

Steering Committee Meeting Notes

Friday, March 29th, 2013 10:00 am – 11:30 am

The Community Foundation of Mendocino County

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then the regular number, then #, and then access code and # again)

1. Call to Order: 10:00 am

- a. Attendees: Brian Churm, Carol Brodsky, Jim Moorehead, Mike Nicholls, Harold Galicer (CEO SeaKay), Kim Remick (CTO McNab Ranch Net), Paul Tichinin (County Superintendent of Schools), Steve Turner (MCOE), Trish Steel
- b. Call-in: Mitch Drake (Chief Architect of Golden Bear Broadband), Randy MacDonald
- c. Guest: Doug McCorkle (North Coast Railroad Authority Property Specialist)
- d. Changes to agenda: Add timeline and budget discussion to the MCOG grant update; add response to Comcast challenge to Golden Bear Broadband CASF application update

2. Route One Corridor Project (R1CP) permitting kickoff meeting – Wednesday, 3/27/13

- a. Jim gave a summary of the kickoff permitting meeting on Wednesday. All felt it was a great meeting and a good start on this collaborative effort. Mendocino County Planning staff (Steve Dunicliff, Andy Gustavson) and Sonoma County Planning staff Dean Parsons, and Economic Development Board staff Steve Sharpe were in attendance, along with Golden Bear Broadband (GBB) Chief Architect Mitch Drake and GBB consultant Ray Anderson.
- b. Mitch was happy with the meeting and would like to see more such meetings in the sixteen counties; he sees that going into Mendocino and Sonoma Counties, working up front, and getting the right people in the meetings will make the permitting process go more smoothly. These collaborative meetings was also part of his response to the CPUC commission when asked about his aggressive 24 month timeline that he has to work with.
- c. The Alliance will have a new page on our website for the Mendocino-Sonoma Permitting Team, and notes from meetings will be posted on that page.
- d. Mitch was asked if all the information that is being compiled to respond to the challenges to the GBB would be put on that webpage, and his response was that they would like to make everything public, including the formal challenges and to let everyone know that what is being said by the carriers isn't reality. He is still researching whether the challenger documents are public information.
- e. There are seven challenges to GBB by: AT&T, Comcast, Verizon, Frontier, Charter, Velocity, and Mediacom. The challenges from Verizon and Frontier came in after the challenge deadline date had passed, but they were still accepted.
- f. The GBB rebuttal to Comcast is almost complete; AT&T's is complete. All will be posted on the Alliance website with a link from the home page.

- g. Their rebuttal for the most part is that GBB is a middle-mile project, and that they pass through these communities (telecom and cableco territories) to get to the next unserved areas, and that the GBB does not have any last mile retail component in their application. He feels like the challenging carriers are confused about it because there is no reason they should be against it.
- h. Another issue is that some of the challenges use “round 7” data, which is against program rules. They were instructed to use round 6 data.
- i. Harold asked if it’s an “everything or nothing” situation with the rebuttals...a question that Mitch doesn’t know the answer to. Every challenger is worried about revenue protection, but if they would partner with GBB then it would make both of their networks stronger. It’s frustrating that the challengers to GBB won’t even come to the table to discuss collaboration, and seem to have the wrong idea about the grant application.
- j. Brian asked if GBB has requested access to lease dark fiber from the telecoms on those routes (yes), but those emails have either gone unanswered or the little bit of dialog has gone nowhere.
- k. Mitch has found that when a carrier says that they have an area 100% covered, there is a percentage that is missed, probably around a 23-27% range where they don’t reach customers. An example noticed immediately is Brooktrails, which is listed as covered, but everyone knows that Brooktrails has many areas that are not served at all.
- l. Currently, only the carriers are able to provide information into the CPUC database which is used to produce the broadband coverage maps, and in addition, they use advertised speeds, not actual speeds which are typically less.
- m. Mike felt that the permitting meeting was a good exchange of information, and especially found it helpful that Ray brought in samples of cabling and conduit of different sizes and strands. Such samples would also be useful to have available at public outreach meetings. For example, the 72-strand fiber cable was only about the size of a pencil.
- n. Later in the meeting Mitch mentioned a meeting with Parallel Infrastructure (PI) on April 18th, in which he will invite the North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA) to attend. This meeting would be to learn more about PI as they are open to discussions, and to share his project and goals. He believes that we are all trying to do the same thing, and working collaboratively with PI would save GBB in the areas of construction and permitting issues and would benefit everyone.
- o. PI has an agreement with NCRA that obligates PI to cooperate with them. PI is looking for opportunities for cell tower development along railroad Rights of Way (RoW). They are not under any agreement regarding fiber optics, so if GBB wants to put fiber along the railroad RoW he would talk with Doug of the NCRA.
- p. Doug said that he was at our meeting today to learn what he can do with their infrastructure with regards to fiber optics, as they hold Rights of Way from Healdsburg all the way north to Eureka (from Healdsburg south it is SMART; fiber along the railroad Right of Way would cross that southern line)
- q. Mitch will contact Doug next week for more discussion about this.

