Broadband Alliance of Mendocino County

Broadband Alliance Public Outreach Meeting

Friday, March, 6th, 2015   10 am - 11:30 am
EDFC (TEMPORARY MEETING LOCATION)
631 S. Orchard Ave, Ukiah 95482 Conference Room 2
Call in Number: 1-760-569-7225 · Access code: 108 1131#

1. **Call to Order 10:00 AM**
   a. **Attendees: Lorraine Dechter** - KZYX Mendocino Currents programmer, **Mike Nichols**, BAMC Steering Committee and NBNCBC Management Team member, Sonoma, **Maureen Mulheren**, Ukiah City Council, **Katie Gibbs**, Community Foundation Board, **Brooke Clark** community member, **Dan Hamburg**, Supervisor 5th District, BAMC Executive Committee, **Howard Egan**, BAMC Steering Committee, **John Kuhry**, Economic Development and Finance Corporation ED, BAMC Executive Committee, **Bruce Vogen**, Marin community member, **Suzanne Norgard**, Community Foundation ED, BAMC Executive Committee, **Tom Woodhouse**, Supervisor 3rd District, **Ruth Valenzula**, Field Rep for State Congressman Jim Wood; **Trish Steel**, BAMC Chair; **Diann Simmons,** BAMC Administrative Coordinator.
   Trish Steel mentioned this is the first time Jim Moorehead is not attending the meeting.
   b. Call-in: **Heather Gurewitz**, Field Rep for Congressman Huffman, and one unidentified caller.
   c. Approval of Agenda – no changes

2. **Items of interest "In the news"**
   a. The text from the **recent decision by the FCC** to increase the standard for broadband speed from 4Mbps down/1 Mbps up to 25Mbps down/3 Mbps up hasn't been released to the public yet. Mike mentioned that the FCC received over 4, 000,000 comments, which Commissioner Wheeler said was unprecedented and obligated the FCC listen to public. In the meantime, California PUC Commissioner Sandoval has mentioned that the CPUC wants to parallel the federal standards. The process would be for a staff recommendation, then open to public comment followed by a vote to approve it. (FCC ruling press release: http://www.fcc.gov/document/chairman-wheeler-proposes-new-rules-protecting-open-internet
   b. Our **State Assembly member Jim Wood** (represented today by Ruth Valenzula) was appointed as Chair of a new special committee: the Select Committee on the Digital Divide in Rural California: http://asmdc.org/members/a02/news-room/press-releases/assemblyman-wood-will-serve-as-the-chair-of-the-select-committee-on-the-digital-divide-in-rural-california
   c. John Kuhry said that the biggest news is that the **FCC placed broadband under Title II**. How this will affect us is unclear and will depend on the position that the state takes.
   d. Dan and Mike mentioned some people who helped create the broad public support for this vote, including Tim Wu, Columbia University professor who coined the phrase "net neutrality" and John Oliver who aired on Amy Goodman/Democracy Now.
   e. Trish and Dan praised the local news brought by Lorraine Dechter (present at our meeting), who produced and aired a two part series on KZYX – "**The Rural Digital Divide**". She really took up the issue with a range of good conversations and representations from small

providers like De Novo, Pacific Internet, Mendocino Community Network, legislators and a formal statement from AT&T.

f. Dan thanked Lorraine for including these local providers; He found it very informative and helped him to understand some of the issues.

a. Lorraine received an email from Alexandra Krasov, Director of Communications, Public Affairs, with **AT&T's statement** "Planning for weather events and the repairs that come with them is an important part of delivering a dependable network experience for our customers. But we also know that extensive emergency response and historical performance is not enough. Our goal is to continually improve the network experience for our customers. That's why we are carefully reviewing our procedures for service repairs and weather preparation in areas like Mendocino County. And we are hiring more field technicians in the area so that they are readily available in case of outages and able to reach customers in more dispersed areas of the County".

- Alexandra said that at this time AT&T only responds to individual complaints – there is no grouping of issues in particular areas and so they don't have a way to see trends.
- Alex said that if Lorraine was willing to collect complaint information from individual AT&T customers who had issues (such as no service for weeks followed by a greatly increased bill for that period), and to forward this information to her, then Alex would see if she could see the trends and help find answers.
- Residents who want to send Lorraine this information should contact her at news@kzyx.org
- Mike described the change PG&E made after a major storm in 2005 wiped out service in Cazadero for 11 days, but continued to have automated responses that were not updated and incorrectly told customers that their electricity would be restored that same day. After being sued, they set up a mapping system on their web site to see exactly how many homes were out, along with continually updating their message system.
- Trish said that this is the kind of system AT&T needs to adopt. She is working on communicating with Barbara Winn at AT&T asking that AT&T initiate a policy and procedure for communication of outages, similar to what PG&E developed. Trish will keep everyone in the loop to see how AT&T responds to this request and whether they make good on the statement they gave to Lorraine.

