

Steering Committee Meeting Notes
Friday, August 23, 2013 10:00 am –11:30 am

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

New Dial in number: (760) 569-7225 Participant Access Code: 108 1131#

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1. Call to Order: 10:00 am

- a. Attendees: **Brian Churm** (Alliance Technology Chair), **Carole Brodsky** (Alliance Media), **Dan Hamburg** (Mendocino County 5th District Supervisor), **Jim Moorehead** (Alliance Chairman), **John Goldsmith** (Alliance Financial Chair), **John Kuhry** (Executive Director, Economic Development and Financing Corporation), **Mike Nicholls** (Access Sonoma Broadband Co-chair), **Susanne Norgard** (Executive Director, Community Foundation of Mendocino County), **Trish Steel** (Alliance Administrative Coordinator)
- b. Call-in: **Greg Jirak** (Alliance Strategic Chair), **Mitch Drake** (CEO, Golden Bear Broadband), **Marsha Armstrong** (Supervisor, Siskiyou County), **Randy MacDonald** (Office of Emergency Services/Alliance liaison)
- c. Changes to agenda: addition of FirstNet report by Randy

2. Broadband Coalition of Northern California Counties (BCNCC) - Greg

- a. The BCNCC was formed to unite the northern counties of California and identify our common broadband problems.
- b. Our initial problem statement is: "Substandard broadband damages the Northern California economy."
- c. Out of a total of seventeen counties we have received supporting responses from community leaders in nine.
- d. These counties are: Yuba, Butte, Mendocino, Sonoma, Tehama, Siskiyou, Shasta, Modoc, and Lake. Together these counties represent 76% of the population of northern counties.
- e. We also have a nice letter from 2nd District Assemblyman Wesley Chesbro (2nd district encompasses all of Humboldt, Del Norte, Trinity, and Mendocino counties, and portions of Sonoma county) basically complaining about the national broadband maps; we also have a letter from the Hoopa Valley Tribe which was sent to Governor Brown that states, "Health, education, public safety, and economic development have been, and continue to be, compromised by inadequate broadband service."
- f. We are starting to get some real "clout" behind us, with much credit due to the recent report out by the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) called Wrong side of the Digital Divide which documents that the digital divide is a statewide problem and not limited to rural and poor areas. This report has been added to the end of these notes.
- g. Supervisor Armstrong (Siskiyou County) said that she has talked with some of her contacts, and they felt that because they have already sent letters in the past that they

didn't need to send any letters again. Trish will talk with her off-call about getting copies of these letters.

- h. Golden Bear Broadband (GBB) has received letters of support from almost every county, and there is a difference between support letters for GBB and the Coalition. We need to clearly articulate the difference, and why an additional letter is needed. Trish will prepare a draft statement about why we need this additional letter.

3. Golden Bear/CASF Review Team Field Trip – update

- a. On Tuesday, August 20th CPUC review staff assigned to the GBB application, Ana Maria Johnson and Tom Glegola, physically toured the R1CP with Mitch Drake. They started in Petaluma, and attended meetings at Joy Road, Point Arena and Mendocino.
- b. Along the way, they were able to see the physical geography of the area (dense forests, ridges and gulches, etc) and meet with various people/groups who spoke of their challenge with lack of adequate and reliable broadband service.
- c. These groups included the Joy Road Homeowners Association, Mindy Kittay, County Librarian, Mendocino County School Superintendent Paul Tichinin, 5th District Supervisor Dan Hamburg, Fort Bragg Mayor Dave Turner, local ranchers and businessmen, and emergency service folks. In Point Arena, seventeen community leaders attended, including a farmer, a pharmacist, and the local superintendent of schools.
- d. At their stop in Mendocino, Supervisor Hamburg asked them a very good question: "If not Golden Bear, then what? There is no other application in northern California that has put together a plan with the fourteen counties which address this great need." He hopes that a great political effort is mobilized for the support of this application.
- e. The general feeling was that the field trip was very productive, and that we had a chance to tell our story and provide staff with the ground truth reality that we still have a huge problem here, that nothing is getting done and hasn't been getting done for many years now.
- f. Tom and Ana Maria will continue to work with Mitch on the GBB application. We feel pretty certain that with the regulations that staff has to work within, that it won't be fully approved and that if it is only partially approved it may not "pencil out" for GBB.
- g. Mitch said that not all applications are guaranteed a Draft Resolution, and GBB doesn't know if they will get one or not.
- h. Jim asked that if there is no Draft Resolution, then it is basically a "deny", and in that case can the applicant do the Alternate Draft Resolution (ADR)? Mitch didn't know the answer to that question and will check, but he thinks that maybe not.

