

Broadband Alliance Public Outreach Meeting

Friday, January 6th, 2017 10-12 am

Community Foundation of Mendocino County

Call in Number: 641-715-3341 Access code: 108 1131#

I. Call to Order

- A. Attendees: Jim Persky (Pacific Internet), Rick Elhert (OES), Mike Nichols (Sonoma), Ashley Trestle (Willits News), Sarah Wright (Mendocino Voice), Trish Steel, Jim Moorehead, Brooke Clarke, Katie Gibbs, Lloyd Chasey (Gualala)
- B. Call in - John Viegas (Supervisor, Glenn Co), Scott Ignacio (city manager, Pt. Arena)
- C. Additions to the agenda - none
- D. Handouts
 - (1) Agenda
 - (2) 2017 Alliance meeting dates
 - (3) 2-page summary of CPUC final decision in Rural Call Completion proceeding

II. California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Update

- A. Rural Call Completion - Trish provided some background and the latest news regarding Mendocino County's participation the Rural Call Proceeding. Basically, Mendocino County petitioned the PUC to become a "party" to this proceeding so that our voice would have more impact at the Commission. We were granted party status in April 2016, and Trish and Dan participated in various meetings in San Francisco. There was also a public participation hearing that was held in July in Ukiah. Mendocino County Counsel also submitted written comments in the proceeding, making recommendations and supporting the final decision. The PUC voted on the Decision on 12/15/17, and the decision was passed by a 3/2 vote (Commissioners Sandoval, Florio, Picker ayes; Commissioners Peterman, Randolph noes). This was very good news!
- B. Trish handed out a 2-page summary of what the decision means "on the ground;" this summary is also [posted on the Alliance website](#).
- C. Future Concerns - the carriers were opposed to the decision that was passed, and they could request a "re-hearing" of the decision from the PUC.
- D. New Commissioners- Commissioner Sandoval was unfortunately not re-appointed to the PUC when her current term expired at the end of December. Both the Alliance and the NBNCBC worked hard to encourage Governor Brown to re-appoint her, so her lack of re-appointment was a big disappointment because she is a strong advocate of consumer protections, and traveled the state listening to the concerns of residents. Commissioner Florio, also a strong advocate of consumer rights, had his term also expire in December as well. The new appointees to the Commission are Martha Guzman Aceves, and Clifford Rechtschaffen. Both have worked in the governor's office, as the deputy legislative affairs

secretary (Ms. Aceves), and senior advisor (Mr. Rechtschaffen). They also both have experience in energy matters, but neither has telecom experience.

III. North Bay-North Coast Broadband Consortium (NBNCBC) News and updates

- A. Consortium grant update - Since our last meeting in November, the NBNCBC grant application was approved by the PUC to provide for another 2 years of funding (Jan 2017-Jan 2019).
- B. 2-year Workplans - Trish provided a brief summary of the 6 main activities in the workplan for the year 2017 for Mendocino County. Each county has their own workplans, and the consortium as a whole as a workplan. These plans will be posted on the website soon.
- C. OverSight Committee - this committee is composed of a supervisor from each of the consortium counties (Marin, Mendocino, Napa, Sonoma) and guides the work of the consortium. The last met on December 8th. Highlights from the meeting include:
 - (1) Thanking retiring members Supervisor Kinsey and Carrillo for all their work to help close the Digital Divide
 - (2) Discussion of how to best support the re-appointment of Commissioner Sandoval to the CPUC (see above; she was not re-appointed)
 - (3) Discussion of The Internet For All Now Act (IFAN) to re-authorize the state broadband program (CASF).

IV. BAMC/County News

- A. Broadband Working Group (BWG) - The BWG met for the first time in December, and made good progress on a draft county "Broadband Goals and Strategies" document. The group is composed of 9 members representing education, public safety, county IT, government, providers, and businesses. Once the draft is finished by the BWG, the document will be posted on our website and distributed to various groups around the county to gather endorsements and support.
- B. Connect Joy Road
 - (1) In Sonoma County, after many years and much disappointment, the "Connect Joy Road" group finally had **success** in getting broadband for their community. They deserve a big congratulations! Their project is a fiber-to-the-premise build, using a partial subsidy from the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) grant program. The challenge was to find an applicant to apply on their behalf, but they were finally successful with RACE Communication.
 - (2) Community members took leadership roles to keep the community engaged and organized through the years and many disappointments; now as they look back on their long process, they see "lessons learned" and want to help other communities who might want to use their work as a model for bringing broadband to that community. Trish wants to know if there is interest from community groups in Mendocino County for such a presentation from Joy Road. If so, please contact her.
 - (3) However, the big catch is that the CASF program has to be re-authorized (it expired in December 2016) for this model of broadband expansion to work. There is legislation planned to be introduced this legislative session called "The Internet for All Now" (IFAN) act, which would re-authorize this fund. The IFAN bill will meet great resistance from the carriers, however, and so it will be a big challenge to get it passed and without the addition of harmful amendments.
- C. BAMC website - Trish is continuing to use the website to post new content, so please be sure to check it regularly. Meeting dates, agendas, notes, consumer education,

consortium news and more can all be found on the website. The most recent posting was of a letter from public interest groups (in which the Alliance signed on) in support of the draft Lifeline Verifer Program.