3. **BAMC news**
   a. **New hire** - Diann Simmons as Administrative Coordinator, chosen from a group of 5 final applicants who were interviewed last month. Diann comes with a background that includes grant writing and connections through-out the county. Trish is happy to have her on-board.
   b. **New Facebook page** – Trish talked about creating more of a presence for BAMC on social media and seeing it as a good way to get more information out without sending out more emails. At this point, not many of the 145 people who have "liked" the page are receiving our posts. In order to receive the posts, go to the BAMC page https://www.facebook.com/BroadbandAlliance, "Like" or hover your cursor over the "Liked" box at the bottom of the cover photo, and a submenu will open with a choice of "Get Notifications". Click that to receive all of our posts.
   c. **Broadband policies and regulations that promote broadband:** Trish discussed that this is an important area that we and other consortiums are focusing on - trying to get local/regional policies in place to promote broadband.
      - **A "Dig Once" policy** is needed in Mendocino County. John Kuhry agrees. Starting in Santa

Cruz, 9 areas in the state now require the laying of conduit and/or fiber whenever there is trenching along public streets, roads or highways. Trish is collecting information on "Dig Once" policies, including examples from other jurisdictions. It was asked if Caltrans has this policy, and Ruth said she would find out if CT has a "Dig Once" policy and if so, get a copy.

- John and Maureen discussed the background of Ukiah's plans and contract for the Perkins Street Project, created years ago. Evidently fiber is being laid by AT&T, with an offer to provide fiber to the city at a cheaper rate than the city putting it in. Also the trench isn't continuous along the street.
- Trish suggested that we need to get a team together, to start looking at our county and city policies in collaboration with the Dept. of Transportation, city managers, utilities departments, etc. find out what we already have and coordinate an effort to create a plan and move forward to get these policies in place..
- John and Mike talked about BAMC making a formal position statement promoting "Dig Once" and other policies. They feel that government is looking to us as experts.
- Maureen (Ukiah City Council member) described the Perkins underground project as an old one that was spearheaded by group with very different intentions. She believes that other Council members don't realize how important this issue is. She thinks that the new council working together with the community and BAMC could be effective. She wants to work with it.

d. Trish and Brooke discussed how **mapping our infrastructure will be an important part of the planning process**. Brooke said, "Where would we want fiber if money wasn't an issue. Let's map in detail and create layers to see what we can do, get provider maps, look at what other counties are doing with census income levels, etc."

- John said we could get county government infrastructure mapped/listed, and then evaluate how it can be used.
- Brooke said that we need to send a message to Jim Wood and the Select Committee on the Digital Divide to remind them that during Eisenhower's administration that federal government built the interstate highway system, and the need for a similar nationwide fiber system is a parallel to that. It would have a very positive impact on the economy.
- Ruth stated that it is important for the Alliance to pull together the mapping.
- Trish talked about how the fiber map would include several layers - the ideal fiber backbone, what actually exists, and the gaps.
- John thinks that we need to focus on where 80% of the population is – that is the place to survey. The cost to provide broadband to the remaining 20% is too high to focus on. Also, the coverage may be higher than we think. Ruth agreed. John went on to say that fiber is the gold standard that not even Ukiah has. For now we need to focus on wireless. We have a satellite that communicates with Mars, so wireless could work better on earth.

e. Trish asked "**What are our next steps**"? Developing policy, mapping and working with the local governments is a huge undertaking. She said that she can't do it all and wants to know how other people can help.

- Ruth responded that the work could be divided up.
- John said that the data is already out there. We need to talk with governments about their policies, and what infrastructure do they know about. We should ID targets that have access, but are not adopting – figure out the barriers.
- Trish said that finding out adoption rates is not easy and there are many variables.
- Maureen agreed that getting adoption rates from the big companies may not be possible.

