

Steering Committee Meeting Notes
Friday, February 7th, 2014 10:00 am – 11:05 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: **Jim Moorehead** (Alliance Chairman), **Mike Nicholls** (Access Sonoma Broadband co-chair), **Brian Churm** (Alliance Technology Chair), **Doug McCorkle** (North Coast Railroad Authority), **Howard Egan (Norbar)**, **John Kuhry (Economic Development and Financing Corporation ED)**, **Matt Goff** (Business Adjunct Faculty, Umpqua Community College), **Trish Steel** (Alliance Administrative Coordinator)
- b. Call-in: **Greg Jirak** (Mendocino Broadband Associates), **John Bastian** (PA library board), **Randy MacDonald** (Public Safety Communications Committee/Alliance liaison), **Cathy Emerson** (UCCC Manager, Center Economic Development)
- c. Approval of Agenda: Activities in Point Arena area (John Bastian) was added to the agenda

2. Broadband Coalition of Northern California Counties (BCNCC)

- a. Our last outreach activity was inviting all BCNCC participants to the California Broadband Council meeting which was held in Sacramento on January 22nd.
- b. The Alliance (through the generosity of Perkowski Screenprinting) had 150 neon yellow t-shirts made that had the Broadband Coalition Logo at the top, and then "EQUAL ACCESS TO ALL CALIFORNIANS and END THE DIGITAL DIVIDE on the front. The same message was printed in Spanish on the back of the t-shirt.
- c. The Alliance handed out these t-shirts for attendees to wear and have a bright visual representation of their message, and also gave each council member a t-shirt also.
- d. Jim Moorehead, Mike Nicholls, and Mindy Kittay (county librarian) all attended and spoke out about how the digital divide is negatively impacting our communities. Also speaking out was Tim Taylor, County Superintendent of Schools for Butte County.
- e. The public comment period was held at the END of the two-hour meeting; unfortunately by that time several Council members had departed during or before the public input.
- f. The Alliance would like to believe that our public agencies created to end the digital divide, such as the California Broadband Council, would care about what the public has to say; but, when people travel for many hours to attend a meeting in which there is a short, 20-minute total public comment period at the END of the meeting, and in which the committee members themselves have already left – it is sending us a very different message.

3. Golden Bear Broadband

- a. The Golden Bear Broadband Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) license application was approved by CPUC commission.
- b. No other update available at this time.

4. Activity in the Point Arena Area - John Bastian

- a. John reports that there has been a lot of activity in the Point Arena area and people are very excited about it, but he hasn't seen any mention of this on our agendas, so he wanted to update the group and receive feedback.
- b. Yahel Ben-David of the De Novo group (<http://denovogroup.org/main/about/our-team/>) recently made a presentation on their "Celerate" project in Point Arena. (<http://denovogroup.org/main/CELERATE-PROJECT/>). From their website:
 - i. The Celerate project is a De Novo group initiative to provide affordable broadband Internet access to rural communities around the world, thanks to a grant from Google.org and in collaboration with scientists at Berkeley and Stanford.
 - ii. Celerate will leverage work from the burgeoning area of Software Defined Networking (SDN) to help redefine how such networks are built and managed.
 - iii. The initial phase of Internet access rollout will begin with rural communities in Northern California within 250 miles of the San Francisco Bay Area. This initial rollout will enable De Novo Group and its affiliated researchers to provide real Internet access to users while refining new approaches that improve performance, reliability, and affordability. Beyond this initial series of deployments, Celerate will expand to communities beyond California, and De Novo Group will seek to partner with interested technologists around the world.
- c. According to John Bastian, Yahel has proposed service to Irish Beach and Point Arena (although he has not given them any sort of pricing). He claims that he could put a satellite dish in Manchester (on AT&T building/Level 3) and another satellite dish at Irish beach and provide a 100 MB Wi-Fi connection for all 50 residents.
- d. Yahel said that they have a new approach using a "Software Defined Network" or SDN, which would have lower costs and which they could control from their Berkeley offices. They would like to use Irish Beach as a test case. In a few weeks he hopes to have this all firmed up. People in Irish Beach are very interested about the possibility of this happening.
 - i. A Software Defined Network allows network administrators to have programmable central control of network traffic via a *controller* without requiring physical access to the network's *switches* (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Software_Defined_Networking)
 - ii. Evidently SDN's are incredibly complicated and that there are risks involved in their implementation. For an easier-to-understand description of SDNs which *may* help go here: <http://readwrite.com/2013/04/23/software-defined-networking-sdn#awesm=~ovuQcTH7kdzq9R>

