Steering Committee Meeting Notes
Friday, Dec. 5th, 10:00 am – 12:00 am
Ukiah Conference Center (temporary location)
200 South School Street, Ukiah 95482

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

1. **Call to Order: 10:00 am**

   a. Attendees: Brian Churm, Brooke Clarke, Steve Dunnicliff, Howard Egan, Cathy Emerson, Shirley Freriks, Katie Gibbs, Ray Gifford, Jr., John Goldsmith, Dan Hamburg, John Kuhry, Richard Lampken, Randy MacDonald, Jim Moorehead, Mike Nicholls, Trish Steel

   b. Call-in: None

   c. Changes to the agenda: update on county broadband position

2. **Items of interest**

   a. At the Nov. 10th Mendocino County Board of Supervisors Meeting there were two items on agenda that are related to broadband:

      i. The August 3, 2014 AT&T Fiber Break Broadband Outage Report was approved and is now posted on the county website at http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/bos/incidentreport.htm; the Alliance homepage links to the county website.

      ii. The Supervisors also approved a budget item creating a part-time broadband coordinator to replace Jim. The position will be in the Planning & Building Services Department, of which Steve Dunnicliff is the Director.

3. **Update on Broadband Coordinator position – Steve Dunnicliff**

   a. Steve hopes that he will have something to announce in the next few weeks. The position will be in the Planning Department, but Steve will keep his involvement "backseat" to the new hire.

   b. Money will be allocated in an hourly contract basis. There are three options: as a county employee, as a county contractor, or as a contractor of EDFC.

   c. There are some economic efforts happening in the county, and there may be opportunities to align with broadband.

4. **Update on the Sonoma-Mendocino Economic Development District – John Kuhry**

   a. We now have a joint Sonoma-Mendocino Economic Development District (SMEDD) which will allow for regional approaches to problem solving, which will increase the chances for funding from places like the Economic Development Administration (EDA).

b. Both Mendocino and Sonoma have an individual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), but together as the SMEDD we have access to larger pots of money.

c. The SMEDD will next appoint a Board of Directors, and this will help decide how to coordinate efforts.

d. The Alliance will continue to meet as the county advocacy group pushing the broadband effort forward; Shirley also pointed out that the Mendocino Coast Broadband Alliance will also continue to exist.

e. The Alliance is currently working on an overall county fiber backbone plan, which may include the Skunk and North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA) rights-of-way; NCRA has already negotiated with Parallel Infrastructure for telecommunications RoW negotiations, and they are doing a complete inventory of the complete NCRA RoW.

f. AT&T's option on the Skunk Train RoW was abandoned, so the Alliance is just beginning to explore that situation. We have an upcoming conference call to discuss.

g. John Kuhry highlighted the fact that we are talking about new infrastructure, and that there is still a valid conversation about how to bring broadband access into the urban cores and for low-income residents. He wondered how Title II classification of broadband would affect this.

h. Mike Nicholls provided a summary of what we understand the effect of Title II regulation would be. When broadband was de-regulated in 1996, and deemed an "information" services as opposed to a "telecommunication" service, the FCC as well as the state Public Utilities Commission did not and does not have the authority to direct incumbent companies to build out. Title II is part of federal regulations which regulates telecommunications. If broadband is re-classified under Title II, then they would have the authority to change the requirements.

i. With the transition from copper to fiber, information and telephone data are all on the same equipment, but one is regulated and the other is not, even though it is the same wire. Carriers of last resort feel that they shouldn't have to deliver calls to remote areas.

j. Jim and Mike wrote to the NBNCBC management team with a proposal including parallel strategy ideas, so that we don't put all our hopes into federal or state grant infrastructure funding to solve our problem. There is no guarantee our counties will get any funding, especially if the barriers are such that the providers don't want to even apply. Currently there is money available and no one is applying for it.

k. We will press forward with our NBNCBC work plan, but we need to have some type of fall-back position. If half of the house-holds are underserved or unserved in our county, that is roughly 15,000 households. Wireless won't work for much of our terrain, and that means as much as $70-120 million will be needed for a fiber-to-the-home build.

l. John Kuhry said that until there is an economic model that can address the issue of transferring operating costs from low-cost areas to high-cost areas, this is all moot because it won't be sustainable.

m. The topic of de Novo was discussed and how their business plan was sustainable…de Novo received a $2 million Google grant for a start-up wireless network in Point Arena,

using "software defined network" or SDN. It's subsidized now, but how will they prevent operational costs from spiking down the road?

n. (Note: later on Friday it was announced that the de Novo group was short-listed for a $609,600 FCC Broadband Experiment grant award)

o. Often smaller providers need help with grant writing to be able to apply for some of the available money. John K thought that providing grant-writing support would be a tangible effort.

p. The question is how to get compensated to do this? Hiring a grant-writer to help the providers in the four counties could be a CASF- reimbursable expense if it is part of our workplan. We could think about modifying our work plan and budget to include this expense.

q. John said that the EDFC has applied for two grants: one to the Certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) for a $600,000 grant to build capacity (researching, writing, administering) which could be used for broadband efforts. The other was to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for $1 million.

r. (John informed us this week that he heard they did not get the EDA grant.)

s. EDFC is a Certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) and is working on getting it Community Development Entity (CDE) certification which would allow EDFC to access New Market Tax Credits - which could be used to develop large projects.

t. EDFC is finalizing its Direct Public Offering of local social impact notes. These six-year notes will allow people to invest locally in their community. The target $1M raised will be used to match grant funds to then create a $2M fund for local impact projects.

