

NEVADA BROADBAND TASK FORCE  
MEETING

March 21, 2013  
9 A.M.

**1. Call to order, roll call, and determination of quorum.**

Name	Affiliation	Present	Location
Brad Lyon	Moapa Telephone	X	Logandale
Daphne DeLeon	State Library and Archives	X	Reno
Ed Anderson	Nevada System of Higher Education		
Elmer Porter	Eureka County School District	X	Eureka
Frank Woodbeck	Commission on Economic Development and DETR	X	Carson
Jeff Fontaine	Nevada Association of Counties		
Gerald Ackerman	University of Nevada School of Medicine	X	Elko
Randy Brown	AT&T	X	Carson
Sherry Rupert	Nevada Indian Commission	X	Carson
Terri Weldon	Charter Communications	X	Reno
Rick Nelson	Nevada Department of Transportation		
Jim Garza	Economic Development Authority-White Pine County	X	Ely

Daphne DeLeon called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. after quorum was established.

**2. Introduction of task force members and staff, names, and affiliations.**

Non-members of the task force in attendance were: Lynn O'Mara (State Information Technology Coordinator), Mike Eifert (Nevada Telephone Association), Maud Naroll (Department of Administration), Quin Rescigno (Rx3 Communications), Lindsey Niedzielski (Connect Nevada), Ariel Martinez (Connect Nevada), Debbie Erdody (Connect Nevada), Rickey Boucher (Charter), Scott Nebesky (Reno-Sparks Indian Colony), Bill Welch (Nevada Hospital Association), Gerald Smith (Reno-Sparks Indian Colony), Victoria Guzman (Walker River Paiute Tribe), Elveda Martinez (Walker River Paiute Tribe), Kathy Griffin (Lyon County School District), Scott Lommori (Lyon County School District), Alan Medeiros (Lyon County School District), Elizabeth Riesser (Connected Nation), Jeff Cocoran (Network Services), Jeff Drothler (Las Vegas Urban League), Jeff Begley (Chief Engineer), Shane Del Cohen

(SHRAB), Debra Solt (Vegas PBS), Assemblyman James Oscarson (Nevada State Assembly), and Jane Miller (Arizona Nevada Tower).

### **3. Public Comment.**

Assemblyman Oscarson thanked members for their work on the Task Force.

### **4. Follow up on action items from previous meetings.**

No follow up.

### **5. Approval of minutes from previous task force meetings.**

Sherry Rupert made to revisions to the minutes including a change to the word “cognizant” and to a revision to her title as “Vice President”. Terri Weldon moves to approve as amended, Jim Garza seconds. Minutes are approved.

### **6. Nevada Hospital Association (NHA) Update**

Bill Welch stated the NHA project as a whole was not suspended by National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA). Rather, the ability to draw down funds was as a result of NHA’s partner’s withdrawal of match funding. Recently, NTIA sent three federal grant officers to do an onsite review of the construction. While in Nevada, they met with eCare and Optica, and were pleased with the work that has been done. NTIA gave NHA a letter to respond to with a new partner in place to take over the project. NHA did submit the project within the time dictated by NTIA. NHA has been working with Commnet to take over the project. Commnet has been engaged in due diligence to take over the project from eCare. eCare has been very cooperative with the transition.

Commnet has previous experience in Nevada, which will prove beneficial in plans for expansion and cost saving. Bill Welch reported NHA anticipates a term sheet from Commnet on March 22, which the NHA board will then need to approve. Mr. Welch anticipates this will be a smooth transition, as they have worked on the draft agreement since the beginning. Mr. Welch is hopeful the federal government will see the term sheet as a binding agreement and allow for construction to begin April 1.

Optica will continue to be the construction vendor and the project will still need to be completed by July 30. NHA is still seeking an extension, and are hopeful they can secure one, as many grants have had similar issues. NHA would like the project extended to September 30.

#### *Discussion:*

Gerald Ackerman asked if the pole agreements are also transferable. Mr. Welch stated the pole agreements were with eCare on behalf of the Nevada Hospital Association and are transferable. Daphne DeLeon stated the Douglas County Library

would like to be connected as part to the project. Mr. Welch said he would take note of that and make sure a conversation was initiated. He also stated John Champagne has been very aggressive at identifying potential partners and other community anchor institutions. Mrs. DeLeon asked if the budget for the project included 25 million of federal funds as well as the 1.7 million match dollars. Mr. Welch stated in total the project was now a 30 million dollar project. Commnet is also working on developing a work schedule that would spend the federal dollars first and the private funding second, this would mean the portion in Tonopah would be moved to end of the project. Mr. Champagne and Stacey Jennings are confident they can complete the project as scheduled.

Assemblyman Oscarson left the meeting at 9:32 a.m.

