

Steering Committee Meeting Notes

Friday, January 9th 10:00 am - 12:00 am

EDFC (temporary location)

631 South Orchard Ave, Ukiah 95482

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

1. Call to Order: 10:00 am

- a. Attendees: Brian Churm, Jim Moorehead, Mike Nicholls, Howard Egan, Supervisor John McCowen, Supervisor Dan Hamburg, Steve Dunncliff, Katie Gibbs, Brooke Clark, Richard Lampken, Jim Persky
- b. Call-in: Regina Costa, Sage Statham
- c. Guests: Supervisor Tom Woodhouse, Craig Schlatter (Mendocino County Community Development Commission)
- d. Changes to the agenda: addition of Sherwood Road update, under 4d

2. Items of interest

- a. ATT copper wireline outages from around the county
 - i. There have been copper wireline outages around the county, and the Alliance has been contacted by at least five individuals about it. Jim had begun inquiring about it and found that the outage has affected quite a few people.
 - ii. Jim Persky from Pacific Internet has been particularly affected, and was interviewed for an article by the Ukiah Daily Journal (UDJ) which ran in this morning's paper:
http://www.ukiahdailyjournal.com/news/ci_27286113/mendocino-county-facing-more-broadband-issues
 - iii. Regina Costa, the Telecommunications Director from The Utility Reform Network (TURN) was on the conference line, and provided some background information about this issue.
 - (1) The issue of ATT and Verizon not maintaining the copper networks has been ongoing for awhile now; their long-term "game plan" is to get out of the wireline business altogether, with ATT's plan to stop about 25% of their wireline customers by 2020. They do this in two ways: They push at the FCC that none of this should be declared a public utility anymore, and at the state level try to deregulate, and in practice they don't put enough resources into maintaining the networks. There is a reason that we are having these problems.

Broadband Alliance of Mendocino County

c/o Economic Development & Financing Corp.

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- (2) This lack of resources includes not enough staff, loss of experienced staff, and not re-placing the copper plant that was due for replacement a long time ago, even though by law they are required to do so. There is a service-quality proceeding before the CPUC where the issues have been put on the table. Companies are also declaring “States of Emergency” which they then use as a reason for not having to meet their requirements for how quickly they repair lines. Normally they have 48 hours to have an “estimated time of repair (ETR)”, but when they self-declare a state of emergency, then normal boundaries do not hold.
- (3) There is also no consistency between companies as to when they make a call for being in a “state of emergency.” Recently the CPUC has been focused on Energy issues (think of the recent gas explosion) and until recently, didn’t have a single telecom engineer on the staff for 10 years.
- (4) Their service quality reports are also self-reported, and Regina said that they have strategies to make it *look* like they are meeting the reporting requirements, and that it is a huge “bone of contention” with TURN.
- (5) TURN has been documenting these issues in the form of customer complaints, and providing this documentation to the CPUC.
- (6) The commissioner in this proceeding said that there had to be an “independent” investigation, and TURN is also very much in favor of this. Unfortunately, that commissioner got sick and was replaced by someone who is not pushing for this independent investigation.
- (7) Regina suggested that it is crucial that the Alliance continue to document this information also, and to put the information into a letter to Ryan Dulin, the Director of the Communications Division of the CPUC, with a cc to CPUC Commission President Michael Picker, and TURN.
- (8) To file an “ex parte” notice to the CPUC is more involved than to file such a report to the FCC, where anyone can enter such a filing at anytime. In contrast, to file a document with the CPUC, you have to be a party to the proceeding, which makes it more formal and involved. But someone already a party (like TURN) can bring issues up, so that is why it’s important that TURN is receives documentation of any complaints.
- (9) In summary: TURN can document these issues at the CPUC, but they have to have the information. She suggested that we encourage people with service-related issues to file complaints

though the TURN website, so that they receive a copy too. If it only goes to the CPUC, the companies can downplay the complaint with the CPUC; it's important that TURN see the information directly to put the data into the record.

- (10) If an issue is *not* in the record, it gives a company grounds for appeal if a decision is made.
 - (11) Instructions to file a complaint through the TURN website:
Go to www.turn.org, and in the upper right corner click "File a Complaint."
 - (12) This provides the information to TURN for documentation and also directly takes you to the CPUC form for the official complaint.
 - (13) The Alliance can then get this information from TURN for any documentation that we need.
- iv. Jim of Pacific Internet said that more education is needed also, as some of the complaints put "Pacific Internet" down instead of "ATT". It's frustrating for Jim because Pacific Internet is a victim of this outage as well. They have lost business and have had complaints filed against them as a result of this outage, when they can't do anything about the lack of repair of the ATT lines.
 - v. Jim also said that they have done their own informal investigative work, and he thinks that about 20% of the time when ATT claims to have been to the site and found no problem with the line, that ATT actually did not even show up.
 - vi. Regina said that the local technicians have to take direction from Corporate Headquarters in Texas, which sets the work parameters. The technicians want to fix the lines, but the reality is that the copper plant should have been replaced 20 years ago. Technicians are also required to clear the problem within a certain amount of time, so they can find themselves in a difficult situation.
 - vii. It has also been extremely difficult to get ATT to provide answers to people as to an estimated time of repair. One woman resorted to blocking the entrances to ATT offices with her vehicle to force them to talk to her.
 - viii. Regina said that the work that the Alliance is doing is incredibly important, and that no other community organization is doing this.
 - ix. Supervisor McCowen suggested that the Alliance and/or the Board could send a letter to the CPUC after this important data has been collected. Regina said that TURN can review the draft and make suggestions to strengthen it, and that Brian Churm should also review for input. The next BoS meeting is Jan 20th.

