

Steering Committee Meeting Notes

Friday, November 16th, 2012, 10:00 am -11:50 am

The Community Foundation of Mendocino County
204 S. Oak Street, Ukiah, CA 95482 (707) 468-9882

Dial In # (605) 477-2100 Participant access code: 565491#

1. Call to Order: 10:00 am

- a. Attendees: Brian Churm, Jim Moorehead, John Kuhry, Ray Gifford, Steve Turner, Susanne Norgard, Trish Steel
- b. Guests: Sargent Shannon Barney (Office of Emergency Services)
- c. Call-in: Greg Jirak, Randy MacDonald
- d. Changes to agenda: none

2. Office of Emergency Services

- a. Sergeant Shannon Barney attended today's meeting in order to facilitate collaboration between the Broadband Alliance and the Office of Emergency Services, and for the Alliance to share information about the Golden Bear project.
- b. Randy MacDonald is the public safety/Alliance liaison, and the overall objective is to work collaboratively. Sergeant Barney started this collaboration a few years ago when he and Dan Gerbil (Ukiah Fire District Chief) asked Randy to serve as liaison between the OES and the Alliance.
- c. Randy reported that the request for more public safety facilities to be on our anchor institution list is not an easy task, as there is no central place to get this information, and that due to the nature of public safety, some of these locations are nothing more than glorified barns with lights.
- d. Shannon said that he is looking to get a briefing as to the scope of our vision and what we want to accomplish. Most of his information comes from the public safety Northern Planning Areas, which includes 18 counties.
- e. Jim responded that our big vision and long-term goal is to deploy broadband to the whole county, and that the Alliance acts as matchmakers between funding, need, and vendors to accomplish that goal. Our strategy is to send out notices of opportunity to our list of vendors who operate in Mendocino County, from small companies to the large companies. The Alliance itself is vendor, funding and technology neutral.
- f. Jim also briefed Shannon on the R1CP that we are working on, which included our most recent map of the fiber backbone (72-strand, in some places maybe 144). Jim, Greg, and Mitch Drake (of Golden Bear) drove the route this week to check out the physical geography (more on this under item 4). This project is estimated to cost \$120 million, with a Mendocino/Sonoma portion cost of \$30 million. The larger telecom companies, due to ROI considerations, won't serve these low population areas, which is why the CPUC subsidy program is important for broadband deployment in rural areas.
- g. Private investors have tentatively committed the 10% match of \$12 million; the county has no liability in this project.

- h. During their drive, they stopped and met with Dave Turner (Mayor of Fort Bragg), Ginny Feth-Michel (Assistant City Manager), Lynda Bengtsson-Davis (IT person for Fort Bragg) and Mitch Sprague (MCN). Mitch Drake and Mitch Sprague are in conversation about an internship program to train local techs.
- i. On November 15, Mitch Drake, Steve Sharpe and Jim met with the Sea Ranch Association management and utilities committee. It is expected that SRA will become a major anchor tenant with 1800 homes.
- j. Shannon deals with an 18-county Northern Planning area, and wanted to know if this was a coordinated effort. Jim replied that it is within a coordinated broadband statewide effort. For the 16 counties, there are different consortiums set up, and Mendocino County is within the RCC Consortium; The other 12 counties are managed by two other consortiums under Tom West. There is a consortium map if Sergeant Barney would like it. Jim asked Trish to send Sergeant Barney the NCRMMI plan.
- k. Shannon asked whether we are competing for the same money. The answer is that we are going after the same pot, but together, so we are cooperating on this effort as best we can. If this larger umbrella isn't approved, then there are smaller pieces.
- l. Jim suggesting coordinating on this issue of backhaul; if Shannon needs backhaul (middle mile) for certain locations, then we can include that in the Mendocino County fiber backbone plan. Trish will send the draft Golden Bear plan to Shannon, and some sample letters of endorsement.
- m. Our anchor institution inventory will also allow Mitch to plan the fiber route through cities to reach anchor institutions, and to plan the drops and services to those facilities.
- n. Shannon does want to coordinate all the communications components so it plays into the Office of Emergence Services vision, with schools right in the center, as they are used as hubs/shelters/for evacuation purposes. Randy stressed the importance of not missing some key institution when we build this fiber network.
- o. Randy also added that with the anchor institution inventory and identifying potential spots for fiber is a very meaningful conjunction of opportunity with the First Net program, as some of the things that they are looking for are: collaboration, multi-agencies, private/public partnerships, and leveraging use of existing facilities. As the R1CP moves forward, it could potentially bring in money from the First Net initiative; they are still months away from putting out their grant guidelines, but they will be available at some point. We should remember both as we develop the R1CP and decide locations and anchor institutions; we have a small list so far, and Cal Fire and Coast Guard are on there, and over time the First Net will wrap all that together.
- p. Greg added that we are deficient on core public safety institutions such as fire departments, sheriff's offices, coast guards, etc. If public safety can get that information to us, we will pursue it. We are in good shape on schools already.
- q. Jim requested a name (contact) for each public safety location from Shannon for our inventory so that we can get the information we need. Shannon said he can send that request out through their communications committee.
- r. Randy said that he has a meeting with Long Valley Fire Chief Jim Little on Monday December 3rd about Cahto Peak as a potential location where some kind of node in a larger network could be established, because Laytonville Fire owns the Cahto lookout

