

**Steering Committee Meeting Notes**

Friday, May 3rd 10:00 am – 11:25 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#**

(If you have problems dialing in, try dialing (805) 360-1075 first,  
then the regular number, then #, and then access code and # again)

**1. Call to Order: 10:00 am**

- a. Attendees: Brian Churm, Carole Brodsky, Dan Hamburg, Greg Jirak, Jim Moorehead, Mitch Drake, Susanne Norgard, Trish Steel
- b. Call-in: Mike Nicholls, Steve Turner
- c. Changes to agenda: none

**2. Golden Bear Broadband NCRMMI/R1CP update**

- a. On Friday, April 25<sup>th</sup> Mitch gave an update to the Alliance and Sonoma Connect from his meeting with CPUC staff on the status of the GBB application. The meeting was held in Sonoma County Board of Supervisors' conference room,.
- b. GBB has had to redo their entire financials, and he must remove any area that is classified as "served" from their application. GBB has a self-imposed deadline of going back to CPUC with a status report by this Friday.
- c. Mike added that if all the Anchor Institutions are removed from Comcast/ATT "served" areas and GBB went to a higher reimbursement rate, then they may not be able to use EB5 Financing. It would require a conventional loan with a fifteen year payback.
- d. There is a meeting with Joseph Kong this afternoon.
- e. Mike also reported that Sonoma Connect has their initial funding from the county, and will have their first meeting on May 15<sup>th</sup>. He gave kudos to Jim and Greg and the Alliance for providing a "roadmap" for them to follow. Jim will attend and share with them more details of how the Alliance has organized themselves, and pitfalls to beware of. He expects about ten people to attend.

**3. SB 740 update (Padilla)**

- a. Mike Nicholls attended the SB740 hearing in Sacramento on April 30<sup>th</sup> to speak in favor of the bill, and he gave a report. Out of the sixteen northern counties, only two were represented – himself for Sonoma County and Connie Stewart for Humboldt County (and Redwood Coast Connect). He asked Cathy Emerson her opinion about why there was not more participation/interest in this, and her reply was that these counties are "dis-spirited" because of having been through this so many times and with the same disappointing results.
- b. Representatives from Verizon, ATT, Frontier, and The Council of Cable Companies all made comments in support with substantial amendments or in opposition to SB 740.

- c. ATT's Bill Divine spoke first, saying that ATT is in favor of the bill but troubled by the fact that there is "over-building", and that ATT cannot permit this "overbuilding" through their territory.
- d. Verizon said that they felt the specification for service speeds should be modified and reduced to the FCC speed of 4 Mbps Down/1 Mbps Up so that there is uniformity with FCC levels. Padilla responded that he didn't want to have any speeds defined nor specified in the statutes. The Alliance was shocked that the telecoms would suggest moving "backwards", if you will.
- e. The bill will go back to the committee, the language will be re-worked, and it will come back.
- f. Jim received an email that implied that due to pressure from a lobbyist group, Padilla agreed to change the language making the priority for funding to "unserved" over "underserved." The Alliance estimates that Mendocino County is about three quarters underserved, so this change would severely undermine Alliance goal to close the Digital Divide in Mendocino County.
- g. In all, Mike waited for three hours and listened to ten other bills, and when SB 740 came up they discussed it for a total of twelve minutes from start to finish before they broke for lunch.
- h. It was pointed out that there are so few "unserved" areas (according to the inaccurate official maps) that once that criteria is met, then the funding should be available for the "underserved" areas (as long as underserved areas are not eliminated from the criteria).
- i. The Padilla staff will advise us when they are ready to have another hearing; the decision is expected sometime in June.
- j. During his travels this week, Mitch Drake met with an internet provider who wants to testify at this next hearing, as he is quoted as telling Mitch, "You are the answer to my dying business." This ISP has a lot of customers on dial-up still, and has been trying to order internet backhaul from ATT, but is refused. (To clarify: ATT doesn't say "no" outright, but they raise their price to such a level that it is impossible for an ISP to operate). He has no other choice for backhaul, so is facing business failure.
- k. This sort of economic need is what keeps grassroot efforts like ours going, and energizes GBB to continue to fight this "David and Goliath" battle. These sorts of stories are what need to be told.
- l. Mitch said that people are literally moving away and leaving their homes in northern California because there is no broadband from which to operate and grow a business and provide the opportunities that they want for their children.
- m. Carole said that she spoke with a realtor from NorBar, and this person said that if we need endorsements, then she didn't think it would be a problem. Trish will send Carole a GBB template to get that endorsement from them.

