

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Nebraska Information Technology Commission
Wednesday, October 4, 2017 1:30-4:00 P.M. CT
Varner Hall-Video Conference Room
3835 Holdrege, Lincoln

Desk Top Video Sites and Public Participation Sites Available Upon Request:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Phil Green, Co-Chair
Rod Armstrong, Co-Chair
Jay Anderson
Chris Anderson
Randy Bretz
Charlotte Narjes
Tim Lindahl
Cullen Robbins
Holly Woldt

Participating Video Sites or Phone (Non-voting): Connie Hancock, Megan McGown

MEMBERS ABSENT: Pam Adams, Brett Baker; Jessica Chamberlain; Shonna Dorsey; Steve Fosselman, Steve Henderson; Jacob Knutson; David Lofdahl; Joan Modrell

ROLL CALL, NOTICE OF POSTING OF AGENDA, NOTICE OF NEBRASKA OPEN MEETINGS ACT POSTING

Co-chair Phil Green called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m. There were 8 members present. A quorum did not exist to conduct official business. The meeting proceeded with informational items. The meeting announcement was posted on the NITC and Nebraska Public Meeting websites on September 19, 2017. The agenda was posted on the NITC website on Sept. 20, 2017.

APPROVAL OF MAY 12, 2017 MINUTES*

Approval of the minutes was tabled until the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

CITY OF LINCOLN BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE EFFORTS

David Young, City of Lincoln

In 2012, the City of Lincoln started efforts to improve broadband for Lincoln businesses after Yahoo passed up Lincoln for a data center and Gallup moved its headquarters to Omaha. The City of Lincoln invested \$700K in a downtown conduit system which now covers every street. The City attracted four Internet carriers to provide competitive service to downtown businesses.

In 2014, the City of Lincoln began focusing on residential service. It established a 100 Mbps minimum "broadband" definition and required a 25-year agreement from companies using the City's duct. In 2015, Windstream announced deployment of gigabit speeds to 5,000 homes. In 2016, Allo began a citywide buildout to bring 100Mbps/1,000Mbps fiber to every home by 2019. Their deployment is now 60% complete. In 2017, Spectrum announced an upgrade to a minimum 60Mbps for all residences in the city. In 2017 Bluestem Fiber announced fiber deployment to select neighborhoods. The City jointly owns 4-6 fiber conduits down every arterial. Competitive providers own 1-2 fiber conduits to every neighborhood. Residential fiber buildout has resulted in:

- 400+ new jobs
- \$20 million/year in new salaries
- \$200 million infrastructure investment
- 1,000 miles of new fiber (2,000 miles by 2020)

In 2018, the City will begin a Wireless Initiative to provide free public Wi-Fi planned for citizens, students, and visitors. The City of Lincoln is planning for 100 small cell light pole placements by 2018 via Verizon, Sprint (d.b.a. Mobilitie) and AT&T (d.b.a. wireless aggregator). In addition, future plans include 200 small cell light pole placements by 2019 and 400 small cell light pole placements by 2022.

The city has standardized the design of light poles and now has a contract for 25,000 replacements. Wireless companies are invited to propose placement or re-placement of single small cell light poles. The company purchases and pays for the construction; the city then owns the pole. Backhaul to each light pole will be fiber through one of the fiber companies serving the City of Lincoln.

Members commented that there are towns right outside Lincoln that have problems with connectivity. There is a need for a statewide broadband plan.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Tim Lindahl, Wheatbelt Public Power District

Mr. Lindahl distributed a map indicating the coverage (green color areas) of 2,400 miles of installed electrical service in the Panhandle area of Nebraska. The black dots are distribution centers. The blue color area indicates NebraskaLink's infrastructure. Mr. Lindahl commented that a statewide broadband plan is needed. Solving the last mile will require extending the existing backbone. One concept is to use wireless for the last mile. The second concept is to partner with municipalities. A public/private partnership may be the only way that broadband to everyone in remote rural areas can be provided. Representatives of public power are meeting with representative of the telecommunications industry later this month. Easement and liability issues will also need to be worked out.

QUESTIONS FOR BROADBAND TASK FORCE

Nebraska Public Service Commissioner Mary Ridder has formed a broadband task force in response to the expected availability of federal funds for broadband infrastructure projects. At the July NITC meeting, commissioners were very interested in broadband. Commissioner Ridder invited two representatives of the NITC, Ms. Byers and Commissioner Shane Greckel, to serve on the Broadband Task Force. The Broadband Task Force meets next week. Task force members have been asked to provide input on five questions. Ms. Byers shared input from Commissioners with the Council and asked members for their input.

1. Should there be a Nebraska-specific definition of broadband? Should it be based on minimum speeds or some other measurement?

The Council did not make a recommendation on this question. The Council needed more information on how the definition would be used, how it would be adjusted, etc. in order to make an informed recommendation.

2. Should Nebraska formally adopt a policy goal of ensuring ubiquitous broadband availability, regardless of cost?

The Council felt that Nebraska should adopt a policy goal of ensuring ubiquitous broadband availability, but that cost should be a consideration.

