

**Steering Committee Meeting Notes**

Friday, February 6th, 2015 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, Brooke Clarke, Supervisor Dan Hamburg (5th District), Harold Galicer, Howard Egan, Jim Moorehead, Jacob Turner, John Kuhry, John Goldsmith, Katie Gibbs, Kim Remich, Mike Nicholls, Ray Gifford, Supervisor Tom Woodhouse (3rd District), Trish Steel
- b. Call-in: Bruce Vogen, Cathy Emerson, Chris McManus (Independent Coast Observer), Heather Gurewitz, Myron Curtis, Randy MacDonald

**2. Items of interest**

- a. Trish has received a number of calls from the media inquiring about recent events at the national level, and what changes in policy may mean for the local community.
- b. Regarding the CASF public housing grants, all grant awards went to southern California, with the exception of five grants in Petaluma.
- c. The FCC voted 3/2 to increase the definition of broadband from the former 4 Mbps download/1 Mbps upload to the new standard of 25 Mbps download/3 Mbps upload. This change means that most of the county would be designated as “underserved” or more likely, “un-served.” However, these are guidelines and not mandatory. There is a change “but no miracle.”
- d. The state definition used by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) is 6 Mbps/1.5 Mbps. This difference causes confusion; the North Bay-North Coast Broadband Consortium manager Tom West has asked the CPUC to align the standards for consistency.
- e. Cathy Emerson said CPUC Commissioner Sandoval would like to raise the state standard, but that would require a public proceeding before any vote. If initiated, this action would receive lots of opinions as well as push-back from the incumbents who would need to improve or scale back their claims in advertising. For comparison, most wireless devices have a download speed of 10 Mbps, and fixed wireless at best 10-15 Mbps.
- f. Could local providers serve customers with these speeds? Not really, the technology is not yet available. There would be money available, but as John K pointed out...we’re back to the Op-ex constraints with increased bandwidth costs.

### 3. BAMC updates

- a. Trish is stepping up as the new Chair of the Broadband Alliance as Jim is stepping down (retiring), although Jim will still be active in an advisory capacity and to ensure a smooth transition. The Alliance will be hiring an new administrative coordinator to replace Trish, and they have interviews scheduled for this afternoon.
- b. Trish proposed updating both the executive committee, including identifying 4 or 5 members who could make decisions with a quick turnaround, and the larger Advisory Committee. She handed out lists and asked for recommendations from those present. Please email her with your comments and edits.

### 3. North Bay/North Coast Broadband Consortium

- a. Supervisor Hamburg congratulated Trish on a great Volume 1 North Bay-North Coast Broadband Consortium newsletter.
- b. Phase 3 Ground Truth Mobile Testing for Napa County is finished and the results should be available very soon.
- c. There will be a new layer to the Broadband map of California, "Consortia Field Testing."
- d. There is some bad news: some of the online public feedback from Oct, Nov, Dec and Jan submitted to the California Broadband Interactive Map was lost. People are encouraged to submit in their information again. Mike Nichols suggested that CPUC should put out a press release with this information. Cathy suggested to send a letter to Ryan Dulin, Director of Communications for CPUC with a cc to Commissioner Sandoval. Mike will do this and share letter with NBNCBC members.
- e. CalSpeed information should be posted to the broadband map in the next two weeks.
- f. The next three months Mendocino County has to focus on part of their grant work plans which require a "progress report assessing the availability of, and the needs for adoption programs in each county."
  - Mike reported that in Sonoma County they are focusing on adult education on Computers, for the Latina population, using schools where computers lie unused after school. They had three large coalitions with Sonoma State, Santa Rosa JC and other districts. They will expand to Petaluma and Sonoma valley. They train parents, in Spanish, to become familiar with Word, Excel, Power Point to help move the Latina population into the office world. Is this adoption, the connection must be affordable.
  - John K pointed out that for the younger generation and many Latinos the smartphone is their connection to the internet; how could we capture the level of adoption in the mobile world?
  - Trish suggested using the various "components" that create the digital divide (DD), look at the various programs that we have throughout the county, and see what component of the DD a particular program addresses. We can then see where there are gaps.

- There is no set definition of adoption so we need to define it for ourselves before we can do an assessment.
  - The California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) has a lot of information on adoption, so it would be good to check their website for information, too. Whatever definition we take, we need to take into account the shifts in paradigm, where the culture is mobile.
  - On the topic of mobile services, it was noted that Sprint and T-mobile are disrupting the pricing/data cap structure; ATT also recently went from 10 to 15 gigabytes under market pressure.
- g. Jim pointed out that we have a parallel strategy and we must not wait too long before we work on that (see Tom West's report "Strategies Going Forward"). We need to start working on a permanent structure for the four-county consortium, and develop the alternate strategies so that we are ready when our two-year grant ends.
- Susanne Norgard of the Mendocino Community Foundation is doing outreach to the other three foundations. If there is to be a local, public private solution it needs to be developed now.
  - Mike says Sonoma County has already done a feasibility study and has rough costs to use in conversations with vendors for one priority area of their county.
  - Supervisor Hamburg cautions that government moves slowly so we'll need all the time. Are we looking at sales tax, property tax, countywide, or is this limited to the cities?
  - John Goldsmith suggested we define the needs and work back to the dollars.
  - John Kuhry pointed out that because of current low voter participation, the next two years are perfect for getting a measure passed. We could offer 80% coverage (Jim goes for 95%).
  - Cathy pointed that we will get opposition from the incumbents by claiming access to the backbone; they want control of it as well as all the easy customers so how will the finances work? We need to remember rural residents.
  - In November, Inyo County put out a request for proposals for the design, construction and operation of their last-mile "21st Century Obsidian Project" (<http://thesheetnews.com/2014/11/14/inyo-launches-21st-century-obsidian-project/>) The county will own the infrastructure, but contract out the operation and maintenance. They also have access to the Digital 395 middle-mile infrastructure which makes this possible, and which was publicly financed at almost 99% subsidy.
- h. Mike and Trish will both be attending the CPUC Learning Summit in San Francisco on Feb. 19th to represent the NBNCBC.