- Brooke thinks there is a way to use the information that is available to figure out where there is actual access and adoption.
- Mike talked about mobilizing a campaign in rural areas through print media, KZYX radio, social media, local post offices, each school district, bulletin boards, existing organizations, churches etc. to get the information we need.
- John said that we have to do the work and make many calls. He asked what our priorities are, and added that he thinks fiber to every house would be foolish. We need to ID key projects where we can get a win.

f. Ruth wondered if it is possible for the Hwy. 1 corridor project to rise from the ashes. Mike said it may, but the CPUC program is a pot hole program – not enough funding available to do really large projects. We have to establish priority areas. ASB had to spend $12,000 of its CASF funding to prove they had areas that weren't served.

g. Mike talked about several projects in Sonoma that ASB is supporting: Ray Anderson of LightNet Engineering is finalizing the last of the feasibility studies for Joy Road, Dry Creek, and Cazadero that include cost if the area elects to use fiber. The next step in the process is to locate potential vendors, assist the local areas in their search for match funding, and issue RFP's. Sea Ranch has already submitted an application to the CPUC.

h. Howard said we need a public-private endeavor. Trish said that there are some providers starting to discuss fiber designs but no solid plans yet. Fiber designs are very expensive, and Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) would be one way to considering funding for such a project.

i. Mike talked about forming entities similar to Home Owners Associations (HOAs) to handle the long-term management of payments for the original infrastructure and the operating costs. The internet service bill would stay with the house. An initial high expense to put in the infrastructure would become affordable if paid out by a set number of homeowners over a period of years.

h. The question of **long-term operating expenses** was discussed with agreement that the vendors need to figure that out at the beginning of a project. Dan thought that it should be a requirement in order to get federal money.

i. Ruth said that **Congressman Wood introduced AB 1262** dealing with funding for telecommunications. Read the full text at: http://leginfo.ca.gov/pub/15-16/bill/asm/ab_1251-1300/ab_1262_bill_20150227_introduced.html This bill would move $5 million to the Rural and Urban Regional Broadband Consortia Grant Account from the Broadband Infrastructure Revolving Loan account. Many consortia are at the end of their funding cycle, and the loan account has money which is not being utilized.

4. **North Bay-North Coast Broadband Consortium**
   a. The **Phase 3 Ground Truth testing** has been completed in Napa and a report submitted to the CPUC. The testing in Sonoma, Mendocino and Marin, that showed all the areas as unserved or underserved for mobile wireless was submitted to the CPUC in November. To see all three reports please visit the NBNCBC page of the Alliance website: http://www.mendocinobroadband.org/reports-and-newsletters/
   b. **Adoption program** update: Part of the grant requirement is to assess adoption programs in the county. Diann is working on this, doing a lot of county wide surveying, focused on if and where basic computer/internet use classes are offered. In the small outlying towns and areas, there is not much outside of public schools. The BAMC sent out an email via the Community Foundation to non-profits in the county, asking them to take a short survey on their computer access and any digital literacy classes, both what they currently have and what they need. We

can apply to CASF for funds for special projects for adoption training programs.

- • John wondered what we actually mean by adoption. It includes overcoming all the barriers (economic, language, computer education etc.) so that areas with access are using the services. Currently we are focusing on assessing public access computers and basic computer classes in each community.
- • John suggested that we partner with MPIC – Mendocino Private Industry Council for adoption programs, as the Workforce Investment Act is changing. Contact the ED, Candy De Los Santos. They have several sites and work with unemployed people trying to improve their capacity in order to find jobs.
- • Bruce talked about franchise fees in Marin City that were committed to the Comcast Internet Essentials program that offers low-cost broadband, but they found only 5% of the eligible households utilized the program. Trish pointed out that the program has restrictions and is limited to areas of the Comcast footprint, and so for Mendocino County this program does not make much impact. There is now a new local Comcast rep, Judy James, who may be able to tell us more about the program.
- • John wondered if the bigger focus should be on access somewhere, but not necessarily in each home.

c. **Consortium Learning Summit** Feb 16th in San Francisco; Learning Summit http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/Telco/CASF+Consortia/CASF+2014+Annual+Summit+Presentations.htm The Summit was held by the CPUC for all of the state consortiums. Mike and Trish attended on behalf of the North Bay-North Coast Broadband Consortium.