- e. Jim asked if John knew if Yahel did any sort of survey work to determine need and interest; Yahel had said that the purpose of their meeting was to gage interest (about 30 people attended) and although he had no definitive cost for service plans, he did say that he would need 30-40 people to sign up.
- f. The question was asked whether DigitalPath and other local WISPs were contacted and asked for a price quote for hooking up the community, as it is known that they also have the capability to provide identical service. If this has not been done, it was strongly suggested that someone in the community does this before making a commitment to one particular provider, or to find out why it has not been done with our local WISPs.
- g. For comparisons and general price rates, The Connect Joy Road website does have prices listed for connecting via GBB for both fiber connections (25 Mbps/\$89 month) and via Celerate synchronous wireless (20 Mbps for \$130 per month down to 5 Mbps for \$79 per month) For more plans see <http://www.connectjoyroad.com/signup>
- h. Yahel also said that in Point Arena he could easily connect into the library. However, AT&T was recently given approval by the Point Arena Planning Commission for underground conduit for fiber for a 100 MB connection to the Manchester school (see Alliance notes from 12/20/2013) Mendocino County librarian Mindy Kittay is working with a consultant to get a connection with AT&T through the federal E-rate program which would bring fiber right into the library.
- i. Brian said that the process of AT&T bringing fiber to the school means that it creates broadband capabilities for the entire town (the library, credit union, and businesses), once the "Reconfigurable optical add-drop multiplexer", or ROADM, is put in.
 - i. The ROADM is used to create an "on" and "off" ramp along a long-haul stretch of broadband fiber network; in this case, the fiber coming in from the AT&T north-south cable along Hwy 1.
 - ii. The ROADM is not expensive equipment, but a building, staff time, etc add to the costs
 - iii. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reconfigurable_optical_add-drop_multiplexer
- j. Erate cannot be used to bring internet into individual homes, they can use it as leverage to put the infrastructure in the ground *as long as they put in enough fiber pairs*. AT&T should be putting in 72 bundles; a few pairs to the school for the Erate program, and the others are available for businesses and homes.
- k. For broadband deployment this would create other options if they had a window. For example, if the library was able to get fiber, then there is a fiber bundle that commercial interests can connect to via point-to-point.
- l. Jim is concerned that AT&T might only put in 2 pairs, like they did in Potter Valley and was the reason that they then denied service to the community because there was no bandwidth available.
- m. Unfortunately, AT&T didn't show up at the Point Arena Planning Commission's hearing on permit approval for us to ask them that question of how many fiber pairs they were going to put.

- n. Yahel has approached the Joy Road Association in Sonoma County and has provided pricing at various levels. We will know more about this after the Broadband Forum on the 19th...
- o. Brian added that he doesn't believe that Yahel is offering any new breakthrough technology, and that at least 4 or 5 other companies could do this but that they have not been able to make it work out financially in the past. The challenge on all of these models is access to affordable backhaul (middle mile). If Yahel can make it work financially, then that is good news.
- p. JK said that Willits Online is making progress on the coast deploying broadband with the help of his two CASF grants (Westport and Boonville)
- q. ISP's and WISP's with a CPCN license can order backhaul by law from companies such as AT&T; the problem is that the pricing for this middle mile is so high that it won't support what people are willing/able to pay.
- r. All these deployments are good news and fill small pockets of need, but they also hurt the bigger and more comprehensive approach of the Golden Bear Broadband project through a weakening of the GBB business plan.
- s. Jim thanked John for his update, and that it was good to hear of these activities. Hopefully something good will come out of all of it, like what eventually happened in Potter Valley where residents now actually have a choice of providers.
- t. John K said that the EDFC is looking into the California Infrastructure and Development Bank, a charter bank at the state level that issues bonds for private/public partnerships for building out infrastructures.