tower and has deeded access to it. This could be an opportunity to be used as a demonstration project.

- s. Shannon added that at some of these sites, it's not just fire, but that there are federal, state, and local agencies tied into that one site.
- t. Jim suggested that maybe fiber to Cahto Peak should be on the Mendocino County fiber backbone planning map; the map is a work in progress and for this map we are putting in our "ideal" situation without regard to costs or planning issues. Greg added that the map is the development of a coherent strategic plan for the county, and that we need any state, federal, and local governments to sit down and participate in the process. We are focusing on the R1CP right now because we are coming up against the deadline.
- u. Shannon agreed that having "shovel-ready" projects is important, because the grant money announcements become available with short deadlines that you almost have to have something already prepared.
- v. The plan needs to incorporate multi-technology solutions, and include redundancy. In Japan after the tsunami, everything was wiped out, so the message from there was the more redundancy and multiple technologies the better (Brian).
- w. Shannon asked if someone from the Alliance would be willing to come in to brief the whole public safety committee, even if it is via conference call; Jim, Greg, and Brian said that they would do that. Shannon would also like to pull in the county IT department.
- x. In many respects the Alliance is the broadband planning function for the county of Mendocino; Supervisors Hamburg is usually here, Supervisor McCowen occasionally, they are both on our executive committee, along with Steve Dunnicliff now the Director of the Planning Department. We have political support and have formed a great partnership. Steve Turner from MCOE receives the agendas/notes and is here today; we have the knowledge, expertise, and maybe some data we need to break down "silos" in our broadband planning, and to do it right.
- y. The Alliance works best when other organizations are involved, and we can keep everyone moving forward in the planning process. It really helps when other organizations can put in some effort in working with us too.
- z. Shannon thought that this was doable from the public safety point of view.
- aa. The county IT department receives our agendas and notes via Cody Snider, but we are not actively working with them at this point, but we would like to be.
- bb. Shannon commented that having a communications lead to see the big picture would be important, but it's hard because many departments are overworked and understaffed; some of these decisions really do need to be made at a county-wide level (Greg)
- cc. The issue of network security was touched upon, and how that is a concern of some groups. John Kuhry added that as we move forward and build new infrastructure, we have to have an open mind about how to protect those resources. Shannon summed it up succinctly by saying that we are going to have to look at dealing with it, because no one has the money to build their own systems.
- dd. Brian said that it will take groups coming together and that shared infrastructure will be the norm, and that we have the technology to do this. We need to convince people that

some of the security fears are unwarranted. Steve added that sharing infrastructure is more common than people realize.

- ee. The big picture of all of this is to produce an overall broadband communications plan for the county. The county fiber backbone map is an ideal proposal at this point, but in the coming year the Alliance plans to do major outreach to the county departments, and have them look at the fiber network, force them to think about it and figure out where they ideally need it (fiber) to serve our county, and from there move down and make compromises if necessary (Greg).
- ff. Randy added that the challenge will be to get some of these parties to lead, but that they will get on board if there is something they can join. Some of the organizations have a lot of players (for example, there are 26 different fire departments in the county, each basically on its own), or don't have the capacity or expertise to be a leader so they will just be followers. State and federal agencies involvement means getting someone to bless the opportunity for collaboration, so it's a fair amount of work into getting some type of initiative.
- gg. Again, Shannon is willing to help by getting contact information to the Alliance; Randy reminded us that there is some information in our dropbox files that we should look at which Trish will do.

