

Steering Committee Meeting Notes

Friday, February 8th, 2013 10:00 am – 11:45 am

The Community Foundation of Mendocino County

204 S. Oak Street, Ukiah, CA 95482 (707) 468-9882

Dial in at (605) 477-2100 Participant access code: 565491#

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1. Call to Order: 10:00 am

- a. Attendees: Dan Hamburg, Greg Jirak, Jim Moorehead, John Goldsmith, Mike Nicholls, Steve Turner, Trish Steel, Randy MacDonald
- b. Call-in: Doug McCorkle (property manager for North Coast Railroad Authority), John McCowen
- c. Changes to agenda: addition of introduction of Doug McCorkle

2. Golden Bear Broadband update

- a. The R1CP permitting coordination meeting between Sonoma and Mendocino counties originally set for February 8th (today) has been postponed due to scheduling problems.
- b. We are trying to get at the front end of the permitting process, as Sonoma and Mendocino counties are the only ones from the 16-county project that will have to deal with coastal permitting. Steve Sharpe (Sonoma) feels it's better to get started on this earlier rather than later, and he is familiar with the process.
- c. The Golden Bear CASF grant application upload was completed on Jan 18th.
- d. Joseph Kong (potential funder for Golden Bear) is still waiting for approval on the EB5 Regional Center application; this approval is necessary in order to invest in Golden Bear. It has been 22 months and it is still under review from the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Jim has asked Heidi Dickerson, Congressman Huffman's district rep to investigate.
- e. Mike spoke with a broker contact he knows about this, and evidently a number of requests for these centers are "stuck"; it's not only Joseph Kong having this problem.
- f. Dan recognized that help from our legislative representatives is needed to move this regional center application forward, and asked about attempts to reach out to Senators Boxer and Feinstein to set up a meeting to discuss this. This is really important because not only is Golden Bear dependent on the EB5 regional center for potential funding, but there is also significant investment potential in a whole range of other areas in Mendocino county too.
- g. John Goldsmith brought up the point that this is about economic development and employment, and that it's been going on all over the US. It is not a new idea and is appropriate for follow up with the senators.
- h. Mike will follow up with his contact (all information is public so it poses no issues) to see if his contact can suggest anything.
- i. Jim will contact Heidi about working on connecting with Senators Feinstein and Boxer.

3. Doug McCorkle introduction (via conference call)

- a. Doug McCorkle is the property manager for the North Coast Railroad Authority, and updated the Alliance about the new NCRA contract with Parallel Infrastructure to build cell towers on their rights-of-way.
- b. Their contracts give Parallel Infrastructure the opportunity to build up to fifteen towers on their rights-of-way from Healdsburg up to Eureka in the next two to five years.
- c. They are already looking at and reviewing some sites, including one in Calpella and another one near Hopland, but they can't say exactly where they will be. The sites have to satisfy the needs of their clients (ATT, Verizon, etc).
- d. John McCowen sits on the NCRA board and was instrumental in adding language that will include Alliance coordination with any Parallel deployments. JM added that the requirement to "deal reasonably with the Alliance" is in the process. Doug said that Parallel Infrastructure suggested that he get in touch with the Alliance, so he believes that is on their mind already.
- e. Jim also encouraged Doug to go to our website at www.MendocinoBroadband.org for details of our activities and our skeletal draft the county broadband plan, as it may spark considerations in regards to broadband planning.
- f. Doug also mentioned that another area he is researching is FCC grant funding for developing and planning facilities; Jim suggested that maybe the Alliance could coordinate with him in that area. Trish will add Doug's name to our distribution list.
- g. Doug appreciated the meeting and will plan to attend another meeting in person.

4. MCOG/MCOE Transportation Planning Grant - Steve Turner

- a. Steve Turner from the Mendocino County Office of Education (MCOE) presented his first draft of the proposed Caltrans Environmental Justice Grant Application. This is a grant submitted to Caltrans that would involve MCOE and the Alliance, with the Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) as the applicant.
- b. This would be a great collaborative effort because the goals of MCOE, the California Superintendent of Public Instruction, MCOG and the Alliance would dovetail nicely.
- c. The end product of this grant would be a very accurate, valid broadband access map of the county produced from a survey funded by this money.
- d. The survey would be taken down to the parcel level and cover every paved road in the county. It would detail how much service was *really* available; the cost of that service; whether the family could afford it; was there was a household device to connect to the service; and mileage to the nearest available connectivity if the household is unserved.
- e. Steve needs to determine what this survey would cost, and whether this outcome is a realistic goal for the amount of money from the grant. This includes public meetings, getting the data, and tabulating reports. Originally, he had hoped the schools would be able to participate in collecting survey information, but MCOG has advised Steve that CalTrans requires an RFP to select a consulting firm. MCOG also has to provide the 10% local match, which was a surprise.
- f. Clear measurable goals need to be developed. If we assume that students reflect the overall population distribution, we could set a goal for something like 50% return. There are 15,000 students in the county; if we limit the survey to middle school/high school

students then the number is reduced by a third. We would have to determine what number of returned surveys we would need for statistical validity.

