

ATIC Partnerships/Business Model/Strategy Working Group  
October 31, 2017, Teleconference Report

**Attendees:** Oris Friesen, Henry Goldberg, Mark Goldstein, Joseph Hobbs, Steve Peters, Bill Bolin, Karen Ziegler, Jerry Crow, Andy Phelan, Mike Whipple, John Kelly.

This is a report on the conference call held Tuesday, October 31, 2017, at 10 a.m. to follow up on the Partnerships/Business Model/ Strategy Working Group.

1. We had a very informed and productive discussion about the Focus Group activities conducted by Bonnie Maney of Mission Critical Partners (MCP) and Karen Ziegler, with the Office of Grants and Federal Resources at the Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA), for the State Broadband Strategy development.

Five focus groups have been held in Payson, Prescott, Douglas, Kingman and Parker, and Karen noted they were all well-attended. Bill Bolin reviewed his impressions from the Prescott focus group held on October 11<sup>th</sup>. This was followed up by comments from Karen and other participants. Some of the more salient points are recapped below (Bill's comments in a separate document are being distributed with this report for ease of reference.):

- These focus group sessions are to help the State of Arizona develop a statewide broadband plan aimed at bringing affordable high-speed internet to rural communities.
- The deliverables will be a findings report summarizing the results from the focus groups in late November followed by a strategic plan scheduled for the January 2018 timeframe.
- Participants at the Prescott meeting gave the state a grade of D for broadband service in Arizona, with a grade of C for the Prescott area.
- There was consensus on the need for increased accessibility, affordability, reliability and redundancy.
- There was general agreement that rural broadband is a state problem and the major hurdles are funding and state leadership.
- Bill Bolin stated middle mile fiber is deployed on major Arizona highway corridors and he believes middle mile fiber is not a major issue except to some communities like Tusayan at the Grand Canyon. Karen Ziegler agreed that the focus groups indicated there is a lot of dark fiber deployed in the middle mile, and that the issue was getting this fiber lit (with required telecommunications equipment installed) and the last mile connections. Mark Goldstein commented he believes there are significant middle mile deficiencies in spurs to various local communities from these highway corridors, and AT&T's FirstNet public safety network will be a major driver for Zayo to selectively deploy dark fiber to feed mobile transmission facilities around the stat. Henry Goldberg noted there are also issues of middle mile fiber redundancy in providing fiber loop architectures such as noted by the Town of Payson.
- The critical problems are funding and state leadership. The \$11 million in state matching funds for the E-rate modernization program are not nearly sufficient to meet the overall funding requirements for broadband in rural Arizona and their utilization limited to schools and libraries. The Arizona Commerce Authority could be a source of rural broadband funding and fund management in the future, and the Arizona Corporation Commission AUSF E-

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rate program funding might be considered for modification in the future to support general rural broadband development. Karen has recommended that the Governor's office establish a State Broadband Office.

- ATIC should promote this and formulate some ideas to send to the Governor and other relevant agencies.

Karen reported that the State Cartographer Curtis Pulford and his Assistant Tim Colman will be leaving the Arizona State Land Department on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. This potentially leaves the AZGEO Clearinghouse, future Broadband Mapping data updates and augmentation of the economic development applications of the map portal at risk.

Mark recently met Danny Seiden and noted that he serves as the Governor's Deputy Chief of Staff for External Affairs & Policy Development. His direct contact information is Office: 602-542-3439 and [dseiden@azgovernor.gov](mailto:dseiden@azgovernor.gov). John added that Gilbert Davidson has been appointed Chief Operating Officer (COO) for the State of Arizona out of the Governor's Office.

2. We discussed potential activities of the ATI Institute (ATII) relating to
  - (1) the Jim Simms proposal for a middle-mile fiber network for rural Arizona similar to a network being built by the State of Kentucky and
  - (2) Matt Hanson, the State Grants Administrator, on cooperating to secure/manage grants.

John Kelly recalled that ATII was set up to address the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) grant program to assist rural communities with their broadband planning. When that program shut down ATII essentially shut down as well. ATII has no projects to manage and there are no prospects on the horizon.

John reported that he had a lengthy email exchange with Jim Simms and the conclusion was that there is no role for ATII to play in his activities. John has not talked with Matt Hanson because there seems to be no need.

Mark noted that at its most recent Board Meeting ATII passed a motion that if ATI Institute decides to go dormant temporarily the necessary administrative actions to retain its standing as an Arizona non-profit will continue to be carried out. Mark spoke with Jeremy Babendure and plans to have a meeting to discuss a potential collaboration with the Arizona Technology Council Foundation.

3. Oris reported briefly on a teleconference that was held to consider collaboration possibilities among GAZeL, ATIC and AzTEA related to a potential rural eLearning demo project and cooperation with Labster.com. The meeting participants were Steve Peters, Cathy Poplin, Henry Goldberg, Janet Major, Michael Cohen and Oris Friesen.

Some of the more relevant items discussed are summarized below: (A complete copy of the teleconference report is being distributed with this report.)

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- Henry said we should propose having a rural community college or high school initiative and propose a demo project of a digital science course with Labster lab simulation modules.
  - The Labster virtual online lab modules are geared toward universities. We need to find out if Labster is interested in preparing labs targeting community colleges or high schools.
  - The role envisioned for AzTEA is as a collaborator. Cathy suggested that we coordinate with Nan Williams who heads up the STEM collaboration effort. Maybe a demo of Labster could be done at their STEM Collaborative Unconference in February 2018.
  - ATIC, GAZeL, and AzTEA could facilitate raising funds for the demo and eventual broader rollout in Arizona from organizations such as Science Foundation Arizona and the Helios Foundation in addition to Labster support.
  - Henry stated the demo for a rural community would have be done for a community that has the required bandwidth to support Labster and a digital science course. Michael Sherman of the Sun Corridor Network may have input on rural communities that could have the required bandwidth and interest.
  - Steve will contact Angie Odom and Maarooof Fakhri of Labster to discuss possibilities and possibly arrange a demo for this subcommittee, and he may talk to the ASU people who are working with Labster as well.
4. Due to time constraints the other three agenda items were postponed. They are:
- Consideration of Marisa Walker's query about providing training to use the Broadband Map.
  - Report on the state of the ATIC website.
  - Should ATIC consider developing a broadband policy statement similar to what AZTC does every year?