- • Most of the consortiums are coming to the end of their 3-year funding cycle, and their summary presentations had potentially useful information that NBNCBC should look at. For example, they have templates and models for policies that promote broadband.
- • NBNCBC's model of direct involvement with government representation with the formation of our Oversight Committee is a good model for other consortiums who are floundering without government support.
- • There was very good back and forth with the CPUC. Commissioner Sandoval wants a continuation of funding for the consortiums. CPUC Communications Director Ryan Dulin wants to see more CASF projects come in - there have only been 10 so far. Sean McLaughlin, ED of Access Humboldt, shared several good resources: https://www.natoa.org/ – a national association that promotes community interests in communication and includes rep from local govt. and consortiums; http://shlb.org/ - a schools, health and libraries broadband coalition; Rob Wullenjohn, Manager, Broadband Policy and Analysis Branch for CPUC, wants to know what isn't working and needs changing. Sunne Wright McPeak of CA Emerging Technology Fund responded that the CPUC has flexibility and needs to use it, via an order, to simply the application process and make it more flexible. Trish and Mike made a lot of good connections.

d. **Revised NBNCBC work plans:** The CASF application covered 3 years, but we were only funded for 2 so we are in the process of revising our work plans accordingly. Mike suggested applying again for a 3rd year. If so, Tom West would make the application. We are lucky to have someone of his caliber and energy working pro bono on behalf of our counties.

5. **County Updates**

a. **Executive Office update**: Dan reported that Trish is the main update – stepping into the role that Jim Moorehead left. Trish is working with supervision from Steve Dunnicliff, Planning and Building Director. Dan would like quarterly reports from Trish, with her on the Board agenda for

a face-to-face report every 6 months. (Currently an Annual Report is sent to the Board). Dan provides updates on the consortium and would like her to give them the bigger picture to keep broadband issues in front of them.

b. MCOE update – Not available

c. **Libraries update** – We have a new County Librarian, Wally Clark, who is a good ally for broadband and who Supervisor Hamburg has a lot of confidence in. The libraries are the one consistent place of internet access within the smaller communities and so play a very important role. Diann attended the Supervisors Workshop meeting with the Library Advisory Board (LAB) and reported that important issues were laid on the table by both sides, and there are plans to bring LAB members into a stronger advisory role.

d. **Public Safety update:** Randy MacDonald was not present. Dan has not been impressed with FirstNet, the First Responder Network, which was obligated by Congress to take all actions necessary to ensure the building, deployment and operation of the nationwide public safety broadband network. In April, the County Sheriff emergency communication system is switching to a Cloud 911 dispatch system funded by the state.

e. **EFDC update**: John reported that EDFC has been approved by the state for a Direct Public Offering of a security to both accredited and non-accredited investors who will invest in the communities of Mendocino and Lake. EDFC must first raise $250,000, which John doesn't see as a problem. This will allow funding of projects that don't qualify for traditional loans and could be a possible source for a broadband project in Mendocino County.

f. **Technical Chair update:** Brian Churn is not present today. Next month he will present a fixed wireless tutorial for our meeting. We are looking at the possibility of video-taping it and posting on our web site.

6. Access Sonoma Broadband

a. Mike reported that he has been working with our state senator Mike McGuire on a senate bill. At a CPUC hearing with President Picker last week, McGuire did a good job of presenting issues for the North Coast district, including the PG&E outages in Mendocino County. He's working with Wood on AB 1262.

b. Mike is also working on the quarterly report and is including outreach to the Community Development Commission of Sonoma to include broadband wiring in an affordable housing project.

c. Mike is hoping to interest De Novo into looking at serving Cazadero. They had originally planned for underground fiber in Cazadero, which may not work. A non-profit radio station is applying for co-location on a county tower in that area which could possibly become a site that De Novo could use.

d. The NBNCBC is working to look at the big picture with specific vendors and how to coordinate efforts regionally.

7. Outreach and future presentations

Fixed **Wireless Networks Tutorial** – Brian Churn will present a "Fixed Wireless Tutorial" at our next BAMC meeting on April 3rd, and we encourage the public to attend and submit questions for Brian in advance by emailing them to Diann (admincoordinator@mendocinobroadband.org)

8. Final comments from attendees

a. Trish noted that the meetings frequently last longer than 11:30 and asked whether we should extend the time to 11:45 or limit discussions to end at 11:30. One person said to end at 11:30 and another said extending to 11:45 is fine with him.

b. Howard expressed his concern that we need a project. Mike clarified that Sonoma's project – Sea Ranch – happened "by accident". Trish said that she is really working to encourage providers to submit CASF applications, but most WISPs are very wary of the process and so it is not easy. However, we may have a project soon but Trish was not at liberty to share what specific providers may be working on.

c. Trish reminded the group to feel free to email her and to **share their ideas and thoughts on specific next steps** (chairman@mendocinobroadband.org)

9. **Meeting Adjourned at 11:50**

Next Meeting Friday April 3
Location:
The Arbor Youth Resource Center
810 N. State St. Ukiah