

Steering Committee Meeting Notes

Friday, April 12th, 2013 10:00 am – 11:30 am

The Community Foundation of Mendocino County

204 S. Oak Street, Ukiah, CA 95482 (707) 468-9882

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

(If you have problems dialing in, try dialing (805) 360-1075 first,
then the regular number, then #, and then access code and # again)

1. Call to Order: 10:00 am

- a. Attendees: Brian Churm, Carole Brodsky, Greg Jirak, Jim Moorehead, John Kuhry, John Goldsmith, Mike Nicholls, Trish Steel
- b. Call-in: Susanne Norgard, Randy MacDonald, Mitch Drake
- c. Guest: Jason Schroffel
- d. Changes to agenda: addition of phone etiquette to top of agenda

2. Phone etiquette for meetings - Jim

- a. Jim was a call-in participant for a Community Foundation meeting recently, and discovered first-hand that there were some issues with the new Polycom system that everyone should be aware of:
 - i. The extended microphones are sensitive! That means that they can pick up private conversations you are having with your neighbor and is especially sensitive to papers being shuffled around.
 - ii. We need to be sure not to talk over other people at a meeting so that call-in participants can follow the conversation (that is, no side conversations).
 - iii. Call-in participants should speak up if there is a problem so that we can try to fix it.

3. Golden Bear CASF Application Challenge Response – Mitch Drake

- a. Mitch gave an update on the Golden Bear Broadband application, which was followed by a discussion of possible options for the Alliance. Basically, in his discussions with CPUC staff, it's apparent that AT&T and the other carriers are being very aggressive in their challenge to the Golden Bear Broadband application. The CPUC appears to be standing behind their broadband coverage maps and if an area is classified as "served" then they will not allow funds for that area.
- b. The GBB application for Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) has received three questions from the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) . Mitch expects to be granted CPCN; however, the process could take longer. The existing carriers are watching this process very closely.
- c. We have heard AT&T and other carriers have flooded the PUC and are actively working against the Golden Bear Broadband application.
- d. Mitch has a face-to-face meeting scheduled with the CASF staff on April 25th, and hopes to get a read about where he can or cannot build, what rules they will uphold, and come away with some idea about what can work.

- e. There was a lot of frustration expressed around this, as Golden Bear Broadband has so much support from around the county at high levels (Board of Supervisors, Schools, Libraries, etc.) and everyone is keenly aware of the need for improved broadband access not only in Mendocino County but all of northern California. The blocking of this grant seems only to serve the interests of the individual carriers and not the interest of our county and state.
- f. If CPUC staff tells Mitch where they can and cannot build network, he will have to conduct deeper market analysis to see if it's even possible to make this a sustainable business.. He has to prepare for the worst and try to defend the project, although it feels like a David and Goliath battle because of all the money and lobbyists that the telecoms are using to challenge it.
- g. Mitch also wants the CPUC/public to understand that the Golden Bear Broadband is also about more than unserved/served areas, it's about serving our anchor institutions with a robust, redundant, reliable middle-mile fiber network. For example, AT&T is claiming that they have middle-mile fiber up Highway 101 to Eureka, so there's no need for Golden Bear Broadband to build parallel to that. However, Hopland is not served, and there are towns on either side of Ukiah that are not served. And most schools are served with copper and not fiber that is redundant/diverse. The future of education will require robust service.
- h. Brian asked the question, "If AT&T has fiber but refuses to sell, does that still make you a middle-mile provider?" Mitch replied that the CPUC is only looking at the challengers map, and that whether there is access to the fiber on the map may not matter.
- i. John Kuhry asked about other plans/avenues to address these challenges because again, there is a high level of indignation from the public with these challenges. Mitch again replied that there is not a formal process to refute the challenges. Golden Bear took the initiative to write rebuttals, and Golden Bear asked for a meeting to make sure that the CPUC understood their project and position. There is not much more that they can do.
- j. Jim would like to put some talking points together that we can use to help educate people on this topic. Carole will put that together for us, and she also has some ideas for publicity.
- k. Jason asked about the legal definition of the advertised speeds from carriers; Brian responded that there is fine print in the contracts that you sign; the advertised speed may be "3 Mbps" but that is usually the upper limit; in the fine print it says, "up to 3 Mbps" so that if you are getting only 1.2 you are still *legally* getting what you are paying for.
- l. On April 20th the Alliance and GBB is meeting with Sea Ranch Public Utilities Commission. Mitch will present an update on the Golden Bear Broadband application. Greg will then give a presentation on the 2013 strategic broadband plan, and then they will move into workshop mode to formulate a plan to become a "fiber to the home" community.

