

## **August 10, 2020 AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force Teleconference Report**

### **Attendees**

Steve Peters, Oris Friesen, Henry Goldberg, Mark Goldstein, Juan Balderas, Tracey Beal, Melissa Boydston, Kirk Busch, Michael Cohen, Jerry Crow, Mark Dallmeier, Alexandra Dominguez, Derek Ferguson, Terence Ford, Holly Henley, Steve Hill, John Kelly, Tarma Liranzo, Derek Masseth, Mala Muralidharan, Peter Newbegin, Mauricio Orozco, Cody Pedersen, Lea Marquez Peterson, Ricardo Platt, Jeff Sobotka, Nicole Umayam, Karen Ziegler

### **Updates: State Broadband Director, AZ State Library, ADE, ACC, Public Safety**

#### State Broadband Director Update

Jeff Sobotka, State Broadband Director at the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA), reviewed his recent activities.

Jeff is very involved with several Arizona communities that have applied for Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants. They are working on getting a better understanding of the criteria used to approve these grants. Jeff invites other communities to communicate with him if they are interested in applying for an EDA grant. Grant applications must be submitted early before the funding is used up because Arizona is part of a regional block including California that has a limited allocation of potential funding.

Jeff noted the Telehealth Broadband Action Team had a meeting last week, and is talking with service providers about potential telehealth solutions.

He is working with DES remote offices to get them connected and these offices may also become Wi-Fi hotspots.

Jeff led a State government Broadband Working Group meeting, which included the State Land Department, Arizona State Library, and ADOT. Jeff wants to ensure different agencies are aware of what each agency is doing in the broadband area.

Jeff also had a meeting with FEMA to discuss connectivity available under potential emergency scenarios. He remarked that the reluctance of carriers to disclose their fiber maps poses a possible barrier in such planning.

#### Arizona State Library Update

Mala Muralidharan, E-rate Administrator for Public Libraries at the Arizona State Library, reported on Arizona State Library activities. Mala is working on the FCC's E-rate gift waivers to get them extended to June 30, 2021. She is also working on authentication issues in using the E-rate system and their new eligible services list. Lea Marquez Peterson asked if schools and libraries can be used as hubs for Internet access, and Mala responded that is being considered in the E-rate for Homes bill, and that using school facilities after they close is also under debate. Nicole Umayam commented that there is a lot of discussion on how libraries can extend their networks to communities.

Nicole Umayam reported on the [Arizona Free Wi-Fi Map Portal](#) (see link to it in the Appendix Chat) that she, Tracey Beal, Mala, and Ilana Lowery created based on original data from the State Land Department public Wi-Fi hotspots map. This map includes libraries, schools, and other types of entities offering free public Wi-Fi hotspots, and is searchable by zip code or city with directions provided to the closest hotspot chosen. Instructions will be available in Spanish. Nicole noted that she is constantly adding new hotspots to the map. Steve Peters commented that it would be useful to add information on whether the business Wi-Fi hotspots can be accessed by the general public or just customers of these companies (such as Cox hotspots). Tracey Beal remarked that the Cox "Connect2Compete" program still offers free Wi-Fi hotspots for its customers but some service providers are no longer offering free public Wi-Fi after the initial spring offer. Mark Goldstein commented it would be useful to display the SSIDs for the Wi-Fi networks, and Nicole responded that she has sent a letter to the school districts for their Wi-Fi SSIDs. Kirk Busch added that he can help with STEM student outreach to provide SSIDs, which Nicole can update on the map. Mauricio Orozco commented that church Wi-Fi locations could be added to the map, and Tracey Beal responded that all types of organizations offering free public Wi-Fi can be included in the map. Nicole noted there have already been 14,000 views of the map, and Mala noted that information on this portal is being distributed broadly including in the media. Jeff Sobotka remarked that customer reviews could be added to the Wi-Fi map. Jeff stated this Wi-Fi Map is an important tangible output of the task force.

Holly Henley, State Librarian, reported that the Arizona State Library is continuing to work on projects related to their CARES Act funding (reported at previous task force meetings). The third phase CARES Supplemental Program applications are due from libraries by August 14<sup>th</sup> and are being reviewed.

#### ADE Update

In the absence of Sophia Mayberry of the Arizona Dept. of Education (ADE), there was some discussion regarding the ADE survey of school districts and schools completed in April on students lacking broadband Internet access and computers at home. Lea Marquez Peterson asked about the results from this survey. John Kelly commented the results from this survey were extremely inconsistent in terms of the quality of information provided by different school districts so have not been released. Steve Peters commented that it is his impression that it is now up to the school districts themselves to assess the home broadband, computer, and digital literacy needs of their students. John stated that the Tucson school district is discussing with families their needs to implement distance learning.

Mala Muralidharan stated that charter schools are now giving vouchers to their students' families for discounted Internet services such as the Cox Connect2Compete \$9.95 per month service. Jeff Sobotka suggested public school districts could also work with service providers to establish such programs.

Jeff Sobotka noted there are supply chain delays for new computers and there is a need to work with Az StRUT to help get computers to students. Tracey Beal commented the vast majority of school districts have been giving out computers to students, and that schools are being opened to service children in need such as children without computers or children with disabilities. Tracey suggested this task force can help students with getting computers and that the Wi-Fi map should also be helpful (flyers are being distributed to students getting school lunches).

