Winn on this for Mendocino County. It could be a source for a match for adoption programs.

**VII. Outreach**

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

Alliance staff recently contacted each of these county entities, but it would be helpful if we had a specific liaison for each entity. We would appreciate suggestions about how to get this

information. It was suggested to ask Leadership Mendocino to take that on as a project for us. They have a new class starting this fall.

**VIII. Final comments**

- Please email Trish with ideas of what is relevant to you in the meetings.
- Brian is starting to see Wi-Fi being built out to support whole communities, Comcast for example.
- Net Neutrality rules went into effect today! The House subcommittee tried to derail it but it was decided that Congress does not have the authority – it is up to the courts to decide.
- Brian said that with net neutrality, they are starting to see vendors talking to each other more – “peer arrangements”.

The fast tracking of the TPP – Trans Pacific Partnership from the Trade Promotion Authority, just failed, but the bill is not dead. (The US currently has a very high trade deficit in the advanced technology sector).

**IX. Meeting adjourned  
11:50**

**Next meeting: Friday, July 10th, 2015 at EDFC**