

Steering Committee Meeting Notes

Friday, January 10, 2014 10:00 am – 11:45

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: **Bob Perkowski** (Perkowski Screenprinting), **Jacob Turner** (Ring Nebula Systems), **Jim Moorehead** (Alliance Chairman), **Howard Egan** (Norbar), **Susanne Norgard** (Executive Director, Community Foundation), **Trish Steel** (Alliance Administrative Coordinator)
- b. Call-in: **Cathy Emerson** (Program Manager, Broadband Organization Development and Facilitation), **Greg Jirak** (Alliance volunteer), **Mitch Drake** (CEO, Golden Bear Broadband)
- c. Guests: **Matt Goff** (Business Adjunct Faculty, Umpqua Community College), **Richard Lamken** (ED of Human Resources/Information Technology for Mendocino County Office of Education)

2. Broadband Coalition of Northern California Counties (BCNCC)

- a. We recently sent out an invitation to all BCNCC members inviting their attendance at the upcoming California Broadband Council meeting on 1/22/14 in Sacramento.
- b. We are working on getting the BCNCC portion of the website up and running.
- c. We still stand at having twenty-eight letters of endorsements for the statement that “Substandard broadband damages the regional economy”. Ten different counties are represented, and included are endorsement letters from Boards of Supervisors, County Superintendents, businesses, and non-profits.

3. Golden Bear Broadband (GBB)

- a. Mitch Drake updated the group about the status of the GBB since receiving the CPUC letter of determination. We are coming up on the one-year mark, February 1, 2012, for when the GBB was first submitted to the CPUC.
- b. Mitch is working on the viability of submitting separate applications
- c. Assuming GBB board approval to proceed, Mitch will submit the project summaries when complete to the CPUC for reposting.
- d. There will then be another 30-day challenge period for carriers to challenge the project.
- e. Of the 30 applications that were received, 18 have been approved, 7 rejected or withdrawn, one is before the commission, and 11 are currently under review and not yet sent to the commission (including GBB).
- f. Applications have not been challenged to this extent before by the incumbent carriers; this is why we believe the process has been taking so long.

4. Access Sonoma Broadband – ASB

- a. The next meeting of Access Sonoma Broadband will be on January 15th at the Economic Development Building in Santa Rosa, 10 am.
- b. Steve Sharpe reports that Comcast, Verizon, and AT&T have said that they will be attending that meeting to give presentations.
- c. Sonoma County Supervisors Efren Carrillo (5th District) and Susan Gorin (1st District) will also be attending.
- d. If anyone would like to receive the agendas and notes from the ASB meetings, please contact Trish and she will add you to the ASB email list.

5. North Bay/North Coast Broadband Consortium - NBNCBC

- a. Jim updated everyone on the status of the NBNCBC grant application, including some background information.
- b. In 2007, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) authorized the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) to provide grants to bridge the “digital divide” in unserved and underserved areas of the state. The digital divide refers to the gap between people who possess regular access to technology and the ability to access the internet, and those who do not have this access. The CASF is funded by a surcharge rate on revenues collected by telecommunications carriers from end-users for intrastate telecommunications services.
- c. In 2010, the CASF was expanded into three accounts, and one of those accounts became the “Rural and Urban Regional Broadband Consortia Account” whose intended purpose is to “to fund the cost of broadband deployment activities *other* than the capital cost of facilities.” These activities include regional planning for broadband deployment, and activities promoting broadband access and adoption. There are currently fourteen such broadband consortiums throughout the state, incorporating anywhere from a single county (Los Angeles County) to eight counties (San Joaquin Valley Regional Broadband Consortium). More information about the CASF grant program and these regional consortiums can be found on the CPUC website:
<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/telco/casf%20consortia>.
- d. Several months ago, the CPUC announced a new round of funding available from this consortia account to set up new consortiums for broadband regional planning.
- e. Mendocino and Sonoma already have a close working relationship with much in common, and through collaboration with Napa and Marin the North Bay/North Coast Broadband Consortium (NBNCBC) grant application was created, requesting \$445,947 in a 3-year grant, for the formation of a new consortium that would commence in 2015.
- f. Napa and Marin counties are currently not aligned with existing consortia. Mendocino is currently part of a four-county consortium (RCC) based in Humboldt County and Sonoma County is part of a four-county consortium (UCCC) based in Chico. Both consortia are in the third year of three-year contracts.
- g. County-specific CASF funds will be spent to survey current county broadband availability, and to stimulate improved broadband deployment and adoption throughout each county. Since the four counties form an economic and cultural region, programs to

improve broadband adoption can be replicated, and customized for each county. Counties don't need to reinvent broadband adoption programs from scratch.

- h. The NBNCBC received 46 letters of support from a diversity of organizations from around the region (Marin-26, Mendocino-12, Sonoma-7, Napa-1)
- i. We will post the application on the Alliance website soon, so all information will be public.
- j. Tom West came out of retirement and volunteered his time to put together the application, and has volunteered to be the consortia manager. Four years ago, he and Cathy Emerson put together two consortia applications, and were successful in getting those grants. He was then the co-manager for these two consortias. He's a true professional with in-depth experience, and the founding CEO of CENIC.