3. MCOG/MCOE Grant proposal

- a. Steve Turner from Mendocino County Office of Education (MCOE) updated everyone on the status of the CalTrans grant application. The grant is being finalized today! They are making the case that broadband is an alternative transportation mode which improves economic development.
- b. There have been a few recent modifications to the proposal: a few glitches in the budget were fixed, and a change to Task 4.2 Conducting Student Survey. This task is about coordinating with each district about the delivery, collection, and tabulation of student surveys, and importing that data into the student data systems. The proposal calls for 7,000 surveys of students in grades 7-12, and the results will be linked to their student file and forwarded to the database. They plan to develop standards of how to record the data, as geocoding can be rather sensitive, with the idea to reward the schools somehow for doing an accurate clean job. The only way to reimburse the schools is for MCOE to become a sub-applicant, so that is the change that is being made. MCOE will have a Memorandum of Understanding with MCOG, and Task 4.2 will become the responsibility of MCOE. Steve is expecting that MCOE will be administering this grant and lining up the consultant. There is a large amount of work in this grant, which includes six community workshops and over 10,000 surveys, but in the end we will have a significant amount of the population of Mendocino County surveyed regarding their broadband access/availability/costs, etc.
- c. Mike added that this grant could be taken to Sonoma County and presented as a “road map” to be reproduced there. Bottom line: it’s able to be replicated, and it will be compatible with the CPUC’s database. With these tools we can generate our own maps and challenge the inaccurate broadband coverage maps.
- d. Brian added that to make sure that any results that come from the consultant is in the public domain, and is the ownership of Caltrans.
- e. Mendocino County Superintendent of Schools Paul Tichinin was very enthusiastic about the project, adding that Sunne McPeak is interested to see where this goes, and that collectively we’ve broken through a huge barrier to even be considered. School districts are being asked to provide 24/7 learning opportunities for their students, and that means having access to broadband in their homes.
- f. The grant has a wide support from throughout the county, including all ten school districts, plus twenty-two county agencies. Steve passed a list of all the endorsers around the table for everyone to see.
- g. At this point our grant discussion widened to include related topics...Mike said that Sonoma County has the problem of low adoption rates even though there is access available. In the Latino community only 30% of families utilize broadband, and that is primarily on smart phones for social interactions, so they need to raise the level of awareness about other benefits of broadband to close the digital divide. There is a general lack of computer literacy about basic business activities, such as using MC Word and Excel. School computer labs are turned off at 3 pm when school is out, but they could be utilized for night classes in computer literacy.

- h. Paul added that there are pockets of experimentation happening around the state E-rate program and finding ways to open up that resource. He gave the example of Riverside USD, which has an E-rate exception and they have produced a robust powerful wireless system within the school system available to the public.
- i. Mike brought up that Santa Clara has a separate utility district, and has lit up the whole town because they converted to smart meters with 600 foot Wi-Fi capability built into them (Ukiah and Healdsburg are part of the same power consortium). The question was asked, "Why didn't PG&E do the same here?" Is it too late to send a letter to our Board of Supervisors about such consideration of the smart meters going into effect?
- j. Harold said that there is a precedent for public access from facilities using E-rate. In Washington DC all public libraries using E-rate funds have free Wi-Fi zones around them.
- k. One challenge that PG&E faces is to get broadband to unserved areas to light up their smart meters; they are open to discussion about how to get a signal to their metered areas, and since GBB has rights of way with PG&E, there is mutual benefit. He is hoping to move forward with that work and from there possibly into general access.
- l. Jim ended the discussion of the MCOE/MCOG grant by thanking Steve Turner for all the work that he has put into this application.

4. First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) – Randy MacDonald

- a. The FirstNet program was created by the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 as an independent authority within the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), and directs FirstNet to establish a single, nationwide, interoperable public safety broadband network (from their website <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/category/firstnet>)
- b. California will receive over \$5 million from the Federal Government to be used for planning of the network, with the monies distributed by mid-June.
- c. The Mendocino County Public Safety Communications Committee has given support to it, and last month they supported the 3-pronged strategy for local deployment. Randy is the public safety/FirstNet/Alliance liaison, and is the one pushing the ball forward.
- d. This three-pronged strategy involves: deploying FirstNet on all public safety facilities, 2) deploying on all roadways on the county, and 3) identifying unserved areas through the first two mechanisms, and finding large landowners interested in working collaboratively to plan for the creation of cell towers in those unserved regions.
- e. Randy is working on getting a meeting arranged with Karen Wong, FirstNet California Coordinator, the point person for California. He would like to present to her our unified and solid effort in Mendocino County, as well as to let her know our needs. By working together, and providing a front-loaded plan to her, we can make her job easier and help her implement the program in California.
- f. Once he gets a positive signal back from Karen, Randy would like to come back to this group and nail down some details, including a timeline and fleshing out the local planning with the expectation that we can receive some monies from the state to support consulting devices to build the database. We wouldn't see the money before mid-summer though.

- g. Steve Turner, who has been working intensively on the MCOE/MCOG/Alliance grant that will be submitted to Caltrans very soon, suggested that the information from the FirstNet program (identifying unserved areas) could feed into the same database that his grant will be developing.
- h. Randy didn't see why this shouldn't work, as one of the criteria for the FirstNet program is to facilitate and favor public/private collaborative efforts. Steve Turner will make sure that Randy has a copy of the MCOG grant application.
- i. Harold asked if the FirstNet program is working with the California Guard, as they will be receiving \$30 million this year which is supposed to be spent on rural communications. Randy said that the only mention of military collaboration that he has heard is with the Coast Guard. Harold will let Randy know if he hears anything more.

5. Community Foundation Challenge Grant

- a. The Community Foundation Challenge Grant has been met, and we are working on plans for the best opportunity to announce this to the community at large and to gain some publicity for the Alliance.

6. Opportunities

- a. Randy updated the group about the recent re-organization in public safety: Sergeant Shannon Barney was promoted, and Tammy Bartolomei is now the new Emergency Operations Coordinator for the county on the organizational side, and Greg Glavich is the Communications Coordinator on the technology side.
- b. Harold has some questions about a tower build in Hopland for the Volunteer Fire Department that SeaKay is struggling with in terms of siting, regulations and approval, and Randy suggested informing Greg about it.

7. Meeting Adjourned at 11:30

Next meeting: April 5th, 12th, 26th (no meeting April 19th)