- g. A technologically valid method of assessing bandwidth would have to be determined.
- h. A Steering Committee that represents a broad base of the community (college, K-12 businesses, tribal, health services, emergency services, etc.) would have to be developed.
- i. The Digital divide is a problem of growing concern, and we are not unique in the issues we face. Other areas face the same problems, and one big plus of this grant proposal that should be highlighted is that fact that it could be a reproducible model promoted and re-created in other areas.
- j. This model could have broad implications, including defining benefits to the state by reducing transportation wear and tear on the roads.
- k. We need a snappy name for the proposal!
- l. There are also four or five competing applications, so this is a long shot. It is due at MCOG on Wednesday (2/13/13).
- m. The proposal will be presented to the MCOG board on Monday, March 4th at 1:30. Greg and Jim plan to attend with Steve.

5. Planning for 2013

- a. Mendocino County Broadband Plan and Fiber Backbone Plan
 - i. The Executive Committee will convene for strategic planning workshop Friday, March 1st.
 - ii. Greg added that hopefully by the end of the year we will have a much better handle on the needs of the county.
- b. Randy gave an update on public safety aspects of our Broadband Access Inventory (BAI). There has been a change in sheriff's office, and Sargent Shannon Barney, who was our contact, has been promoted to another job. They plan to hire someone else, but it has to go before the Board of Supervisors first.
- c. Randy attended a full day meeting with Shannon last month in Chico, and it seems that the FirstNet program will take longer and cost a lot more money than it first appeared.
- d. There has been progress, in that board and subcommittees have formed, and the state and local implementation grant monies have been released. Each state will receive \$500,000 and then can apply for more money. CA can look to receive many millions of dollars.
- e. Karen Wong is the California liaison to the feds in the FirstNet program; Randy's goal is to have Mendocino County on Karen's radar, to connect with her staff and have a contact to work with. Steve Turner offered to try to help make that contact using his contacts.
- f. Randy wants to present to Karen our case here in Mendocino County: we are a hard-to-serve community with needs, and FirstNet has a great opportunity to serve public safety and to also be part of an overall network that we are developing here that involves collaboration between public safety, the Broadband Alliance, and private resources.

- g. The money is to be used for planning, and the state is supposed to leverage the money with a 20% match. In-kind matching is allowable, so Randy will use many examples of activities here to make his pitch to Karen, such as:
 - i. Long Valley Fire Department and their Cahto Peak antennae
 - ii. Partnerships with large landowners who own high peaks suitable for towers
 - iii. The BAI that the Alliance is currently working on
 - iv. Deployments along roadways and existing facilities
- h. Steve Turner suggested that the County Public Works Department has a “Multi-hazard Mitigation Plan” that has all county roads, bridges, fire departments, and county facilities on it. It is not complete, but it may be helpful for the Broadband Access Inventory
- i. Randy will follow up with Howard with the Department of Transportation and get the information, as it could be a huge help.
- j.

6. Community Foundation Challenge Grant

- a. We are getting very close to meeting our Challenge Grant goal. John McCowen wondered if there was any strategic event/place to make the announcement to create the most impact.
- b. The Alliance is hiring Carol Brodsky to do some communications work and public outreach, and this can be her first assignment. She may have an idea, and we can all think about it too.

7. Committee reports

- a. Miscellaneous items
 - i. Randy reported that the Comptche Broadband Committee will meet, and that they are hoping to get a cell tower in and develop some small projects.
 - ii. Jim reported on a recent news article from the Press Democrat on February 5th about how the FCC wants to create super Wi-Fi networks across the nation, but the telecom giants have launched a fierce lobbying effort against it. Google, Microsoft, and other tech companies have countered with their own campaign saying that free service would spark an explosion of innovations and devices. <http://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/20130205/MCT/302051046/0/search>
 - iii. Another article from the Chronicle on February 5th by Brendan Greeley about an android application (“Air Mobs”) that would allow for people to trade/sell bandwidth they have now for bandwidth they might need later, *if* it is ever released.

8. Meeting Adjourned at 11:45

Next meeting: February 15th, 22nd, March 8th