4. **SB 740**

- a. Senate Bill 740, introduced by Senator Padilla and supported by the Alliance and various broadband groups, would modify eligibility requirements and funding for the California

Advanced Services Fund (CASF) to support broadband infrastructure in the most remote areas of the state that still lack high-speed Internet access. It would also would increase the amount of CASF funding by \$100 million and extend the period of collection for those revenues. The current round of grant applications for rural broadband deployment projects exceeded money available for \$100 million.

- b. The Mendocino Board of Supervisors is currently considering writing a letter of support for this bill.
- c. The hearing on SB 740 has been moved to Tuesday, April 30th, 9:30 am, Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Communications, State Capitol, Room 3191, Sacramento.
- d. Letters of support from any group or individual will be accepted until April 25th, and the Alliance encourages you to write a letter to express your support.
- e. Email Trish and she can send you a SB 740 fact sheet, a sample letter of support, and email list (see below). Her email address is:
admincoordinator@mendocinobroadband.org
- f. Your letter should be sent Senator Alex Padilla with cc's to: all the members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Communications, your senate and assembly representatives, and the CETF (gladys.palpallatoc@cetfund.org)
- g. As an easier alternative, send your letter back to Trish and she will send to all the appropriate members. Don't hesitate to contact the Alliance if you have any questions.

5. **MCOE/MCOG Planning Grant**

- a. The MCOE/MCOG/Alliance planning grant was submitted to Caltrans as part of their environmental justice planning grant, thanks to a lot of hard work by Steve Turner of MCOE. The broadband issue is important for MCOE because they are mandated to have "blended learning" for their students ("anytime, anywhere"), and this means having broadband access in their home. In Mendocino County this is a big challenge, and part of this challenge is to deal with the inaccurate broadband coverage maps.
- b. The grant makes the case that broadband is an alternative transportation mode which would save money, resources, wear and tear on the roads, and reduce carbon emissions by reducing traffic on our highway system.
- c. If successful, this grant could be a model for other areas to follow.
- d. We will be adding all this info to the Alliance website soon:
<http://www.mendocinobroadband.org>
- e. Sunne McPeak is the CEO of the California Emerging Technology Fund, and she is excited about this proposal because the CETF is looking at how to apply technology to solve transportation issues, so it matches perfectly.
- f. The relationship between CETF, CASF, CPUC, and other broadband entities is not easy to understand. For the organizational flow chart click this link:
<http://www.cetfund.org/resources/cainiative>

6. **Community Foundation Challenge Grant**

- a. The Community Foundation Challenge Grant has been met, and we are thankful to all of our donors who made contributions to help us reach this goal.

- b. Carole and Susanne will be meeting to discuss ways to publicize this success.

7. Committee reports

- a. Mike heard that there was an article in today's Press Democrat (he hasn't read it yet) about Comcast announcing it was pulling out of a project for a wireless WiFi network to light up downtown Petaluma that it had committed to. Guernville was looking at options, hoping to possibly do a similar project to meet the broadband access needs of all the summer tourists.
- b. Brian explained that there are two paths for WiFi: commercial and budget. Providing free WiFi is the commercial path, like they do in Santa Rosa, using a carrier which in their case is sonic.net. The budget path is where people/businesses share their WiFi, like people in San Francisco do. There are WiFi products such as routers with guest partitions that separate your bandwidth, so you basically set up a guest network on your router and share. It's a cheap or budget way.

8. May 10th Public Access Television meeting

- a. On Friday, May 10th our steering committee/public outreach meeting will focus on a single topic: discussion with the three county public access television stations, board members and other interested parties, and to do some strategic planning for their future funding. Everyone is invited to attend.
- b. We will have a special guest Sean McLaughlin at this meeting. Sean serves as executive director of Access Humboldt (<http://accesshumboldt.net>) - a community based organization providing local access to media channels, broadband network connections, digital media production resources, training and support for local communities, including governments, tribes, educational institutions, non-profit organizations and residents of Humboldt County, California USA. Sean presents at conferences around the county and will provide valuable perspectives on this topic.

9. Meeting Adjourned at 12:00

**Next meeting: May 3rd, May 10th (special Public Access Television meeting)
April 19th and April 26th - Meeting Cancelled**