

ATIC Partnerships/Business Model/Strategy Working Group
December 11, 2017, Teleconference Report

Attendees: Oris Friesen, Henry Goldberg, Mark Goldstein, Steve Peters, Bill Bolin, Karen Ziegler, Andy Phelan, Mike Whipple. Mala Muralidharan, Janet Major.

This is a report on the conference call held Monday, December 11, 2017, at 10 a.m. to follow up on the Partnerships/Business Model/Strategy Working Group.

1. Karen Ziegler of the Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA) FirstNet provided a brief update on the Status of the State Rural Broadband Focus Groups Report.

Five focus group meetings have been held in locations at Payson, Prescott, Douglas, Kingman and Parker. The focus groups did not yield “earth-shatteringly new” results but did document major issues and provide contacts with major players in the rural areas. Key points emphasized were that:

- broadband should be treated as a public utility;
- broadband needs statewide leadership such as a state government broadband office;
- standards need to be established for broadband speed and service in rural areas;
- broadband speed, redundancy and resiliency need to be improved in the rural areas;
- more data is needed on existing broadband/fiber infrastructure throughout the state (the state government did not get a good response from service providers when requesting fiber pathway information); and
- there is a need to have broadband for multiple applications/sectors and to develop funding strategies in those areas.

The focus groups findings report will be released around January 1, 2018, assuming it is approved by the ADOA. Karen still plans to report on it at the January 10th ATIC Board meeting. A strategic planning session, facilitated by Bonnie Maney of Mission Critical Partners, will be held in early January to follow up on the focus group findings with a state broadband strategic plan document to follow. The attendance at this strategic plan session will be limited to 12-15 people. The Governor’s office has not been sold on this broadband strategic plan activity, so a convincing case must be made for it.

Karen will probably continue to work on broadband until told otherwise as she goes into the second phase of the FirstNet activity. It is too late to submit a bill for the upcoming legislative session, but ADOA has developed a budget and proposal for a state broadband office being considered for submittal to the Governor’s office as part of ADOA’s budgeting process.

Relative to the need for more data on existing broadband fiber throughout the state, Mark suggested investigating NEF whose FiberLocator service and its ongoing expansion is under new ownership by CCMI (<http://www.ccmi.com/>), a business unit of Simplify Compliance and a leading provider of telecom data and information. It might prove a useful adjunct to what fiber and connectivity information that may be obtained directly from providers in supporting gap analysis and strategic planning. It is available for a short term trial, and it can be used to look up a building by its

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address. It is relatively inexpensive to license, but reuse of the underlying data is very limited.

The state cartographer position at the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD) remains unfilled. The ASLD has said that they will continue to support the AZGEO Clearinghouse but the FCC updates to the Broadband Map are in jeopardy. ADOA has not yet identified a contact person. Tim Coleman also was let go at ASLD and had very specific knowledge and experience of prepping and loading the biannual FCC wireline and wireless data for Arizona, yielding concern for ASLD to support that process going forward.

2. Mala gave a brief update on E-rate activity.

Regarding tribal and rural broadband issues relative to E-rate, Mala reported on a recent visit to two tribal libraries, one at San Lucy in Gila Bend and another in Sierra Vista. ACC Commissioner Andy Tobin and Schools Superintendent Diane Douglas also attended one of the meetings and were very supportive. A major topic of discussion was the FCC E-rate modernization program funding that must be applied for by a March-April 2018 deadline and utilized during this next funding year. Applications must be submitted before that deadline but many schools are not submitting applications because they don't have the resources to apply and consortiums need to be established to obtain better broadband service at lower prices. Mala also noted that self-provisioning of fiber infrastructure is not possible under these grants.

Mala suggested that ATIC should submit a proposal to Commissioner Tobin to extend the application deadline for using ACC state matching funds for rural broadband infrastructure by one or two years. Mark said that may be difficult to achieve because the ACC state matching funds are tied to the FCC E-rate modernization program duration and would likely require a new rulemaking procedure.