4. Access Sonoma Broadband (ACB) – Mike Nicholls

- a. Mike provided an update on the newly formed Access Sonoma Broadband group. They had their fourth monthly meeting on Wednesday, August 21st in Santa Rosa, and Jim and Greg from the Mendocino Alliance both drove down and attended.
- b. Mike reviewed the CPUC staff R1CP field trip, and they dealt with organizational issues inherent in any start-up organization, such as their mission statement. Sonoma County 4th District Supervisor Mike McGuire attended, was attentive and engaged, and plans to attend the September 6th meeting of the Broadband Alliance in Ukiah.

- c. Another topic that was discussed was the possibility of a joint, regional Economic Development District (EDD) through a joint powers agreement. John Kuhry (Economic Development and Financing Corp Executive Director) said that Sonoma and Mendocino Counties are seeking to form an EDD which would allow access to potential funds coming down from the State and Federal level. The prerequisite for the formation of the EDD is to create a merged Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Mendocino's CEDS is maintained by the Workforce Development Board (WIB) which has signed off on the project and the matter is on the Tuesday, 8/27 consent agenda for the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors.
- d. In the long run, this means more economic development through grant monies.
- e. Another important topic that was discussed was GIS mapping. Jim was very impressed by the presentation that Tim Pudoff, the GIS manager from Chico State, gave on the capabilities of the mapping program and the power and access to data. This software is compatible with state and federal maps, so we have the capability to create various databases and add those layers of info into the base maps. Jim thinks that Tim has a good feel for what the Alliance is trying to do with our broadband planning for a countywide fiber network.
- f. Greg asked about coordinating with Tim to design and create a fiber map using all the information that the Alliance has collected in our "Roads and Communities" database. Tim will set up a conference call between Mike, Greg, and Mitch as the first step in this process.
- g. With this software and modeling, you can ask a question such as, "What is the economic impact of lost dollars from lack of broadband", and you can extrapolate and calculate an answer.

5. Senate Bill 740

- a. Mendocino County Supervisor Dan Hamburg gave a quick update on the bill: on 8/21 the Assembly Appropriations Committee voted to move the bill to the suspense file.
 - i. Info from the website:
<http://apro.assembly.ca.gov/appropriationscommittee/rules>
 - ii. All bills with a fiscal impact in any fiscal year of \$150,000 or more will, by a majority of members present and voting, a quorum being present, move to the Suspense File. "Fiscal impact" includes all fund sources.
 - iii. Authors should present all witnesses and testimony at the time of the bill's first hearing, even if the bill's provisions indicate a likely referral to Suspense. Authors may waive their right to presentation.
 - iv. Suspense bills will be heard at a hearing that normally follows passage of the budget bill. When the bills are placed on the committee's agenda as "From Suspense File – For Vote Only," no testimony will be taken and the authors need not be present.
- b. So far, there is nothing alarming. Brandon from the Mendocino County Executive Office spoke with Paul Smith (Regional Council of Rural Counties (RCRC) and there are no glitches that we can see.

- i. The RCRC is an association of thirty-one rural counties that advocates before the legislature, Congress and other government agencies on behalf of rural issues.
 - c. *UPDATE since the meeting:* on 8/26 from Gladys Palpallatoc of CETF wrote that SB740 was put on Suspense at the Assembly Appropriations Committee Hearing this week. It is anticipated that the bill will get off of Suspense. But to ensure this, it is CRITICAL to continue emailing, calling and/or visiting ASAP, Members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee, as well as your other legislators to urge their support for SB740. Preliminary decisions on which bills will make it out of Suspense will be made by approximately next Wednesday, 8/28 & a final decision will be announced by Friday, 8/30. Please continue your outreach & ask your partners, particularly elected & government officials to contact legislators (Assembly & Senate).
 - d. Please contact the Alliance if you would like contact information for various legislators, and we would be happy to send you that information.
- 6. FirstNet report – Randy MacDonald, Comptche Volunteer Fire Dept Assistant Chief**
- a. Randy provided Jim with the notes from the third of six meetings of the First Net Consultation that was held in San Francisco on May 29-30. The meeting was hosted by FirstNet and the National Governor’s Association. After reviewing the notes, Jim would like to add this to the agenda for our Sept. 6th meeting for discussion.
 - b. Trish will forward those notes out with our meeting notes next week.
 - c. Randy did say, “Nothing was happening very fast”, which gives time for others to review the notes too and participate more fully in the discussion.
- 7. MCOE/CalTrans/Alliance Transportation Planning Grant -“Bridging the Digital Divide in Mendocino County”**
- a. We have not heard back from CalTrans yet as to whether our joint application was selected for funding. We expect to hear any time now.
 - b. County Superintendent Paul Tichinin spoke with the CASF review team when they were in Mendocino on Tuesday about the application, and explained the reason behind it: the MCOE partnered with MCOG and the Alliance since the broadband coverage maps weren’t providing ground truth mapping, and we need to see the extent of the problem in Mendocino County to prepare for coming changes in the state educational system that will require students to have adequate broadband access at home.
- 8. Committee reports**
- a. The Alliance Media Relations sub-committee (Carole, Jim, Mike, Susanne, and Trish) will hold their first meeting this afternoon.
 - b. The goal of the meeting is to create a media plan which will prioritize a list of possible projects and strategies that relate to public relations.
 - c. This plan will then be sent to the Alliance Executive Committee for approval.
 - d. Brian brought up a really good point: at the CPUC meeting in Point Arena, when there was a comment made about fiber, the review staff immediately asked if there was any

