

Steering Committee Meeting Notes

Friday, November 8th, 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

Dial In # (760) 569-7225, Participant Access Code: 108 1131#

1. Call to Order: 10:00 am

- a. Attendees: : **Brian Churm** (Alliance Technology Chair), **Dan Hamburg** (Mendocino County 5th District Supervisor), **Doug McCorkle** (North Coast Railroad Authority), **Jim Moorehead** (Alliance Chairman), **John Kuhry** (Economic Development and Financing Corporation), **Mike Nicholls** (Access Sonoma Broadband Co-chair), **Ray Gifford** (Ukiah Wireless), **Trish Steel** (Alliance Administrative Coordinator)
- b. Call-in: **Greg Jirak** (Alliance volunteer), **Cathy Emerson** (UCCC Manager, Center Economic Development), **Mitch Drake** (CEO, Golden Bear Broadband), **Myron Curtis** (Deputy Sector Navigator, ICT/DM, Far North Regional Consortium)
- c. Guests: **Jim Wood** (2nd District Candidate), **Sherry Baxter** (Mendocino County resident), **Quintin Brady** (Intern, Mendocino County CEO's Office)

2. Broadband Coalition of Northern California Counties

- a. There is not a lot new to report.
- b. Myron Curtis called in from Butte County and joined the on-going dialog. Myron is the Deputy Sector Navigator, ICT/DM, Far North Regional Consortium which comprises 15 community colleges in northern California. The goal of the consortium is to facilitate communication among the Chancellor's Office, the Economic and Workforce Development Program Centers and Initiatives, and the Offices of Contract Education. Myron is dedicated to getting students into career jobs, and to do that the consortium needs to make sure that students can take courses across campuses. That requires them to have a larger number of on-line courses, and a lot more tele-presence in the classrooms (skype, Cinema Craft Encoder, aka CCE) or to subscribe to a structure which creates tele-presence in the classrooms.
- c. Myron noted that the northern counties account for 29% of the underserved population in California, and that those are the people they are trying to reach. But ultimately, the real problem is that they are training students to go and work in other places and that creates a talent drain, which has to stop. Students need to get involved outside of their communities in order to bring money back into their communities, and then to stay here. "We are losing our young talent because we (northern counties) don't have adequate broadband." Although they don't have official statistics, anecdotally it's known to be a growing problem.
- d. GJ asked Myron to send the Coalition a letter to that effect.
- e. It was also brought up that we may be inadvertently discriminating against large number of minorities by not providing adequate broadband; most rural counties have

higher percentage of retired, Hispanics, black, and native people where there is not access and/or affordable access.

- f. Also rural communities have a higher percentage of people on public assistance, and it makes sense to help bring economic development to these areas to help people migrate away from that.
- g. CE said to be cautious about how the word “discriminate” is used, because although we all know it intuitively, we can’t get down to a granular enough level to prove it statistically. She suggested using more receptive language such as “left behind” so that people we want to come to the conversation are not alienated.
- h. Jim thanked Myron for participating in this conversation, and that we look forward to working with him.

3. Golden Bear Broadband (GBB)

- a. Mendocino County School Superintendent Paul Tichinin is on a state committee on K-12 high speed access for schools as part of the state’s efforts to get broadband deployed throughout the state. He is gathering data on what the current access for schools is, and what their needs/future needs are, and he has stated emphatically that schools do not have adequate bandwidth. Paul will be asking for a letter supporting GBB from State Superintendent of Schools Tom Torlakson which would go directly to CPUC Commissioner Sandoval.
- b. The Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California (CENIC, a nonprofit corporation formed in 1996 to provide high-performance, high-bandwidth networking services to California K-20 public education, universities and research institutions) has also been asked to do an inventory of schools and funnel that information up to CPUC Commissioner Sandoval as well. We are not sure who is working on this, or when it is scheduled to be complete. The bottom line is that Commissioner Sandoval is trying to ascertain what current and future bandwidth issues for education are.
- c. Mitch is still waiting to hear from the CPUC on which routes of his project will be approved. He has provided them with an excellent plan, quotes from carriers, and updates on his progress, but cannot report anything at this time. He is standing by every day, waiting to hear from staff.

4. Access Sonoma Broadband (ASB)

- a. Their next meeting will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 20th in Santa Rosa at the Economic Development Board office from 10-12 am. This is an open meeting, and anyone is invited to attend.
- b. They will be having Scott Adams, Comcast Director of Government Affairs for the North Bay as a guest at this meeting. He will make a presentation on the Comcast Internet Essentials (IE) program.
- c. Scott has requested a list of questions he will be asked, so Steve Sharpe has suggested to we respond to this request.
- d. Some possible questions for Scott: Comcast’s official stance on “net neutrality” (MN); Comcast’s intended build out for Sonoma and Mendocino County (MN) and maps of their franchise territory; request for the same info for Sonoma County that Scott

provided the Alliance a year and a half ago on the IE program in Mendocino County. In that info, there was only an 8% adoption on IE in Mendocino County.

