

Steering Committee Meeting Notes
Friday, April 4th, 2014, 2014 10:00 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: **Dan Hamburg** (Mendocino County Supervisor), **Jim Moorehead** (Alliance Chairman), **Mike Nicholls** (co-Chair Access Sonoma Broadband), **Howard Egan** (North Bay Association of Realtors), **Randy MacDonald** (Public Safety Communications Committee/Alliance liaison), **Richard Lamken** (Mendocino County Office of Education), **Trish Steel** (Alliance Administrative Coordinator)
- b. **Heather Gurewitz** (Congressman Jared Huffman's District Representative)

2. Broadband Coalition of Northern California Counties (BCNCC)

- a. The Alliance recently saw an article about the FCC and state laws that block cities from building their own broadband network (<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2014/03/05/220125/fcc-questions-state-laws-that.html>); and it was suggested that the Alliance should write a letter to the FCC in support of their efforts to remove state restrictions on local municipal broadband.
- b. More background on this topic can be found in Alliance notes from 3/21/14.
- c. We wrote such a letter, and have plans to make this letter a template that we could share with our BCNCC partners.
- d. Regina Costa from The Utility Reform Network (TURN) was helpful in understanding the issues, and she helped us reframe the letter in such a way to make it most effective.
 - i. The January Open Internet decision by the DC Circuit court had a dissenting vote by Judge Silberman, and he argued that Section 706 of the Telecom Act gives the FCC authority to enforce net neutrality. He also wrote that the FCC has the authority to take "measures that promote competition in the local telecommunications market or other regulating methods that remove barriers to infrastructure investment." In a footnote he said that "[a]n example of a paradigmatic barrier to infrastructure investment would be state laws that prohibit municipalities from creating their own broadband infrastructure to compete against private companies."
 - ii. Silberman's opinion raises the possibility that the commission could remove state-level legal restrictions that *prohibit or limit the ability of cities and towns to offer competitive broadband service*, according to a senior FCC official who is familiar with (FCC Chairman) Wheeler's thinking.
 - iii. In summary: the FCC can't just say that it will overturn state laws; it doesn't have the power to do that. What it *can* do, is conduct a docket to develop

facts and a solid record showing that removing state restrictions on municipal broadband would "promote competition in the local telecommunications market" and a well-supported finding that the restrictions on municipal broadband impedes competition in local telecom markets.

- e. We plan to ask various other groups to "sign-on" to this letter, and make it available as a template.

3. **Route One Corridor Project (R1CP) in Light of Golden Bear Broadband (GBB) application withdrawal**

- a. As discussed in previous meetings, the Press Democrat ran an article about the withdrawal of the Golden Bear Broadband application from the CPUC: <http://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/20140303/articles/140309892>
- b. When Senate Bill 740 was passed, it included language by the lobbyists that said there can be no "overbuilding" into already established territory that is considered served, and that it is "unfair competition." This had a very negative impact on the GBB application.
- c. Chris Mitchell from the Institute for Local Self-Reliance (<http://www.ilsr.org/>) produces podcasts relating to these issues; In his recent podcast from March 25th 2014, Chris compares the big telecoms making decisions about what internet speeds are available for customers with the interstate highway system with this quote, "I'm sorry your town can't get an interstate because you already got dirt roads, and that's good enough for you." (<http://www.muninetworks.org/content/overbuild-or-underbuild-rural-policy-conundrum-community-broadband-bits-podcast-91>)
- d. The Broadband Alliance and Access Sonoma Broadband are making plans on how to move forward and will be looking at more local solutions. We would like to schedule a "strategic planning" workshop to discuss some of the possible options, but we are having a very hard time finding a date that works for everyone at this busy time of year.
- e. We will be researching other states that have found local solutions and cooperatives, such as South Carolina.
- f. Richard Lamken (from Mendocino County Office of Education) said that once of year county superintendents go to Washington, DC. He asked Paul Tichinin, our county superintendent, to be sure to bring up the concern that schools are able to *use* and *distribute* the high-speed broadband once they get it.
- g. As a case in point, on Tuesday ATT lit up our Point Arena schools with a high-speed fiber connection, and MCOE sent over their network administrator but the equipment at the school (switches, cabling, wireless access points, etc) is old and problematic.
- h. Richard also pointed out that Paul, who has been our county superintendent for many years now, will be retiring soon and there is an election on June 3rd for his replacement. There are three candidates running for Paul's position.
- i. It was suggested that we could invite these candidates to one of our meetings.