## **7. SONNET Project update – Chris Magenheimer**

Lindsey Niedzielski reported on behalf of Chris Magenheimer. SONNet with the Nevada Division of Emergency Management (NDEM) completed the NTIA State Planning and Implementation grant (SLIPG) and submitted it to NTIA on March 18, 2013. This grant will allow SONNet to move forward in collection information that will be necessary to plan the needed infrastructure that will be required for the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network.

Connected Nation provided much of the detailed information and mapping that was required for the grant application and members of the grant team would like to thank Connected Nation for this support.

NTIA plans to release these grant funds to the 56 states and territories in the two phases. The first will be to establish governance for broadband in each state and establish a plan to provide outreach and partnerships in each county. The second phase will be to map infrastructure and establish memorandum of understandings (MOUs) with the state and local government and private industry for the use of their infrastructure to create Nevada's piece of the nationwide network.

Because of the work that the Task Force has already established, Nevada and SONNet are far ahead of other states and Nevada wants to continue to be a leader in the western region. Nevada has worked to create a collation with other western states to create the West State Alliance. This group consists of California, Oregon, Washington, Montana, Idaho, Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, Nebraska and New Mexico. Each of these states has similar issues and sees the benefit to work together in the tasks ahead.

As SONNet moves forward the partnership with Connect Nevada and the Broadband Task Force as a very important piece of the overall planning process. Connect Nevada has already established important working groups in each county and SONNet would like to become part of these teams to establish a public safety element that would introduce the county team members to the FirstNet concept and how this network will benefit public safety around the state.

*Discussion:*

Mrs. Rupert stated yes, she has had meetings with Chris Magenheimer and has coordinated meetings with the Intertribal Council of Nevada.

Randy has joined the meeting at 9:39 a.m.

Elmer Porter stated that public safety may be able to help with sustainability of other projects, including those along I-80.

## **8. ARRA Project Reports**

### **Lyon County School District:**

Kathy Griffin reported on updates to the Lyon County School District project. The project is a BTOP grant award for six public computing centers awarded May 30 and ending Sept 30. The total grant was for 745,000 dollars with a 319,000 dollar match requirement.

Mrs. Griffin stated the project has met all of their goals as stated in their application. The project has also exceeded their federal grant match requirements

These goals include training classes at each facility (some are paid most are volunteers, software classes, GED, internet safety, ESL and resume), video broadcasting, and creation and support of community partnerships. The Fernley location has offered job fairs and has placed 500 residents, which they estimate resulted in 2.5 million dollars in economic impact.

The public computing centers, at the end of the grant period, are to be turned over to each location. This process starts in April and will continue through the end of the grant period. There will be a meeting of all recipients on March 26 to discuss the success of the PCCs and a smooth transition.

*Discussion:*

Mrs. DeLeon asked how many computers were added to the county. Mrs. Griffin stated they had added 110 new computers, which are not time restricted. Mrs. Griffin also confirmed use numbers are higher Dayton, Fernley and Yerington.

Elveda Martinez commented on the beauty of their facility and invited members to visit.

Mrs. DeLeon suggested the PCCs look into dedicated funding through Institute of Museums and Library and Services, the funding will be tied to the value of the programming within the PCCs.

### **Reno-Sparks Indian Colony:**

Scott Nebesky, the planning director from the tribe, reported on the BIP infrastructure grant between the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony and Hungry Valley.

Mr. Nebesky stated the tribe received a USDA grant in 2011 for the expansion of broadband between Spanish Springs and Hungry Valley. The colony recognizes Hungry Valley as a future center for growth (population). Currently, the project is in the final phase with specifications. The project will connect fiber to a tower in the community and the colony will broadcast a wireless signal to residents. The colony has a tribal center and an education facility eagerly waiting the build out. The construction phase will start June 13, which is currently on schedule. The colony also plans to be the ISP for the project and will charge a fee to residents, with three tiers of service. The tribe will subsidize a portion of the project through general funds.

Mrs. DeLeon asked if the network was robust enough to support other projects like public safety and the Nevada Health Information Exchange. Mr. Nebesky stated he could not answer that without his technical director Joe Chicago, but that he would look into it.

### **One Click Away:**

Mrs. DeLeon reported on the One Click Away project, funded through BTOP grant funds and ending July 30.

Mrs. DeLeon stated the project covers 34 locations at existing libraries, providing for public computers (15 of 17 counties). To date the project has deployed 100% of the computers in the application (for 18 months) and has completed the 2012 annual report.

Findings from the annual survey and the resulting report include data. To date the project has served ½ a million people, 551, 201 unique sessions, and includes 4,800 hours of formal computer training. The centers also report ad hock, on-site training for 450 people. The project has leveraged additional money, which allowed for the installation of print management systems. In addition, mechanisms for replacing the computers have been built into the budget for sustainability of the project.

At the Nevada State Libraries and Archives a 30 seat computing lab service was created specifically for government services. The project is currently coordinating efforts with Health and Human Services to offer training to eligible Medicare/Medicaid applicants.