**4. SB 331 (Liu) – CENIC service to all public California libraries - Greg**

- a. Senate Bill 331 is a budget-related effort at the State Capitol to connect public libraries to a statewide high-bandwidth, high-capacity Internet network sponsored by CENIC (the Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California). Basically it allocates money to the CENIC network.

- b. The Alliance, Friends of the Coast Community Library and the Gualala Municipal Advisory Council have endorsed it.
- c. Greg doesn't think that there is any real opposition to it at this time.

**5. Fort Bragg Broadband Planning meeting – May 17th**

- a. Fort Bragg has close to twenty vacant buildings in the downtown area, and they are exploring ways to bring businesses and people into those areas.
- b. If they could get robust internet then the possibility of creating "micro-work centers" exists.
- c. Susanne brought up that for many of these older buildings, there are other issues besides lack of broadband that need dealing with.
- d. The Fort Bragg City Council is doing some planning for hooking up their Anchor Institutions to fiber. The Alliance wants to work with them in this planning, and for that reason our steering committee/public outreach meeting on Friday, May 17<sup>th</sup> will be held in Fort Bragg, followed by two meetings with city council and their staff. Scott Deitz (Fort Bragg councilmember), Dave Turner (Mayor of Fort Bragg), some of their staff, and Mitch Sprague have all indicated that they will attend. Basically the Alliance would like to get them started with a broadband plan template that they can use, similar to what Greg provided for Sea Ranch.
- e. Brian asked if they are going to create a municipal utility, a "business-side" planning question for them to consider.

**6. MCOG/MCOE Transportation Planning Grant**

- a. Steve Turner from MCOE worked with MCOG to finish the grant, and it was sent off to the Caltrans office in Eureka the first of April. He has heard nothing since, and a decision can be expected by August.
- b. We are hopeful about the grant, but have nothing else to report at this time.

**7. Community Foundation Challenge Grant**

- a. The Alliance is working on the best way to publicize reaching our challenge grant match goal. Susanne offered to write up something in her next column, but needs to show how the Alliance is going to spend the money. She will call Jim and get some quotes.
- b. The Alliance is also working on a larger public outreach story about the grassroots effort of the Alliance in trying to solve the broadband problem in Mendocino County. We have been waiting on KC Meadows, the editor of the Ukiah Daily Journal/media news group which owns several papers, but we are getting a bit impatient as we have not heard anything from her.
- c. Greg feels that we should move ahead with this effort and not wait for the UDJ.

**8. Opportunities**

- a. At the Sacramento Broadband Summit in March, Jim felt that the CPUC finally recognized that the current mapping system isn't working, and they announced setting up a "mapping working group" with representatives from the various consortiums throughout the state and the CPUC GIS lead person Rob Osborne.

- b. Jim nominated Greg to be a part of this group, and they had their first conference call April 24.
- c. They had twenty-three people on this first call, and Cathy Emerson ran the meeting.
- d. The highlight of this whole thing to Jim is that the CPUC is seeing the need to get more accurate mapping information, and they proposed to allow the various consortiums to submit mapping information in whatever format they have collected it in. From this information, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) database is updated every six months, which is the official federal (FCC) mapping.
- e. Jim and Greg have been working on a “Roads and Communities” database, and they have a high level of confidence in its accuracy and will be submitting it.
- f. The deadline for this submission to the CPUC is May 24<sup>th</sup>.
- g. The CPUC is also proposing a new program which would take the mapping down to the parcel level, which would basically solve the mapping granularity problem. Currently the mapping is only at the census block level, and if one person is served within that census block, the entire census block is considered served.

**9. Committee reports – nothing specific but general comments**

- a. Mendocino County has re-subscribed its membership with the Regional Council of Rural Communities (RCRC), which is very interested in all aspects of rural broadband. A representative/lobbyist from the RCRC spoke at the SB740 hearing, and Jim has a call into her, but hasn’t heard back yet.
- b. Jim wants to know how can we work together and publicize these issues now that Mendocino County has re-joined RCRC.
- c. Susanne mentioned that there have been some articles recently about the lack of broadband on employment, and its effect on migration trends. It would be good to find some specific examples of this, and connect it back to our situation.
- d.

**10. Meeting Adjourned at 11:30**

**Next meeting: May 10<sup>th</sup> – Special PEG meeting**  
**May 17<sup>th</sup> – Special location-Fort Bragg**