V. Broadband deployment updates and data

- A. AT&T CAF 2 funding update - there is not much new to report yet; AT&T plans to use this federal broadband subsidy to build out Fixed Wireless service in the county by modifying 8 of their existing cell towers, and building 14 new towers. They are required to provide service at speeds of 10 Mbps download and 1 Mbps upload, and to provide up to 150 GB data/month. AT&T will also be placing cellular equipment on these towers as well. There was some concern expressed on whether these builds will be able to meet future needs both in the data limit and speeds given the potential for congestion with concomitant data usage (people streaming video at the same time for example) that is will only increase at people “cut the cord.”
- B. Anchor Bay Campground Update update
 - (1) Lloyd Chasey is a member of the Gualala Municipal Advisory Council, and he contacted me with information about a new fiber-to-the-premise network at the 40-site Anchor Bay Campground (between Gualala and Point Arena). The campground currently has Central Valley Cable (CVC), but wanted better connectivity - especially those owners who want to live there but telecommute for their work. They could not interest CVC or AT&T to upgrade their connectivity, and eventually they worked with several companies out of Nevada - “GigaCity” as a cyber-retailer, and “SkyFiber” as a provider, to come in and build the fiber network.
 - (2) Skyfiber is now working with some businesses in Gualala for better connectivity so well, but it will probably be a wireless service from a nearby fiber point of presence (“POP”).
- C. Jim Persky from Pacific Internet provided a quick update, expressing high frustration with AT&T and their lack of concern for fixing trouble tickets, and upon which his business depends. Jim said that he has been begging the AT&T techs for help (he is not allowed to touch the copper), and that he was originally told by AT&T they couldn’t expedite line repair except for “medical emergencies;” one of his customers then provided a written note from their doctor about a medical condition, but AT&T reversed position and said that they are not escalating their repair tickets for *any* reason. Jim said that Frontier, whom he works with in Lake County, is much better at resolving repair tickets.
- D. Jim also expressed what all of us are concerned about - that the CAF money and AT&T’s new wireless service will be used as an excuse to cut landline service even though many people will still be dependent on their landlines. Other issues were briefly discussed, such as President-elect Trump’s two nominees to the FCC transition team are a former Sprint Lobbyist and a Verizon consultant, and so net neutrality will likely be lost; Jim stated that he also believes that the Verizon guy has a goal to get rid of Competitive Local Exchange Carriers (CLECs) (such as Sonic and Willits Online in our county) through which smaller providers such as Pacific Internet and Mendocino Community Network can access the copper infrastructure to provide service to customers.

VI. Other updates

- A. Rick Ehlert (county Office of Emergency Services) provided an update, but said that he didn’t have a lot to report. The FirstNet RFP went out several months ago, but within public safety there is concern that FirstNet won’t adequately provide for rural counties;

the issue is that very few companies can provide for service all by themselves, and so they are making partnership agreements. There was also some discussion of the upcoming storm, and expectations of 5-10" of rain, mostly Saturday night and Sunday.

VII. Access Sonoma Broadband

- A. Mike provided an update on the Joy Road group and their grant. They are in a "silent" phase, where the contractor is in the engineering/installation phase, and has told the group "don't bug us!" There are 466 households that are eligible to be served by the project, and more households outside the basic project area that also want to be connected. RACE said "no problem" and will be giving a price to those residents. So far, 80% of the Joy Road residents have formally said "yes" to subscribing to the new service.
- B. Sonoma is next interested in getting service to the Dry Creek Valley, which is adjacent to Healdsburg. There are about 150 unserved households, wineries, and Anchor Institutions, and very spread out. A fiber project there would cost about \$17 million.
- C. Sonoma County also met with AT&T regarding CAF2 funding in their county. AT&T wants to upgrade 5 towers, and build 4 new ones, mostly along the lower Russian River (Jenner, Monte Rio). No permits have yet been issued, and Sonoma County is encouraging co-location as there is home-owner resistance to new tower locations.
- D. Sonoma will be spending their CASF money on a Broadband Master Plan, prepared by a 3rd party using the Yolo Plan as a model.
- E. Mike also talked about the need for additional fiber up the 101 corridor; currently there is only 96 strands of ATT fiber and no diversity. ASB encouraged SMART to install fiber in their Right of Way as a way to make money, and that got their attention. SMART ended up installing 4 conduits, one of which contains 432 strands of fiber. This allows them to provide the cities with fiber, and as SMART expands we hope that the fiber will be extended through Cloverdale and all the way up to Willits and then eventually over the Highway 20 Right of Way to Fort Bragg.
- F. The PUC will have a voting meeting in Santa Rosa on April 6th; they were criticized by the state legislature for only having meetings in San Francisco and Los Angeles, and so this is the first time they will hold a meeting outside of those 2 locations.
- G. There is a new committee in the state assembly that will handle telecom issues instead of the Utilities and Commerce Committee. This new committee is the "Communications and Conveyance" committee, and we don't yet know who is assigned to it.

VIII. Final comments

- A. Lloyd Chasey stated he was impressed with the organization and amount of work that the Alliance has done.
- B. Scott Ignacio was appreciative to listen in on the meeting and stated that Point Arena is ready to get involved; he is looking forward to March 3rd meeting.
- C. John Viegas thanked us and said that the meeting was informative and provided him insight for their local carriers.

IX. Next meeting: March 3rd, 2017