4. Connect America Fund – Expressions of Interest

- a. The FCC accepted “Expressions of Interest” from a diversity of groups/providers as part of their Connect America Fund Broadband Trials Experiment. The deadline for these Expressions of Interest was March 7th.
- b. Over 1,000 Expressions were submitted from around the county, and appears to have exceeded their expectations.
- c. Tom West submitted an Expression of Interest on behalf of the proposed North Bay-North Coast Broadband Consortium.
- d. Other Mendocino County submissions: Albion, Rancho Navarro, Sherwood Gates.
- e. Connie Stewart, manager of the RCC Consortium also included our three priority areas as part of her submission.
- f. Tom Wheeler, Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), remarked on the large number of responses; He and the head of the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) both have expressed that the experiments were good because they are in Washington DC, and they therefore don’t always know what is going on in rural areas.
- g. Local electeds are aware of the importance of broadband to education and economic vitality, but unless they are on committees there is only so much they can do. Jim suggested, and Dan and Randy agreed, that we should be contacting the California delegation and see who is on the FCC committee. Randy stressed the importance of these elected officials having a conceptual idea (such as broadband hubs in the city from and working out from there) that they understand.

5. FCC Rural Broadband Workshop

- a. The FCC held an all-day Rural Broadband Workshop in Washington DC on March 19th. California PUC Commissioner Catherine Sandoval was in attendance as part of a panel in which state strategies to meet the rural broadband challenge were discussed.
- b. The event was streamed live, but because of lack of adequate broadband connections at their homes, neither Trish nor Jim could watch the entire event. Trish watched Sandoval’s address, and Jim was able to see other parts of the workshop, but his ViaSat Exede satellite service kept dropping the connection. The FCC has posted a video of the hearing for viewing (if you have a broadband connection):
<http://www.fcc.gov/events/rural-broadband-workshop>
- c. See notes from 3/21/14 for Trish’s report on the Sandoval presentation.
- d. Jim received a DVD of the hearing just today from the CPUC (13 Gigs of info on three discs) and is looking forward to watching it. He will provide comments on the hearing at our next meeting.

6. Newsweek article by David Cay Johnson – Jim interview 3/25

- a. Last week Jim, Mike and Cathy Emerson were interviewed by a reporter from Newsweek, David Cay Johnston and talked for about an hour.
- b. This interview was a follow up from an article that he wrote recently and was published March 7th in Newsweek: <http://mag.newsweek.com/2014/03/21/telecom-giants-drag-feet-broadband-whole-country.html>

- c. David requested that we provide him with a packet of information which he will review and possibly schedule a Ukiah visit in June.

7. Access Sonoma Broadband – ASB

- a. The next meeting of Access Sonoma Broadband will be held on Wednesday, April 16th at the Economic Development Building in Santa Rosa, 10 am.
- b. Regina from TURN (see item 2d above) attended their last meeting, and Mike characterized her presentation as “captivating”; she understands the inner workings of how to make things happen and is Mike is really grateful that she is so willing to working with us.
- c. Sonoma County Supervisor Efren Carrillo also attended their last meeting.

8. North Bay/North Coast Broadband Consortium – NBNCBC

- a. The proposed consortium manager, Tom West, received feedback from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) this week, and they want to meet soon with key players of the consortium. This group would include the four county supervisors who will be on the “Oversight Committee”, the four county managers (including Brandon from the Mendocino County Executive Office), Tom West (consortium manager), and Ben Stone (Sonoma County Fiscal Agent representative).

9. CPUC Mapping

- a. The group considered various ideas for more publicity about the CPUC broadband validation survey.
- b. Some of these ideas included:
 - i. An advertising campaign (maybe Jessica from Advocate News)
 - ii. Posters (via Bob Perkowski)
 - iii. Point and Click Radio
- c. Richard suggested that we’d have better participation if we looked at persuading groups and organizations to put the survey on their website, and to take advantage of the traffic that already exists on websites, because one downside to posters is that you can’t click on posters, whereas people *can* on websites.
- d. Although the Alliance made initial and limited attempts to get organizations to put the survey on their website (Community Foundation, libraries), Jim and Trish like Richards’s idea and thought it was worth a re-newed and expanded effort. This expanded group would include city and county government websites, Mendo College, and Non-profits.
- e. We could also include list-serves, FaceBook Groups, and newsletters.
- f. Randy suggested a sample email (with a simple explanation and request for help, not with too much rhetoric) sent to organizations such as realtors, rotaries, granges, winegrowers, farm bureaus, and ask them to “Please send this email to your supporters.”
- g. Randy said he would send the link and explanation of the survey to the county fire chiefs.

- h. Jim thinks we should come up with some kind of logo to use for this purpose, a visual that will attract people's attention.

10. Updates/Future Topics

- a. The Grace Hudson Elementary School 100 MB connection has been deployed throughout the school, and will be extended throughout the Alex Rorabaugh Center. This e-rate use has been verified and approved and is within the e-rate guidelines because it supports their after school program.
- b. Richard said they are working with Ukiah Unified School District on the technology side to limit use at the center to 30 MB so there is no issue with the balance of the 100 MB being delivered to the school.
- c. The Tehama County Administration Office is hosting an "All County" broadband workshop on April 23rd in Red Bluff, and is inviting all elected representatives from the northern California counties to attend. Contact Trish if you need more information.
- d. From the Alliance Dan Hamburg, Jim Moorehead, and Trish plan to attend.

11. Meeting ended 11:30 am

Next Meeting: Friday, April 18th