#### 4. CASF Grant Program

- a. De Novo update: ([denovogroup.org](http://denovogroup.org)) Yahel Ben-David, President of De Novo, received a \$2 million Google research grant for his work with sustainable broadband networks for

rural areas. He put an ad in the Chronicle looking for research communities, and Gary Levenson-Palmer in Manchester responded to that ad. Ultimately Manchester was chosen as a test community for De Novo, and they have set up a network serving Manchester, Irish Beach and Point Arena. De Novo is connected into the Level 3 fiber cable at Manchester. Albion Ridge and Navarro are communities who are also interested in receiving service and have organized community support, and may be next for any expansion. As a non-profit research organization, De Novo wants to turn the project over to the community within two years somehow. The grant is to prove the sustainability of the technique.

- b. Ray from Ukiah Wireless was also at the meeting, and he also provides service in the Point Arena and Elk area. Ray felt that De Novo did not want to work with him. MCN has also taken an interest in De Novo.
- c. Brian suggested that long term there should be an edge router at Manchester, which could serve to sell broadband to several providers, as Level 3 requires a purchase of 10 gigabyte waves.
- d. As De Novo service expands on the south coast and many businesses and residents start to rely on it, there needs to be a “balance sheet discussion” about how a transition would occur. The south coast has already experienced the collapse of the Esplanade ISP, which was devastating to local businesses. That is a fear for some with De Novo - will it be sustainable without Google grant money?
- e. Other priority area updates: Trish has said that some residents of Westport have contacted her about broadband services, and she referred them to WillitsOnline, which received a CASF grant to provide DSL service. However, it doesn't appear that anything is happening yet, and Trish has some concerns about the situation. Others agreed that the concern is justified, but at this point we don't know anything more.
- f. There are challenges with all of the priority areas. We had hoped that we could get some service providers to apply for CASF grant funds; unfortunately at this point we do not see any potential CASF applications.

## **1. AT&T outages**

- a. Heather Gurewitz, the Field Representative for Congressman Huffman, said that ATT is caught up with all outages. She also recommended contacting Senator Mike McGuire when ATT does not respond to us.
- b. Brian said that he learned that ATT has rural crews and metro crews; the “field crews” are sent where there is greatest need. In December, that need was in was Sacramento rather than Mendocino County.
- c. There are still some areas where the copper wire is too old, perhaps 100 years, and there is not much that they can do.
- d. AT&T does not share information readily, and there there is only one AT&T Area Director for all 16 counties in northern California. Trish plans to contact her and hopefully develop a relationship so that there can be better communication.

- e. The Anderson Valley Wine Alliance was out of telephone for long time in December/ January; after 3 repair tags went out, service was finally repaired and a \$200 credit on bill.

## **2. Mapping Resources**

- a. This discussion was shortened due to time constraints.
- b. The County has mapping resources; Trish requested input as to what sort of mapping data we should pursue. She passed around suggestions, and asked everyone to please email your ideas to her.

## **3. County Updates**

- g. A Public Safety update was provided by Randy over the phone. The county Public Safety Commission, which hasn't met for more than a year, will be meeting March 5 (or 6<sup>th</sup>)? Greg Glavich is the Coordinator.
- h. The Fire Safety Committee met to revise the plan for public safety communications (which are by radio).
- i. FirstNet met in Fortuna last month; they are still in the planning stages.
- j. It was also reported that Verizon is selling off their landline infrastructure to Frontier in the north part of the county. Everyone felt that this was not good news, as it is likely that service quality will go down and rates will go up. The Utilities Reform Network (TURN) may contest the use of "market price" (as opposed to "net price") because the lines were built with public money.
- k. Mike noted that Verizon sold their towers to American Tower Company in Sonoma County.
- l. John K noted that Comcast owes millions of dollars for their franchise in Chico; Is our county getting its just due? Mikes says Sonoma is owed over a \$1M, but their franchise agreement is through the state DIVCA process and not local so it is hard to know. Mendocino is still local until they expire (we think around 2020).

## **4. Access Sonoma Broadband**

- a. Access Sonoma Broadband held its last meeting on Wednesday, January 21st in Santa Rosa. Their next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 18th.
- b. Sonoma County is building a new, 120' tower on Myers Grade, which will provide service from Fish Rock (in Mendocino County) to Bodega.
- c. They are hoping that companies companies will agree to co-locate on the tower.

## **6. Final thoughts and comments**

- a. The Community Foundation meeting space will not be available for possibly the next six months; we will hopefully continue to use the EDFC for our meeting space.

## **2. Meeting Adjourned 12:00**

Next meeting: Friday March 6th

Location: Economic Development and Financing Corporation