6. Point Arena Planning Commission Meeting

- a. On January 7th the Point Arena City Planning Commission held a hearing to consider the AT&T project to build fiber to the PA schools.
- b. While the Alliance fully supports this project and recognizes the importance of our schools being fully connected, the issue we want to highlight is that of "broadband silos". When fiber is required to go to the schools but nowhere else, it often leaves other important institutions, as in the Point Arena case, their city hall, fire department, library, businesses, senior center, residences, and sheriff sub-stations – unserved or underserved.
- c. We took this opportunity to commend AT&T in a public forum for the school connectivity, but to also ask them to be good corporate citizens and put a DSLAM into their Central Office and light up the whole town. This would not constitute a large investment on their part and would make a huge difference to the town.
- d. The Alliance also brought a letter from the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors which was read into the record, in which the supervisors expressed their disappointment with AT&T, and also questioned whether it potentially violated the law. This letter is can be found on the Alliance website at:
<http://www.mendocinobroadband.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/01-07-14-BOS-Letter-to-ATT.As-agendized.pdf>
- e. Unfortunately, no AT&T representative attended the special single topic hearing or even called in. This lack of representation was very noticeable, and roundly criticized by a number of members of the audience.
- f. Several members of the audience wanted to make approval of the permit conditional upon providing service to some of the surrounding institutions.
- g. Paul Tichinin, County Superintendent and Richard Lamken, ED Information Technology for the County, were concerned about additional delays if the permit were conditional, as they had already been working six years to get ATT to respond and to this point. The schools are already on a tight schedule with upcoming on-line testing. Alliance Chairman Jim Moorehead also clearly stated that the Alliance did not want to de-rail the fiber to the school project with a conditional permit, but to raise public awareness and invite ATT to "do the right thing" in a public forum.

- h. The problem is with the federal E-rate program, which is why the Alliance wrote a letter to Congressman Huffman (<http://www.mendocinobroadband.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/E-rate.Huffman-ltr-12.15.13.pdf>) about it and how changes to the program would could improve access for kids when they go home from school. The new educational model is for “blended” learning, and as state school Superintendent Tom Torlakson has said, for learning “anytime, anywhere, any device”. But without broadband access, it’s increasingly difficult for students to do their learning at home.
- i. Susanne added that she recently saw in one of her grant applications from the Point Arena area, that it was estimated that 52% of the children do not have internet access at home. Greg, who lives in that area, thought that the figure was credible.
- j. Richard also brought up the CalTrans grant application into which MCOE put a huge amount of time and effort. This was a collaborative grant application between MCOE (who did almost all the work in writing it), Mendocino Council of Governments, and the Alliance, and would have provided much-needed data for broadband access data for all the students, faculty and staff in the county. Unfortunately, the grant was not funded.
- k. Richard was open to meeting with the Alliance to discuss how we can use the new CPUC mapping survey that was released several months ago to meet this same goal. Trish will send him the survey, and in February contact him and organize a meeting.

7. California Broadband Council Meeting - CBC

- a. The next meeting of the California Broadband Council will be on **Wednesday, January 22nd** from 1:00-3:30 PM in the Legislative Office Building (LOB), 1020 N Street, Room 100, in Sacramento. *We would like as many people as possible to attend this meeting to let the council know that the digital divide is not being adequately addressed and closed in their community.*
- b. The CBC was established by legislation in 2010 (Senate Bill 1462-Padilla) to marshal the state’s resources to further the objectives of increasing broadband network deployment, and eliminating the Digital Divide by expanding broadband accessibility, literacy, adoption, and usage. More information about the council can be found on the web at: <http://broadbandcouncil.ca.gov/home.aspx>
- c. We will have bright tee-shirts for everyone, and will have signs and work on messaging. Bob Perkowski has volunteered his time and skills for this project.
- d. Richard said that the conditions here in Mendocino County create a “perfect storm” for terrible broadband, mainly the high poverty and sparse population.
- e. The simple fact is that the low “Return On Investment, or ROI” in the rural areas makes building infrastructure unattractive for the carriers, as they are responsible to their stock market analysts as to invest in those areas with the highest possible ROI. The government recognized that fact with the creation of the Universal Services Fund specifically to close the digital divide. Jim feels that the members of the CBC only hear the view of the incumbents and not the people of rural northern California. For this reason we need to give them a clear message.

- f. Everyone agreed that the awareness of the importance of broadband is growing: Bob said that people all know now what fiber is and why it's important; Cathy shared that now supervisors in her counties are calling her to come give presentations at their meetings.
- g. Richard added that because the position of State Superintendent of Schools is an elected position, we have very little leverage with Superintendent Torlakson because we represent very little in terms of votes, and that unfortunately he doesn't yet "get it".

8. Community Foundations and Broadband Leadership

- a. The four counties of Marin, Mendocino, Sonoma, and Napa have started a collaborative effort with our NBNCBC grant application with the full support and involvement of the four county's Boards of Supervisors.
- b. One idea was to involve the county Community Foundations in leadership roles for the consortium. Susanne has built a successful model here in Mendocino, and she knows her counterparts in the other counties. This could be a template for the other foundations to use.
- c. A strategic goal for this year is to put together a cohesive, four-county consortium in partnership with the Community Foundations.
- d. Community Foundations care about things like education and health, and if we tie broadband to some of their programs in those areas, we make a strong case.
- e. In Marin, one of the priorities of their Community Foundation is rural education, particularly in west Marin. Joining efforts would be important to close the digital divide in this area.

9. CPUC Mapping

- a. We have a working distribution plan for Mendocino County to get this survey out far and wide; more on this survey and distribution plan can be found in the notes from 11/08/13 (<http://www.mendocinobroadband.org/topics/steering-committee/>).
- b. Some other news: Jim was interviewed on a KMUD radio show called the Digital Divide, where we got good press about the survey and its importance.
- c. Surveys will be placed at the Leggett Market, an important location as much of Leggett is unserved.
- d. We are still waiting for an iOS version of the application of the mobile cellular testing application CalSpeed, and a Spanish translation of the survey.

10. Meeting ended at 11:45

Next Meeting: January 24th, 2014