## **9. Broadband Initiatives in Other States**

Mrs. DeLeon stated the Task Force should start examining the services of Connect Nevada and how other states are coordinating broadband efforts. She supplied a handout and requested members examine the initiatives of other states for best practices and to determine essential services the State will need after the grant expires. She stated this was only the first step of the process and many different

factors would need to be considered including results of the current legislative decisions.

*Discussion:*

Mr. Garza stated there may be federal funding and foundational support. He also suggested the group examine setting up a Community Development Corporation (CDC). He also suggested that Public Community Centers could fall under the CDC as a function of the organization. There may also be an opportunity to set up an additional school district, dealing exclusively with online education and work force development.

Mr. Garza stated White Pine had recently supported the creation of the Eastern Nevada Food Bank, which could be used as an example.

Mr. Ackerman stated this group was similar to the Rural Telecommunications Task Force which he was a part of many years ago. He stated, for the success of this kind of initiative, it needed to have a place within government to drive the initiatives forward.

Maud Naroll reminded the group of the grants unit within the Department of Administration and their website at [grants@nv.admin.gov](mailto:grants@nv.admin.gov)

## **10. Connect Nevada Update**

Lindsey Niedzielski presented the Connect Nevada project update including updates regarding the Summit, recent research initiatives, and efforts within regional planning.

### **Summit:**

Mrs. Niedzielski stated the Nevada Broadband Summit was set for November 18, 2013 at the University of Nevada, Reno in the Joe Crowley Student Union Ballroom. The focus of the Summit would be education and technology.

Mrs. Niedzielski proposed the following awards for the Summit

1. School District Broadband Hero Award
2. Post-Secondary Award
3. Adoption Broadband Hero Award
4. Community Broadband Hero Award

Mr. Ackerman stated he would like to include an additional award for health care.

Mr. Ackerman moves. Terri Weldon seconds. Awards approved.

### **Research**

Elizabeth Riesser reported the release of the Nevada Residential Adoption Survey Results.

- Rural Nevada businesses have adopted technology at rates similar to businesses in non-rural parts of the state. Approximately 87% of rural Nevada businesses use a computer and 74% use broadband.
- Technology utilization rates are lower among rural Nevada businesses than non-rural businesses. Just over one-half (52%) of rural businesses have a business website, while 28% allow employees to telework, and only 4% subscribe to voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) service.
- Rural Nevada businesses earn approximately \$320 million in revenue from online sales, based on self-reported annual revenues.
- Approximately 72% of businesses in these sectors in rural Nevada have adopted broadband, only 49% report that they use a website, and only 2% subscribe to VoIP service.
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Mrs. Riesser also broke down adoption trends by demographic, type of service, online service and mobile service. She also stated the two main barriers to adoption are cost, followed closely (by one percentage point) by relevance.

### **Regional Planning**

Ariel Martinez and Debbie Erdody gave status reports on completion of regional plans stating that all counties were on target for completion with grant guidelines.

### **ECO Success story**

Mrs. Niedzielski stated a consumer in Henderson had recently taken advantage of the Mobile Citizen offer and as a result he had sent her the following:

“My Clear Modem arrived today, I plugged it in, and now I have access to the internet that is clear, reliable, and very very fast. For a long while there I felt as though I was living in the horse-and-buggy era with my flaky dial-up modem and my dependence on a kind neighbor who let me log on to his slower and constantly-failing Wi-Fi hotspot. When the neighbor told me he was moving to a newly-purchased ranch up in Overton, I really started sweating. Now I'm in the 21st Century! Again, my gratitude. You are a peach!”

### *Discussion:*

Mrs. DeLeon asked Mrs. Riesser what kind of responses fell under the other category as it represented a large percentage of the total result. Mrs. Riesser replied that responses were related to getting access at another location, physical illness, inadequate computer speeds, or was a true “other” response.

Mr. Woodbeck left the meeting and quorum was lost at 10:50 a.m. Meeting was adjourned and future items were deemed for informational purposes only.

## **11. Legislative Update**

Mr. Brown stated the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) BDR had been passed from the Senate to the Committee on Commerce and Labor. There is also an additional amendment proposed by Century Link.

Additionally, an industry bill has been proposed which provides for a 3<sup>rd</sup> party administrator to qualify residents for lifeline.

Mrs. DeLeon reported she, as chair of the Task Force, had participated in a meeting with Assemblyman Oscarson and Senator Goicochea to help resolve issues between Arizona Nevada Tower and the Bureau of Land Management.

In addition, she provided testimony related to internet access (both at home and in the libraries) for the Assembly Committee on Taxation.

## **12. Nevada HIT project update**

Mrs. O'Mara stated the Nevada Health Information Exchange Board had completed interviews and was working through the hiring process for a CEO. In addition they are working toward completing the RFP to identify a vendor for the system.

## **13. Public Comment**

Mr. Ackerman stated Project Echo would make for an excellent participant in the Nevada Broadband Summit.

Meeting ended at 10:53 a.m.