5. **Public Safety Communications in Mendocino County – Randy MacDonald**

a. Randy MacDonald wears many hats in his public safety role, including the Comptche Fire Second Assistant Chief.

b. Today he made a presentation to help us understand the interface of public safety with broadband.

c. There are three functions of Public Safety:

   i. Fire- they are often the first medical responders too
   ii. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) – ambulances, hospitals
   iii. Law Enforcement (LE)- work at the interface

d. What agencies are operating within Mendocino County?

   i. Fire: there are 24 independent Fire Departments; some work under city governments, but most have their own boards. They coordinate with each other by a meeting every other month between the Fire Chiefs, and have various committees. Randy is the Chair of the Communications Committee of the Fire Chiefs. CalFire (State) also operates in the county.
   ii. EMS has a number of ambulance companies that work in the county.
   iii. LE has City Police (4 departments), County Sheriff, State CHP, State Parks, Coast Guard.

e. What latitude to these agencies have to work collaboratively, or to take the lead in broadband issues?

    i. State agencies – very little because they are bound by state rules, have no ability to take policy position, and typically have their own sourcing.

    ii. Federal agencies – same as state…

    iii. Local agencies – here is where there is potential to work collaboratively.

f. Local agencies

    i. EMS – not much broadband leadership potential, focused on other things

    ii. Fire Chiefs – not likely to take advocacy position without going to their board first. But AS A GROUP they are very supportive, and could take a position as the Fire Chief's group.

    iii. Sheriff – is often willing to take a position, and politically can speak more uniquely than other law agencies can on *policy* issues. And there is a relationship between the Sheriff and the county Board of Supervisors. The BoS is the lead agency that is solidly behind broadband.

g. Potential areas of collaboration

    i. Greg Glavich was hired as the County Communications Coordinator, and is also co-Chair of NCAP and Chair of the Public Safety Committee. He works under the County Information Services. He is a valuable resource, knows a lot, and can work in conjunction with the broader effort. Public safety agencies are generally support of the broadband effort, but it is not their mission and so can't take a lead on it. Randy will invite Greg to our Jan. 9th BAMC meeting.

    ii. Randy was appointed to be the liaison between the Public Safety Committee and the Alliance (2011). He is still this liaison, and can facilitate cooperation.

    iii. Facilities – buildings around the county, Anchor Institutions, identified in grants

    iv. Microwave system, antennas, towers (county owns one); Greg is going up them all the time.

    v. Cooperation with deployment efforts where feasible (but no money for this)

    vi. First-net, ; Greg Glavich attends First-Net meetings

    vii. 911 system reliability. Randy was shocked to learn that Sonoma County had a similar situation last year.

        1. Can we find out areas of vulnerability? At least we can tell those communities alternate ways to reach help in the case of an outage…

    viii. Public-Private partnerships to get grant money. That is how the Eureka fiber build was funded…we could try to get grant money to build critical infrastructure, such as the Skunk fiber build from Fort Bragg to Willits.

    ix. Regarding the Mendocino County fiber backbone plan, Jim, Trish and Tom will clean up the map that was started with Golden Bear Broadband, and Randy and Greg should be part of that broadband plan/network as we move forward. Let's develop the plan, and then move ahead and figure out how to fund this.

h. John Kuhry sees opportunity here, and we need to get everyone in the room talking…

6. **North Bay/North Coast Broadband Consortium –Jim, Mike, Trish**

   a. The 2nd Quarter for the consortium ends Dec. 31st. County managers will submit reports to Manager Tom West for the consortium 2nd quarter report submitted to the oversight committee and then then after approval to the CPUC.

   b. Updates to County backbone plan

      i. We have a map that we are working with, and we will be detailing specific routes, adding, subtracting, and include the Skunk and NCRA RoW and how they connect with priority areas.

   c. Chico Mobile Wireless Testing in Mendocino

      i. Testing in Mendocino County started on Monday (12/01/14) at four locations around the county: 7 Capella locations, 2 Rancho Navarro locations, 24 Willits locations, and 12 Gualala locations.

      ii. These locations are randomly selected within a specific area, and then moved to the closest house/road location.

      iii. These locations were not our priority areas, as the priority areas have already come back as unserved and underserved for round 10 data and so there is no need to test. These locations are considered "served" and so this was to verify that designation.

