

Steering Committee Meeting Notes
Friday, March 7th, 2014, 2014 10:00 am – 11:40 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), **Richard Lamken** (Mendocino County Office of Education), **Dan Hamburg** (Mendocino County Supervisor) **Trish Steel** (Alliance Administrative Coordinator)
- b. Call-in: **Randy MacDonald** (Public Safety Communications Committee/Alliance liaison), **Greg Jirak** (Mendocino Broadband Associates), **Cathy Emerson** (UCCC Manager, Center for Economic Development)
- c. Approval of Agenda: agenda approved with addition of comments about FCC article re: Muni-networks

2. Broadband Coalition of Northern California Counties (BCNCC)

- a. Nothing new to report.
- b. Next steps for BCNCC? This question should be part of our next strategic planning.

3. Golden Bear Broadband (GBB)

- a. By now everyone has probably heard the disappointing news that the GBB LLC has decided not to pursue a revised grant application.
- b. The state has a goal to serve 98% of the population with broadband. The danger moving forward is that it is therefore acceptable to leave the 2% behind, and that remaining 2% could be us.
- c. We need to have effective arguments to counter the suggestion that satellite is good enough for the rural areas. (Randy)
- d. One positive point on satellite –in the recently revised CPUC broadband validation survey, there is a minor revision in Question #3 that says, "...is service available *other* than satellite at this address". Satellite is not considered broadband by the CPUC under their current definition.
- e. There was a front-page Press Democrat article about GBB last Wednesday, and it has generated a lot of publicity and interest from people who want to help, learn more, and/or get involved.
<http://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/20140303/articles/140309892#page=0>
- f. The withdrawal of GBB is obviously a setback, but the problem continues to exist so we need to find alternate avenues to fix the problem. The Alliance and Access Sonoma

Broadband will re-group and are scheduling a strategic planning workshop in the next six weeks which will include key people including supervisors from both counties.

- g. The publicity around the loss of GBB is giving us a window of opportunity to be heard, and to increase people's awareness about the importance of broadband for economic development. We want to use this window of visibility to do just that.
- h. Jim and Dan will do a radio program next Thursday with Paul Lambert on his "Mendo Matters" show on KZYX at 9 am. It is also available for live streaming from the website if you have broadband. Jim will give an overall description of the problem that we face in Mendocino County, and Dan will address the political aspects of it.
- i. There is an upcoming "all counties" meetings scheduled about the broadband problem that is open to everyone. Commissioner Sandoval will attend and Cathy Emerson is organizing the meeting. A 'save the date' will be published soon.
 - i. Tentative April 23rd - Red Bluff at the Tehama County admin offices
 - ii. Dan, Jim, and Trish want to go to this meeting.

4. **CASF/CETF Learning Summit in Sacramento, March 3,4 – Trish and Mike**

- a. Trish and Mike both attended this 2-day Learning Summit in Sacramento, organized by the CASF staff and California Emerging Technology Fund.
- b. Mike has attended in the past, and he shared that he felt that staff did an improved job of organizing, topics were more relevant, and that he learned a lot; he felt there was a free flow of information back and forth the first day, and that was accurately re-presented the next day. Trish felt likewise.
- c. CPUC commissioner Catherine Sandoval handled the key-note address, and she covered three topic areas:
 - i. Infrastructure
 - ii. Adoption
 - iii. Affordability
- d. She is passionate about children and education. At a CETF meeting in November some people brought up concern about smarter balanced testing associated with common core curriculum; this is a new testing mechanism using interactive computer testing instead of the STAR testing; the idea is that they want to be able to have testing be more interactive with the child, more relevant, and make teaching more relevant to everyday life.
- e. Catherine is concerned about the appropriateness of the bandwidth guidelines that schools have been provided with for this testing. She will be meeting with State Superintendent of Schools Tom Torlakson to express her concerns.
- f. She talked about broadband in general, but also seems to truly understand the challenges rural areas are facing. She also addressed the importance of ground-truthing, the CalSpeed app, and the hope that the iphone app is available soon.
- g. She said that surveys say that lack of adoption is due to lack of interest, but at meetings people say that lack of infrastructure is driving the lack of adoption, in that people haven't seen what good access is like and are instead driving into cities and libraries for their access.

- h. Catherine also wondered, “What is the nexus between climate change and lack of broadband?”
- i. On the affordability topic, she discussed the CA lifeline program and changes adopted by the CPUC in January 2014, which she called a “game changer” in that it supports telecommunication access for income eligible residents. The program has been expanded to allow consumer discounts to apply to wireless services in addition to wired services. The Ca program provides the discounts directly to the consumer, while the federal program gives the discount to the providers).
- j. (There was discussion at the Alliance meeting how at the Federal Level they want to restrict the program due to alleged corruption by the carriers who were setting up booths to “sign people up” en mass (Brian), and that this would be a question to ask Ryan Dulin of the CPUC at the meeting on the 26th).
- k. She has the opportunity to speak at the IP transition order required hearings by the FCC on rural broadband in Washington DC on March 19th. She said that she welcomed suggestions on issues to bring up, and also wanted photos of unserved and underserved areas to use in her PowerPoint presentation.
- l. (Jim suggested that Trish send her photos from Rancho Navarro)
- m. There are three upcoming meetings: March 19th, May 8th, and April 21st.
- n. The focus of the Summit was presentations by Regional Broadband Consortia Leaders/managers on their “priority areas” for their consortia. Counties were limited in the number of such areas to present, so Mendocino County as part of the Redwood Coast Consortium presented three such areas:
 - i. Route One Corridor “clusters” which consisted of 16 communities along the coast and a few inland.
 - ii. Rancho Navarro (inland between Ukiah and Mendocino)
 - iii. Sherwood Road/Willowbrook (Willits area)
- o. There were 161 priority areas presented and identified in the state; many leaders said it was hard to “whittle” the list down because there were so many areas in need.
- p. There was quite a bit of discussions on various topics during this time, such as affordability challenges; one woman put her recent monthly Verizon 50GB service cell phone bill on the screen totaling \$1,188, which included penalties for overages in her Fusion program.