3. Should there be technology preferences for the means by which broadband availability is deployed?

The Council did not recommend establishing a technology preference. The Council recognized that while fiber offers the best performance, it may not be cost-effective to deploy fiber in all areas. Wireless technologies may be the most cost-effective method of deploying broadband in some areas. Since wireless technologies require fiber to the tower, small cell or other transmitting device, consideration should be given to getting fiber further out.

4. Should the State of Nebraska maintain restrictions on the provision of broadband services by political subdivisions of the state? In the alternative, should exception be allowed that would enable the formation and operation of public-private partnerships that enable broadband deployment?

Council members supported maintaining restrictions on the provision of broadband services by political subdivisions of the state. Council members were very supportive of private-public partnerships. The City of Lincoln provides a good model for public-private partnerships. Public power may be a potential partner.

5. Are existing cost recovery mechanisms adequate to ensure that all Nebraskans will have access to broadband services that are reasonably comparable in cost and service quality?

Council members felt that the PSC and those in the industry would be better able to answer this question.

Council members felt that if existing cost recovery mechanisms were adequate to ensure that all Nebraskans will have access to broadband services that are reasonably comparable in cost and service quality, we probably would not be having these conversations.

MEMBERSHIP

The PSC nominated Mary Ridder to serve as their representative on the NITC Community Council. It was agreed by group consensus to approve the nomination.

The membership recommendation will go to the NITC at their meeting on November 9.

ACTION ITEMS

Ms. Byers drafted action items for the Council's consideration. Members expressed their support for the following action items:

Action: Support the efforts of communities to address broadband-related development by sharing broadband-related news and highlighting exemplary programs through the Broadband Nebraska newsletter, social media, and other activities through the Nebraska Broadband Initiative.

Lead: NITC Community Council, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension and Center for Applied Rural Innovation, Nebraska Public Service Commission, and Nebraska Library Commission

Participating Entities: NITC Community Council, Nebraska Public Service Commission, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension and Center for Applied Rural Innovation, the AIM Institute, and other interested stakeholders.

Timeframe: 2017-2018

Funding: Leveraging existing resources

Targets/Deliverables:

1. At least 4 issues of Broadband Nebraska Newsletter per year
2. Other partnership activities

2. **Action: Expand awareness and address the need for digital inclusion and equitable**

broadband access through educational materials, best practices and community outreach.

Lead: Community Council and Education Council

Participating Entities: NITC Community Council, Education Council, Nebraska Broadband Initiative

Timeframe: 2017-2018

Funding: Leveraging Existing Resources

Targets/Deliverables:

1. Develop and share educational materials and profiles of exemplary programs.
2. Work with the Community Council, Education Council and Nebraska Broadband Initiative to develop an outreach program to help communities better understand and address digital equity issues.

3. Action: Support the efforts of Network Nebraska and the Education Council to address digital equity and to explore partnerships to improve library broadband access.

Ms. Byers will flesh out the third action item.

UPDATES

2017 Nebraska Broadband Today Conference. The 2017 Nebraska Broadband Conference will be held on October 26 at the Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hotel. Members were asked to share the information with their sectors and others who would be interested.

Makerspace Grants and Library Broadband Updates. Nebraska Library Commission was recently awarded a National Leadership Grant of \$530,732 by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to establish rotating makerspaces with the University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL), Nebraska Innovation Studio, Nebraska Extension, Regional Library Systems, and local public libraries.

The initial local library partners that will host one of the four rotating makerspaces are:

- Ainsworth Public Library
- Ashland Public Library
- Bridgeport Public Library
- Broken Bow Public Library
- Central City Public Library
- Crete Public Library
- Geneva Public Library
- Loup City Public Library
- Nebraska City, Morton-James Public Library
- Neligh Public Library
- Norfolk Public Library
- North Platte Public Library
- Plattsmouth Public Library
- Ravenna Public Library
- Scottsbluff, Lied Scottsbluff Public Library
- Sidney Public Library, Special Model Program Partner
- South Sioux City Public Library
- Wayne Public Library

Twelve additional libraries will be selected in 2018 to host makerspaces in 2019/20. This project began July 1, 2017 and will conclude June 30, 2020. For more information about the project or equipment that will be featured in the rotating makerspaces, see <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/grants/InnovationStudios>.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln received a two-year, \$300,000 National Science Foundation-funded Early-concept Grant for Exploratory Research to establish an Innovation Makerspace Co-Laboratory in Sidney. The grant was profiled in the last issue of [Nebraska Broadband](#).

Efforts are also underway to help libraries get better Internet access. Mr. Rolfes and Ms. Woldt are giving several presentations at the Nebraska Library Association/Nebraska School Librarians Association Conference in Kearney Oct. 12-13. The sessions are entitled Toolkit for Public Libraries, The Next Best Thing to Having Your Own Gigabit Internet, and Next Gen Wi-Fi to Enhance Your Public Library.

Other Updates from Members. There were no other updates.

ADJOURN

With no further business, Mr. Green adjourned the meeting at 4 p.m.

Meeting minutes were taken by Lori Lopez Urdiales and reviewed by Anne Byers, Office of the CIO/NITC.