newspaper report on it. In this case the answer was “Yes”, and the staff wanted a copy of the paper. It was clear that press releases help them document issues and then it becomes something that they can use in their work.

- e. Greg added that the newly formed Broadband Coalition really needs publicity, and that we need to get our story out.

9. Meeting Adjourned at 11:00 am

Next meeting: Sept 6th, Sept. 27th,

No meeting on Sept 2nd as incorrectly stated on this week’s agenda



08/09/13

ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

What Happens When A Community Lacks Affordable High-Speed Broadband



Los Angeles



Mendocino County

Stories From California's Regional Broadband Consortia



Humboldt County



EL MOLINO HIGH SCHOOL, FORESTVILLE, SONOMA COUNTY 650 STUDENTS



El Molino High School, an important community institution in **Forestville**, is facing declining enrollment because of inadequate connectivity. It's putting a strain on families who must find ways to get their students to a more connected high school in Sebastopol nearly 15 miles away, the Sebastopol school that is not prepared to deal with the transfer students, and El Molino teachers and parents who worry the limited bandwidth will hamper

implementing Common Core standards and testing, impacting student achievement. Community leaders and families without the resources to get their children to the more connected school are concerned that socioeconomic and ethnic divides are emerging in the school system in this close-knit community.

JOY ROAD, OCCIDENTAL, SONOMA COUNTY, 350 HOMES



Joy Road Homeowners Association, 350 homes in **Western Sonoma County**, relies on a wireless Internet service provider that offers slow (1-2 mbps compared to CPUC standard 6 mbps) but only for line of sight service. Those without line of sight must rely on satellite (if the southwest window to sky is available), expensive cell phone tethering (reception is often spotty) or dial-up service. Nevertheless, this area, less than 10 miles inland from Bodega Bay, is designated on California Public Utilities Commission maps as being fully served by broadband.

COAST COMMUNITY LIBRARY, POINT ARENA, MENDOCINO COUNTY



“We can’t fulfill our mission to be the education center of our community.” -- County Librarian

Mindy Kittay

Because of a slow, unreliable WiFi connection, patrons of **Coast Community Library**, Point Arena’s community hub, often have to wait in line to get online. There is no other free public access broadband available in the town, even though a fiber-fed central office is 100 yards up the street. And, once online, it’s not uncommon for people to **lose their connection** while in the middle of a job application or research project, reports Mendocino County Librarian Mindy Kittay.

POINT ARENA SCHOOLS, MENDOCINO COUNTY, 400 STUDENTS

Highway 1 is also called School Street when it runs past the **Point Arena’s** elementary school (pictured below). Fiber runs north for a block (see the “Warning” sign on utility pole) then left



along Lake Street, bisecting the complex that is home to **three public schools serving about 400 students**. Still, the public schools must pay for T-1 lines to serve students and staff because the provider refuses to connect them to the fiber. “Fiber bisects the street right between the middle school and the high school yet they have to lease 6 T-1 lines costing \$2,400 a month,” says local businessman Greg Jirak.

MAR VISTA GARDENS, WEST LOS ANGELES, 2000 RESIDENTS



Nearly 1,000 children and youth live in the **Mar Vista Gardens** public housing community, managed by the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA). The average household income for L.A. public housing families is a little over \$16,000.



The cost of Internet service is a big barrier to overcome. Mar Vista resident Reyna Peyanez (pictured above with son Raul) says she reluctantly cancelled her \$80 a month Internet plan when the family computer broke and she no longer could afford the plan, even knowing Raul, 7, and his sister likely would need it to excel in school. In a unique partnership, HACLA and the California Emerging Technology Fund are launching a **Smart Housing Pilot Partnership** to provide **free WiFi to each Mar Vista unit**, in addition to bilingual digital literacy training and low-cost computers. The goal is develop a cost-effective model and secure California Advanced Services Funds to expand free Internet to all of HACLA's nearly 7,000 public housing households spread throughout 14 communities, and eventually all unconnected public housing statewide.