5. Access Sonoma Broadband – ASB

- a. Next meeting of the ASB will be on Wednesday, February 19th in Santa Rosa
- b. The ASB received the good news that the North Bay Association of Realtors gave them a \$2500 support donation.
- c. The Joy Road Homeowners Broadband Forum with the CPUC will be held on Wednesday, February 19th at 7 p.m. at St. Philip's Church Hall in Occidental.
- d. For more information and directions please see their website for details:
<http://www.connectjoyroad.com/cpuc-forum>

6. North Bay/North Coast Broadband Consortium – NBNCBC

- a. The four counties of Marin, Napa, Sonoma, and Mendocino collaborated to produce a project proposal for a new broadband consortium (the NBNCBC) as part of the CPUC broadband consortia grant program.
- b. The proposal received support from all four county Boards of Supervisors and various businesses and organizations in each county.
- c. The NBNCBC application was submitted to the CPUC for approval on January 17th; we have not received any word back yet as to the status of the application.
- d. CE said that there is a 60 day review period to check all applications for minimum eligibility requirements, then 3-5 more weeks for detailed review of those applications that met those requirements.
- e. In the meanwhile, we are having weekly conference calls to coordinate activities.

7. Net Neutrality Discussion

- a. There has been a recent decision by a federal appeals court in Washington DC that struck down some of the FCC's rules on Net Neutrality (<http://consumerist.com/2014/01/14/appeals-court-strikes-down-net-neutrality-rules/>)
- b. Jim sent out a link about an interview on KQED last night in which Susan Crawford was interviewed, and highly recommended that we listen to it if we can (<http://www.npr.org/blogs/alltechconsidered/2014/02/06/272480919/when-it-comes-to-high-speed-internet-u-s-falling-way-behind>)
- c. Brian did a small workshop for the Alliance on 9/27/2013 on the topic of net neutrality, and gave us reason for optimism when he had this to say: "Yes, it's a loss, but not a loss of the war". It's a very fluid unpredictable environment right now, so dynamics can change. There are big dollars on both sides of the equation.
- d. House and Senate Democrats introduced a bill to reinstate Net Neutrality (<http://consumerist.com/2014/02/03/congressional-democrats-propose-legislation-to-preserve-net-neutrality/>) and although unlikely to pass, it's at least written.
- e. It was brought up that the Alliance has not put anything in their vision/mission statement or on our website endorsing net neutrality, and that perhaps we should.
- f. Brian also added that if we endorse any particular provider or solution, then net neutrality should also be integral to that.
- g. The Alliance will consider doing such as statement as found on the public knowledge website which says: "Public Knowledge supports enforceable Net Neutrality regulation and a neutral Internet." (<http://publicknowledge.org/issues/network-neutrality>)

8. CPUC Mapping

- a. The Alliance cover letter/instructions and CPUC broadband survey has been translated into Spanish by Mendocino Broadband Associates. These are posted on the Alliance website at <http://www.MendocinoBroadband.org>. We encourage everyone to take this survey and share the information with friends.
- b. We have no control over the actual on-line survey, which is part of the CPUC website and currently is English only.
- c. We are still waiting for an iOS version of the application of the mobile cellular testing application.

9. Priority projects

- a. The CPUC has asked all consortia leads to tell them what are their "priority areas" for broadband funding. This is seen as good news, as it shows the CPUC staff recognizes and understands the problems and economic hardships that result when communities cannot connect. Cathy felt that the meeting back in October with Commissioner Sandoval in Redding was a watershed event, in that people from all over rural California came and gave that message loudly and clearly.
- b. Jim and Greg are finishing up their input they will provide to Connie Stewart, the Manager of the Redwood Coast Connect consortium of which the Alliance is affiliated. What they provide to Connie will be "ground truth" data from our three Notices of Opportunity which are posted on the Alliance website.

- c. Cathy Emerson is also finishing up her report for these priority areas, using GIS data, census data, and “boots on the ground” data from surveys and other sources.
- d. Jim will be attending a Learning Summit in Sacramento in March, where these priority areas will be presented by consortia leads.

10. Future Topics

- a. John asked for an update on the Cal Fire tower issue

11. Meeting ended 11:05

Next Meeting: Friday, February 21st, March 7th, March 21st