      iv. Trish joined the Chico tester, Tom Allread, for 4 locations in Willits. She was surprised at how variable and poor the results seemed to be, especially since the test locations were right along Highway 101. The testing took a long time since the signal was poor, roughly an hour/location.

   d. Additional Priority Areas – (not discussed during the meeting due to lack of time)

      i. Although not discussed at the meeting, six additional Priority Areas have been submitted:
         1. Unserved: Navarro Bluff Road (26 households)
         2. Underserved: Comptche (190 HH), Comptche-Ukiah Little River Airport Road (177 HH), Philo Greenwood Road (81 HH), Covelo (300 HH), Leggett (55 HH). Total Households: 829

   e. NBNCBC Activity 5.1 (deliverable 3): Report on the availability and need for adoption programs (not discussed at the meeting due to lack of time)

      i. Activity 5.1 is due 3/31/14. In this activity we collect data on existing adoption and training programs that are meant to close the digital divide. The digital divide is the gulf between those who have broadband and those who don't, and adoption programs are for people to learn the value of broadband, and how it can improve their lives. We are just starting the process to identify what our current programs are, and assess the need for adoption programs through-out the county.

      ii. There are eleven components that the Alliance has identified that create the Digital Divide: availability, bandwidth, capacity (limits), latency, cost,

equipment, redundancy, diversity (competition), adoption, expertise, and political money to maintain status quo.

   iii. Another question we will need to answer is "What qualifies for an adoption program?" Then answer which part of the digital divide does the program address? What component of the digital divide do the adoption programs fail to address?

7. **CPUC Mapping – not discussed due to lack of time**   *Trish*

   a. Door-to-door Direct mailing

      i. We are working on creating a mailing that will be distributed widely throughout the county and will include the CPUC survey. It will be delivered to each address by the postman/postwoman on specific mail routes.
      ii. The advantage is that we can reach a lot of households this way, without needing to have each individual address.
      iii. The disadvantage is that each route costs money, and you have to include all the houses on a route. We will be sending surveys to places where there may be good broadband and no need for the survey.

   b. Fixed Wireless Testing challenge

      i. For Mendocino and Humboldt, Fixed Wireless plays a huge role in providing service. Basically, every census block will have coverage by fixed wireless, and that knocks out eligibility for CASF funding. We need to test to be sure that what is being advertised is actually available.
      ii. Brian suggested that simple antennae could test for the availability of a signal at various locations.

8. **National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (NASUCA)**

   a. Jim and Peter Pratt (Marin) were invited by Regina Costa of TURN to participate in a telecom panel that she organized at the annual NASUCA conference, this year in San Francisco.
   b. Jim presented highlights of Incident report on the Broadband outage that happened in our county in early August, and its effect on our county. The full report was approved by the Board of Supervisors on November 10 and is available here: http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/bos/incidentreport.htm
   c. Peter's presentation developed the point that the stimulus-funded State Broadband Data & Development (SBDD) mapping program has ended. As a national federal-state program, it no longer exists, given that NTIA and the states no longer have the money to continue the effort.
   d. The FCC now takes the lead with a reformed Form 477 process, which will hopefully be fully coordinated with the Connect America Fund (CAF) challenge rounds.
   e. The current Form 477 rules take reporting by providers down to the Census block level. Elements of the CAF challenge round process of FCC appear to be more robust that the state programs, in terms of updating the maps for accuracy, responsiveness to public input, and the like. Peter argued that '*Like it or not, the Commission Form 477 process is*

what we have now in place. That is what we need to work with now, and decide as broadband developers how it can be improved.'

    f. What we need is to actually develop networks in underserved areas:

        i. We need *visibility* over what infrastructure exists where. The fact that most of this infrastructure exists in the public rights-of-way means it is unacceptable that we continue to have poor visibility over these assets in public property.

        ii. Lack of information about existing broadband infrastructure and services could possibly be considered a "barrier to entry" under Sec. 706 of the federal Telecom Act.

    g. Peter's final point: We may be better off under the FCC program, given that the CPUC uses mobile wireless data for broadband mapping.

9. **Access Sonoma Broadband – not discussed due to lack of time**   **Mike**

    a. Access Sonoma Broadband held its last meeting on Wednesday, November 19th in Santa Rosa.

    b. For more information, please see their website: http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/projects/access-sonoma-broadband/

10. **Final thoughts and comments:**

    a. Cathy commented that she has been meeting with other consortia folks in rural counties to begin discussion of possible strategies for furthering consortia momentum.

    b. CPUC Commissioner Sandoval made it clear that she believe that new legislation is needed to revamp the CASF program. The grant window has been open a week now, and there are NO applications in yet, anywhere in the state.

    c. Mike suggested a service fee for text messages as a vehicle to generate some revenue. Brian said that texting is "going away."

11. **Meeting Adjourned 12:00**

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Next meeting: Friday January 9th

Mendocino Room at the Economic Development and Financing Corporation

631 S. Orchard Ave, Ukiah 95482

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