JESSICA'S STORY, EUREKA, HUMBOLDT COUNTY



I live at 2916 Spears Road in **Eureka** and, despite many attempts, have been unable to get Internet service at my house. In 2011, I was accepted into an online graduate school program through George Washington University. This initiated an exhaustive search to identify a service provider that could supply reliable internet service at our home. In August 2011, I contacted five Internet providers to explore my high-speed Internet or broadband options. I was repeatedly told that our residence was not in their "service area" or that they couldn't guarantee adequate internet speeds (satellite providers).

Our home is located only a half-mile off of Myrtle Ave (a major thoroughfare in Eureka). I can drive to our local Safeway in 5 minutes and make it to the gym in less than 3.

My husband, who is a small business owner, cannot manage any of his financial accounts, billing, or other business related work over the internet. My son, who will be a high school freshman, is faced with school work that more and more requires suitable access to the internet. As for me, I just completed my online graduate program, by cobbling together study time at a local coffee shop (thanks to their free internet!) and long weekends in my worksite.

ORLEANS, HUMBOLDT COUNTY, 600 RESIDENTS

Orleans is a rural community in North-East **Humboldt County** with a population of 600, about a third of whom are members of the **Karuk Tribe**. There is **no cell service, no high-speed Internet**, and the land-line phone service still fails regularly. After years of waiting for providers to improve service, the Karuk Tribe decided to solve the problem by becoming the provider. In 2011, the tribe was awarded a USDA Community Connect Grant to build infrastructure, and Internet service is expected by next spring.



The Karuk Tribe has submitted plans to the California Advanced Services Fund to partner with the neighboring **Yurok Tribe** to expand service to include the communities of **Weitchpec, Wautec, and Orick**, bringing home Internet to another 450 households.

FARMWORKER HOUSING, SALINAS VALLEY , MONTEREY COUNTY



The **Salinas Valley** is one of the most productive agricultural areas in the world. It is characterized by large corporate farms that primarily employ a migrant workforce. Still, large stretches of the eastern valley, from Salinas to Gonzalez in **Monterey County**, lack access to broadband, along with many of the other 21st Century benefits that other parts of California take for granted. Unemployment rates top 20% in some communities and the California Department of Education recently designated several of the Valley's public schools as "persistently low-achieving schools."

Because the valley floor is so fertile, there is a tendency to push housing, particularly for migrant workers, into less valuable land in the hot, dry canyons of the Gabilan mountain range. The sparse population and distance from central office facilities have dissuaded telephone and cable companies from investing in wireline infrastructure, and the hilly terrain makes wireless service problematic. Data from the California Public Utilities Commission show that the area is in the state's lowest tiers of broadband adoption (0% to 29%) and broadband penetration (0% to 29%).

MARIA'S STORY FIREBAUGH, FRESNO COUNTY



Two years ago, Maria Franco was diagnosed with diabetes. At first disheartened at the news, she soon figured out she could be her own best health advocate. Living on the outskirts of **Firebaugh** in the Fresno County however, she does not have access to broadband at home. Through a grant from California Emerging Technology Fund to the city, she can go to town to get online and take digital literacy training through a partnership with Los Promotores, which promotes health and welfare initiatives. But for Maria and hundreds of nearby residents that requires getting in a car to get online.

"I had never before in my life used the Internet," Maria said. Now, through online searches she says she has been able to find and learn about holistic medicines to treat diabetes. "Broadband and computer literacy have opened up a world of information," she said, and a new avenue for her eagerness to give back to her community. "I am now more involved in helping others," she said. Just imagine if she had broadband access at home.



CHROME RIDGE, PLACERVILLE, EL DORADO COUNTY

“We are in a black hole between the communities that are connected,”
-- Placerville area resident



There are more than forty homes in the **Chrome Ridge Road** neighborhood on the east side of **Gold Oak Elementary School** and the **Holm Road** neighborhood on the west side – about 7 miles from downtown

Placerville. There are at least as many more homes also in walking distance of the school (school is cluster at center of photo above). Yet, despite the availability of broadband at the school, thanks to the T-1 line installed, high-speed Internet service is not available to the surrounding residents.

NEVADA COUNTY



Nevada County has a video business cluster that sells its products and services worldwide, requiring technical support people on call 24/7. These employees often work from home, requiring a broadband connection. When a new tech service person is hired, their housing choices are limited to those homes with broadband connections. This is a shrinking inventory in Nevada County, and that is impacting economic growth.