5. **Connect America Fund – Expressions of Interest**

- a. Tom West submitted an Expression of Interest on behalf of the proposed North Bay-North Coast Broadband Consortium to the FCC as part of the CAF Broadband Trials
- b. Rancho Navarro submitted and Sherwood Road in Mendocino both filed Expressions of Interest
- c. Three locations in Sonoma County filed: Ft. Ross State Park, Kashia Rancheria, and Fort Ross School
- d. Cathy Emerson will be submitting 47 areas for her eleven counties (whittled down from almost 100 areas).

6. **Access Sonoma Broadband – ASB**

- a. The next meeting of ASB will be held on Wednesday, March 26th (a change from the normal third Wednesday of the month) at the Economic Development Board Building in Santa Rosa.
- b. *Tentatively*, Ryan Dulin Director of the Communications Division of the CPUC will be attending.
- c. Dane Jasper from SONIC is also scheduled to attend the meeting.
- d. Their website is up, and if you google “Access Sonoma Broadband” you will get to their page.
- e. Mike made a presentation to the Sonoma County Board of Education recently, where he introduced them to ASB and the work they are doing.
- f. He was surprised at some of the questions (What is broadband?), and provided resources for more information, such as the ASB website glossary of terms. He received positive feedback and questions from three of the members (District 1, 4, and 5). He focused on the work around the mapping problem and the importance of the CPUC survey, and asked for assistance in sending the information (surveys) home with students. The BoE can’t tell schools what to do (that is up to each school superintendent), but ASB asked if they (the Board) would work with them, and contact the 42 independent school districts and superintendents and ask.
- g. Richard from the Mendocino County Office of Education concurred that the challenge is to separate out and somehow make clear to parents what is mandatory and what is voluntary when it comes to sending information home with students. Richard said that in Mendocino, he has made presentations to the school superintendents at their monthly meetings. The Alliance thanked Richard for attending the Alliance meetings and providing input and updates for what is going on with the schools in Mendocino County.

7. North Bay/North Coast Broadband Consortium – NBNCBC

- a. The four counties of Mendocino, Sonoma, Marin, and Napa submitted a joint application to the California Advanced Services Fund back in January for the formation of a new broadband consortium: the North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium.
- b. We expect to hear something after March 17th as to the status of our application.
- c. There were seven applications submitted for \$960 thousand dollars, including five applications that include non-aligned counties; it’s anyone’s guess how it will all sort out.

8. CPUC Mapping

- a. The CPUC survey has a minor but important edit, and it has been re-posted on our website and is also available in Spanish (<http://www.MendocinoBroadband.org>)
- b. We need to get this new survey out to all our groups. Trish will re-send the survey out to the Mendocino County Libraries.
- c. We can’t stress enough the importance of taking this survey, and to share the information with friends.

9. Updates/Future Topics

- a. Richard from MCOE updated the group about broadband improvements at Mendocino County schools.
- b. The first of eight schools in the county scheduled for upgrades was connected to fiber when Manchester School was lit up. The Point Arena Elementary School is scheduled for the 21st, and the Point Arena High School for the 28th.
- c. The schools that have weakest connectivity are Leggett, Whale Gulch, and Laytonville/Spyrock. Laytonville is scheduled for an upgrade in July/August.
- d. Ukiah has become a “Google District”, meaning that they have chosen to use Chromebook at their solution to the “one-to-one” deployment. A Chromebook is given to each 3-10 graders so that every students has a device to use as part of their educational process. They will keep it in their lifespan as a student.
- e. The concern for MCOE is that there are 1000 Chromebooks for use in the WiFi Smarter Balance testing in Ukiah, but it all funnels into a small pipe at MCOE. They are not positive what will happen...
- f. There was an instance in Covelo where staff was uploading information for the yearbook to a website, and the bandwidth overload shut down the district office.
- g. Richard also mentioned that five years ago, the MCOE received a grant to deploy videoconferencing equipment around the county for remote school districts, such as Laytonville, Fort Bragg, Point Arena, to cut down on long driving times and to participate in Ukiah MCOE workshops. Unfortunately, these districts did not have the necessary bandwidth to use the equipment, and it couldn’t be deployed. This is an instance where videoconferencing could have been used to reduce carbon emissions and save driving time, but lack of bandwidth prevented it.
- h. Trish brought an article to the attention of the Alliance about the FCC announcing that it intends to take a close look at overruling state laws which restrict the ability of cities and towns to build their own broadband networks in 20 states across the US. She suggested that the Alliance submit comments to the FCC in support of this. Jim asked her to start a draft of such a document.

10. Meeting ended 11:40

Next Meeting: Friday March 21st