- e. Last year the Alliance asked Scott for maps of their service area for Mendocino County, but Comcast would not provide them. JK wondered if the city or county could make an official request for those maps, since Comcast has a franchise with the city/counties.
- f. Trish will work with Dan for doing this and taking to the city councils to get it done (city and county signatory). It would not need to go to the Board of Supervisors.
- g. MN suggested that in this request we ask Comcast to prove that they are in balance with ethnicity and income diversity, since the law requires franchise holders to do this.
- h. Mendocino County Franchise agreements are still local, but Sonoma County has a state-issued franchise agreement; Assembly Bill 2987 was a law passed that stipulated that when local agreements expire, then everything goes to the state. Currently Sonoma County is state-issued.
 - i. On September 29, 2006, the Legislature passed, and Governor Schwarzenegger signed into law [Assembly Bill 2987](#), the Digital Infrastructure and Video Competition Act of 2006 (DIVCA). Prior to DIVCA, cable television franchises were issued by cities and counties. DIVCA replaces that system with one in which video franchises are now issued by the CPUC, rather than these local entities.
 - ii. More information about DIVCA can be found here: <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/Telco/Information+for+providing+service/videofranchising.htm>
- i. JK suggested that this could be a two-step process, so as to not put Comcast in a defensive position.
- j. Myron asked if we are involved with any statewide organizations or if we are part of a larger collaborative effort working towards the same goal.
- k. Jim responded that there are not many groups like the Alliance even in California, so that we feel more like an island doing this work. There is a non-profit in St. Paul called the *Institute for Local Self-Reliance* that we are aware of and interact with somewhat.
- l. For more information about the Institute of Local Self-Reliance: <http://www.ilsr.org/> and the companion site <http://muninetworks.org>
- m. MN will look at their newsletters and see if there is a national group that we should be connecting with.
- n. *Subsequent to the meeting, JK provided this information on about national groups working on the issue of rural connectivity:*
 - i. <http://www.ruralstrategies.org/rural-broadband-policy-group>
 - ii. <http://www.ruralstrategies.org/broadband>
- o. Myron suggested that we need a stronger and more collaborative effort to create a larger voice to push through some of this inertia. There are strong arguments for doing what we are doing, and maybe there are best practices that we need to look at.

- p. Jim agreed, but his final comment was that because of the volunteer nature of the Alliance and also ASB, it's a matter of resources and time for this. We do what we can with our limited resources.
- q. We are always looking for volunteers who can help out.

5. CPUC mapping validation of BB availability.

- a. The Alliance is participating in a CPUC Broadband Mapping Working Group; we have made a lot of noise over the last three years about the maps and the methodology used to collect the data. Up until now, there has been no way for the public to add input, and no third party independent validation of the information which is provided by the carriers. When you look at the broadband maps, we feel that the coverage is grossly overstated.
- b. Now the CPUC has started to do something about it, and has added an additional layer to the maps so that the public can add input. They have distributed a *Broadband Availability Public Feedback Survey* as a means for public input to this database. The CPUC has asked everyone to please share this survey as widely as possible.
- c. There are three ways to provide input: paper survey which is mailed into the CPUC; the on-line survey, and using a cellular phone application.
- d. This survey with more information is attached with these notes. You can also take the online survey immediately:
 - i. Go to: <http://www.broadbandmap.ca.gov/>
 - ii. Click "Interactive Map"
 - iii. Select the House icon, third down from the top on the right side of the map. This is the "Address Lookup" tool.
 - iv. Enter your physical address and select "Locate"
 - v. A box with service providers in your area appears, and directly above it you will see the link 'Send Feedback.' Click this link and the survey will appear on your screen. Answer the questions and submit the survey.
- e. The survey is very encouraging, and we are happy that the CPUC is moving ahead with this. We plan to distribute this survey widely in Mendocino County, and have even proposed the distribution of this survey as a "seed project" for someone in the Leadership Mendocino program.
- f. We would also like to get this survey distributed to all students in the public schools, especially since the prior MCOE/MCOG/Caltrans grant proposal was not funded.
- g. If anyone wants to help with the distribution of this survey, or has ideas, please contact Trish at <mailto:AdminCoordinator@MendocinoBroadband.org>
- h. This survey will help the CPUC get better and better data about broadband coverage; coverage in some areas will increase, and others will decrease. Jim's house finally shows it as "unserved" which it is (prior he had a choice of three providers...). Accurate data is important information for the CPUC staff to have in their decision-making role.

6. Opportunities/Other

- a. Jim asked guest Sherry Baxter how and why she came to the meeting. She heard the meeting announced on KZYX radio, and decided to attend and find out more. She lives in the Cunningham Road area of Ukiah, and has been dealing with dial-up for six years. Her neighbors down the road have DSL service, and she has called ATT on a regular basis with no luck. Lack of broadband has negatively impacted her work, and her son's ability to do homework. She has tried many things all of which have been extremely frustrating.
- b. Many people in Mendocino County are in a similar situation, and we could relate to her frustration as that was the reason for the formation of the Coastal Alliance years ago.

7. Meeting Adjourned at 11:30

Next meeting: November 15th, (no meeting November 22nd and 29th), Dec. 6th