3. Steve proposed convening an ATIC-led Roundtable in early 2018. He suggested that ATIC should facilitate a roundtable discussion of key state government officials and other stakeholders to follow up on the state broadband rural focus groups/strategic plan regarding important issues such as state government leadership in the broadband area, state/ACC funding and leveraging E-rate funding.

Steve noted he has discussed this roundtable idea with Milan Eaton and Karen Ziegler, and they supported it. He proposed that this ATIC strategy committee should recommend to the ATIC Board convening a roundtable consisting of about 20-30 people. This could be a one-time event or the first of several. The session would be at least 2-3 hours in length. If the ATIC Board approves then a small group should go ahead and organize it.

Mike Whipple expressed some concern saying this seems to be more comfort food rather than action-oriented. Steve said the actions should be defined at the roundtable. Karen said that there will be a document with specific goals provided

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after the strategic planning session (before the end of February) and it could provide a framework for topics and attendees at the roundtable. Henry stated that it is important the roundtable be in synch with the state broadband strategic plan document. Janet suggested that it be a virtual roundtable and Steve said it would certainly allow for remote attendees. Karen offered a conference room at ADOA with capacity for 20-30 people that has high-definition videoconferencing equipment. Henry, Mark, Oris, Janet, Mala, Bill and Andy supported going forward with this roundtable proposal.

4. Steve and Henry reported on progress on the proposed GAZeL-ATIC-AzTEA Labster virtual online lab partnerships project for Arizona schools, community colleges, and universities. This project will likely include a demonstration project for rural schools/colleges. A teleconference was held on December 4th to discuss this project, and was attended by representatives from GAZeL, ATIC, AzTEA, ASU, and the UofA. A summary report of this teleconference was distributed to ATIC Board members.

Steve thought it was a productive meeting. Henry noted that Angie Odom of Labster gave a good overview of what Labster provides. This activity will lead to creation of a draft project document and possibly a consortium to seek funding and to license Labster for Arizona educational institutions. Nan Williams of AzTEA will contact appropriate high school science teachers/groups to explore this and what Labster modules would meet their requirements. Angie will provide demo accounts for project participants to view and interact with Labster modules. The hope is to have a follow-up in-person meeting soon, possibly at SkySong, and have Angie demo Labster.

5. Mark, Oris and Henry reported on a meeting with Jeremy Babendure to discuss a potential partnership between ATI Institute (ATII) and the Arizona Technology Council (AZTC) Foundation.

Mark noted that Jeremy has launched the successful Arizona SciTech Festival and the Chief Science Officers (CSO) program for high schools. He is the Executive Director of the AZTC Foundation. About 90% of the foundation activity is SciTech related.

Jeremy is not particularly knowledgeable about rural broadband issues. The meeting was basically exploratory and focused on grant potential and partnership possibilities, such as ATII partnering on grants with or being absorbed by the AZTC Foundation, but no clear direction was established. There may be some potential for collaboration between the Labster project for rural schools and the CSO activity. Janet wants to join any future meetings as she has been involved with the CSO activity which is going international with a project in Kuwait. Mark informed Karen about Jeremy's interest in grants and the fact that he was unaware of the Arizona Office of Grants and Federal Resources under Matt Hanson. Oris committed to remind Mark to provide Karen's contact information to Jeremy. A further discussion of ATII with Jeremy may be held in the new year.

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The next major Arizona SciTech Festival (<https://azscitech.com/>) will be Connect2STEM (https://azscitech.com/scitech_event/connect2stem-2018/) on January 27, 2018 at the UA College of Medicine in downtown Phoenix.

On a related note, Steve said that ATIC and GAZeL are partnering in a networking event on cyber security at Sierra Vista, Prescott, Tucson and Phoenix on January 30, 2018. It includes a cyber security education resources forum that will precede the networking activity.

6. Mala gave a brief report on plans for the ATIC website.

Mala has not been able to do any work on the website but will look into it during her vacation. Mike Whipple said he has a copy of an old ATIC website that was built with Drupal and could easily be restored and used as a baseline for evolving for current needs. Mark suggested taking this under consideration. Mala, Mike and Mark will meet to coordinate actions to be taken.