- x. Such a letter should be addressed to CPUC Commission President Michael Picker and Communications Division Director Ryan Dulin, with a CC to the other commissioners and TURN.
 - xi. Katie thought that many people do not know that they can file a complaint about their telephone with the CPUC; Trish will make sure that people know this and will send out the TURN “file a complaint” link with the meeting notes.
 - xii. Sage wondered if people’s phone is working, *but not internet*, if they can still file a complaint since the CPUC doesn’t regulate internet.
 - xiii. Regina said that the CPUC *does* have authority under the “706 decision” last year, which said that the state commission does have authority over broadband, and so yes, they should also file a complaint.
 - xiv. We can also talk to Tom West about the North Bay-North Coast Broadband Consortium also sending a letter.
- b. County update
- i. Steve Dunnicliff reported that the county has already committed to funding of the Alliance Chair position to replace Jim who is retiring; they talked about bringing in a new employee, but realized that there is a candidate who has been working with Jim for three years now - Trish. They would like to hire her for this work, and are hoping to have a contract in place with her soon.
 - ii. The plan is to for Steve Dunnicliff to be the County Manager of the NBNCBC, and Trish to work as the active Deputy County Manager.
 - iii. We also have a valuable local resource in Ukiah with the county cartographer-planner, and we hope to get him involved in this effort so that some of the maps that are currently produced by Chico state can be produced locally.
 - iv. The Alliance will be looking for someone to replace Trish as the Administrative Coordinator, so please send the name of any potential candidates to her or have them contact us. We have a job description available upon request.
- c. Other updates
- i. Newly elected Senator Mike McGuire was appointed to the Senate Energy, Utilities, & Communications Committee.
 - ii. EDFC updates - no updates were given as John Kuhry was not present.
- 3. North Bay/North Coast Broadband Consortium -Jim, Mike, Trish**
- a. The 2nd Quarter Report was submitted to CASF recently, and the Oversight Committee also had their 2nd Quarter meeting.

- b. The first NBNCBC newsletter is scheduled to be published in late January; everyone on the distribution list will receive it.
- c. Phase 2 Ground Truth testing, analysis, and results are finished, and a report was submitted to CASF.
- d. The county fiber backbone planning map is in progress (the planning map was sent out with the agenda). This is a high-level, “conceptual framework” from which to start planning efforts.
- e. Adoption information
 - i. Part of our first year work plan is to compile information about adoption programs in the county. We have not really started this yet, and we will be looking for input in the next few months.
 - ii. Several years ago, the Alliance created a document about the “Components of the Digital Divide”. We will be identifying existing programs, and assessing which component of the digital divide the program addresses. Then we can determine where the gaps exist and what programs would be needed in the future.
 - iii. Jim Persky said that he sees the language barrier as a big part of the problem - people can’t utilize the internet because they don’t speak English.

4. CASF Grant Program

- a. The CPUC wants all Broadband Infrastructure Grant funds encumbered by Dec. 31, 2015. The application window is now open, and applications are being accepted on a “first-come, first-serve” basis. There are six applications that have been submitted to the CASF program so far.
- b. Because of a recent change in the applicant eligibility rules, “non-CLEC” entities are now eligible to apply for the first time.
- c. The next six months the NBNCBC will focus on areas in each county where we would like to see a application submission for a CASF grant. We are pushing for some provider to submit applications for these five areas: Sherwood Road, Rancho Navarro, Ukiah, Road 408-409, and Albion.
- d. Some of these areas may be waiting for the new Administrative Permit Process, which is currently going through the CEQA process at the county Building and Planning Department.
- e. On Thursday, 1/8/15 Trish met with some folks including a fixed wireless provider, a community representative, and Sherwood Rancheria representatives to physically drive in the Sherwood Road area and discuss possibilities for broadband deployment.
- f. From the California Broadband map, it looks like there may be up to 139 Households in the Sherwood Road/Willowbrook area, and about 100 more in the surrounding census blocks, and 11 at the Rancheria. These households do not

have broadband service unless they subscribe to satellite, or can receive a strong cellular signal. Some may be able to receive fixed wireless, but the geography makes it unlikely that this would be very many.

- g. It seemed from the drive that there could be some reason for optimism, as possible antenna sites were identified, and everyone was thinking about ideas. In addition, everyone was also committed to helping in whatever way they could to make this happen. One big question is whether there would be enough potential subscribers to make a viable business case for the project.
- h. At the meeting, Supervisor elect Tom Woodhouse said that he knew the area well, as in his work in real estate he sold many of those properties. He is also willing to help with the work in finding potential customers through his contacts, and we will stay in touch.

5. Access Sonoma Broadband - Mike

- a. Access Sonoma Broadband held its last meeting on Wednesday, December 17th in Santa Rosa. Their next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 21st.
- b. At this next meeting, ASB will be discussing what will happen when the CASF grant program “ends” on Dec. 31st, 2015 and there are no more available funds for deployment projects.
- c. They will be looking at Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and a number of other things.
- d. The consortium has hired a contractor to go into the Joy Road area for a fiber project design, which could then go out to bid. This contractor is a former executive with Frontier Telephone and has experience doing these sorts of networks.
- e. If the consortium likes his work, then he may be hired for network design for other areas in the four-county region.
- f. For more information, please see their website: <http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/projects/access-sonoma-broadband/>

6. Final thoughts and comments

- a. It was reported that the de Novo group held a meeting in Gualala for potential customers, but that it's too early to know what their long range plan for operations may be when their grant runs out.

7. Meeting Adjourned 12:00

Next meeting: Friday February 6th