3. Golden Bear Broadband NCRMMI / R1CP – update

- a. R1CP drive – Nov. 13, 14, 15 - Greg and Jim reported that it was useful for Mitch Drake to see the terrain on the R1CP drive, and that when they got out in the woods some challenges with wireless became clear, including trees and terrain. Mitch had put down radio towers for last mile on the Mendocino portion, but it is a heavily forested road and he is not sure that radio will solve the problem so instead he is thinking of eliminating some of the towers and reallocating budget to fiber loop in certain areas (“fiber to the curb” – FTTC)). He has to run the numbers and move some of the budget for wireless to this.
- b. With FTTC, there would have to be some grassroots work and cost-sharing to get from the drops to the end users
- c. We don't know if it would cover most of the key roads until the numbers are crunched, along with an inventory of all the roads. Jim and Greg will be working with Mitch to calculate the county road miles.
- d. Sea Ranch Association (SRA) meeting - It is expected that SRA will become a major anchor tenant with 1800 homes. GBB and SRA are in discussions for SRA to donate real estate in-kind for GBB equipment huts on SRA property
- e. In some areas it will have to be some type of hybrid of fiber/wireless; use fiber to get to some point and then mesh from that point up (Brian).
- f. There are some difficulties with this idea (Ray).
- g. Brian wondered how PG&E is getting their data into their locations, in that they still need a network to use their smart meters.

4. Tobacco settlement funds update

- a. It looks like we will get this money! It is on track to go to county staff as a county contract; it looks like we may not need to do any big legal review of it.
- b. Thanks to Greg for his perseverance to get the \$7500.
- c. Now Jim can send email to Jim Mayfield, saying the MCDC can put us over the top for our challenge grant.

5. **Countywide Anchor Institution Inventory**

- a. Jim has made contact with all five Mendocino County Chambers of Commerce to discuss getting their help for membership participation for the Alliance data collection (broadband access inventory). We will ask each Chamber Director to send out an Alliance request for connectivity data on their Chamber letterhead (so businesses know it is endorsed by the Chamber) and individual members can either fill out a form or go to our website to give us the information. Getting business information is a little difficult as there is not one central place to go for that information.
- b. Steve Turner asked if we can we get a list of business licenses from the county (yes), but Jim thought that hitting the businesses “cold” would not be as successful as going through the Chambers who will hopefully provide an introduction and encourage participation.
- c. It was suggested that the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) might be of help, as Supervisors McCowen and Hamburg are commissioners. We are looking for a list of the special districts in the county.
- d. Our school sites are well covered as anchor institutions, but Steve Turner from MCOE brought up the issue of “blended learning.” Blended learning is education that combines face-to-face classroom methods with computer-mediated activities, creating a more integrated approach for both instructors and learners. The problem is that students go home and do not have internet access, so they are limited to only doing blended learning at their school site.
- e. The County Superintendent of Schools, Paul Tichinin, has asked Steve to find a way to a simple way to survey the kids to find out their connectivity at home, starting with the 6th grade and up. Steve is still working on that piece, but is thinking of going through their computer classes.
- f. This brings up the issue of the digital divide, and Brian suggested that maybe we need to start touching on this. 75% of county students qualify for free/reduced lunches, and it seems that no one has done any analysis of whether the households can afford the services that are coming to them.
- g. Steve Also brought up a CareerTechnical Education/Business Symposium that will be held on Thursday, December 6th hosted by the MCOE in partnership with Mendocino College. The purpose of the symposium is to encourage the private sector to participate in career technical education, with a goal linking education and business together to discuss 21st Century Skills and Career Technical Education at the middle school, high school, adult school, and community college level and how schools and business can work more closely together. Steve will send the flyer to Trish, and we will send the flyer out to our cc lists.

6. Committee Reports

a. Technology

- i. Brian gave a technology committee update on ATT announcement about expanding their digital system, it doesn't look like they've changed it, as the numbers are back to original plan; they reduced the number of people, and now have added them back. It's no different than what there were doing.
- ii. They are getting out of copper and abandoning the rural copper plants.
- iii. If ATT were to sell their copper plant, then that could be part of the solution
- iv. Another issue is finding the location of remote terminals; we don't have any way to determine this.
- v. The ATT LTE network now is pretty much all south of Santa Rosa, but it will pop up around here pretty fast. In order to have 4G LTE you have to have fiber to the cell tower, and some towers on the coast are still 2G. Unless you watch netflix on your phone, you probably wouldn't notice the change.
- vi. *Because of a technical glitch, Randy MacDonald was on the phone but could not be heard when he wanted to offer these comments. He emailed these comments to the Alliance, and we want to include them here:* The FirstNet Board setting up the national public safety broadband network has already determined that the network will use LTE technology. Therefore, the points Brian made about LTE needing fiber connected to its transmission facilities is directly relevant to the deployment of FirstNet in our county. Again, there appear to be significant shared opportunities to leverage our local efforts and the FirstNet program. *Jim apologizes to Randy for the apparent glitch.*
- vii. It was reported in the news that a security flaw was uncovered with the LTE expansion, in that the whole network could be knocked offline with about \$600 worth of equipment and technical smarts

7. Meeting was adjourned at 11:55 am

8. Upcoming meetings: November 16th and November 30th