Steve Peters commented that school districts may not understand the technology options available and that the Technology Subcommittee of this task force can provide them useful information.

Mala Muralidharan commented that in India school curriculum is being broadcast over TV channels. John Kelly responded that the Governor wants to focus as much as possible on synchronous interactive learning.

### ACC Update

Lea Marquez Peterson, Commissioner of the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC), reported on her work on the broadband task force of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC). There are Public Utility Commissioners from 12 states on this task force. The task force is still in the process of collecting data and considering actions that can be taken to make broadband available in underserved areas. She is also considering the issue of transitioning the Arizona Universal Service Fund to support broadband services in these areas.

Mark Goldstein noted that Senator Tim Scott (R-SC) recently introduced two Senate bills addressing broadband and digital access issues. These would provide states with block grants that prioritize areas that currently lack service, support the deployment of advanced technologies, and encourage projects that can provide Internet service quickly. Mark estimates Arizona would receive about \$214 million if these bills were passed. See the Appendix Chat for Mark's link to Senator Scott's announcement. Jeff Sobotka remarked this is good news because Governors know best how to allocate funds in their states.

### Public Safety Update

Karen Ziegler, Public Safety Program Manager at the Arizona Dept. of Administration, reported on her recent activities.

An RFP was released in July for a statewide IP backbone network called the Emergency Services IP Network (ESINet) to support the state's next-generation 911 network. Karen stated the deadline for responding to this RFP has been extended to September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Karen is also working with the towns of Springerville/Eagar on applying for an EDA grant.

## **Arizona Virtual Teacher Training Institute and Labster**

Governor Ducey, Superintendent of Public Instruction Kathy Hoffman, Helios Education Foundation and Arizona State University announced on August 6<sup>th</sup> a collaboration to provide training and professional development for every teacher in Arizona. With financial support from the Governor's office, the Arizona Dept. of Education, and Helios, ASU Prep Digital's Arizona Virtual Teacher Institute will provide both group and personal training to help Arizona teachers

succeed in delivering online instruction. Steve Peters sent a link last week to the task force to the article describing this initiative.

Steve Peters noted that Labster will be offering introductory webinars on their virtual lab simulations on Wednesdays from 10:00 – 10:30 am. Labster presented at a previous task force meeting.

## **Technology Subcommittee**

John Kelly, co-leader of the Technology Subcommittee, reported at the subcommittee's meeting on August 4<sup>th</sup> Dev Khoslaa, Head of Enterprise Sales Development for Nokia in North America, gave an excellent presentation on Nokia's end-to-end telecom infrastructure solutions, fixed wireless access (LTE and 5G) solutions for various vertical markets including school districts, and new business models for smart cities. The Nokia presentation is posted on the task force website.

John stated that the Technology Subcommittee meeting on August 11<sup>th</sup> will feature a presentation by a company AirVine that offers devices to improve broadband throughput.

John and Mark Goldstein have been working on a menu of broadband access technology options for different geographies, including features and pros & cons, for inclusion in the task force recommendations document.

## **Task Force Preliminary Recommendations Document**

Steve Peters presented his continuing work on drafting the task force's preliminary (Phase One) recommendations document.

Steve briefly overviewed the sections of this document which includes an introduction section, explaining the focus on digital access rather than only Internet access, Internet access issues and solutions, Arizona infrastructure initiatives, access to free or affordable devices, and recommendations under various categories.

Steve will send out a link to his draft document to a core group of people on the task force including the leaders of the subcommittees to start work on editing the draft tomorrow. After editing the document based on this feedback, Steve will distribute the revised document to the overall task force for comments. After finalizing the content, Steve will work with Insight to put the document in a format suitable for publication – Terence Ford stated Insight will provide a technical writer and formal presenter to work on this.

## **Next Steps**

The next AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force overall meeting will be held on Monday, August 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 am. Future overall task force meetings are scheduled through August on Monday mornings.

This week, the Technology subcommittee will meet on Tuesday August 11<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am. If meetings are held this week of the Education and Libraries and Funding and Resources subcommittees, the task force will be notified.

Henry Goldberg and Oris Friesen will write up a summary report of today's task force meeting.

## **Appendix: Chat from Zoom**

From Mark Goldstein to Everyone: (7:36 AM)

Last Wednesday, Senator Tim Scott (R-SC) introduced two Senate bills addressing broadband and digital access issues: The Connecting Minority Communities Act and the Governors Broadband Development Fund which would provide the states with block grants that prioritize funding for areas that currently lack service, support the deployment of advanced technologies, and encourage projects that can provide Internet service quickly. Based on their proposed formula and if my math is correct, Arizona would be provided a baseline of \$75 million plus an estimated \$138.6 million based on population, yielding some \$213.6 million total. Funding could be used for infrastructure development, providing free or reduced cost broadband service, community center improvements and other applications. Senator Tim Scott's announcement can be found at <https://www.scott.senate.gov/media-center/press-releases/scott-introduces-two-bills-to-expand-rural-broadband> for more on both bills.

From Kirk Busch to Everyone: (7:36 AM)

thanks mark

From Lea Marquez Peterson to Everyone: (7:36 AM)

Thanks for sharing, Mark! I'll check it out.

From Mark Goldstein to Everyone: (7:42 AM)

Connect Arizona Free Wi-Fi Map (<https://go.azsos.gov/wifi>) and Arizona Libraries Tech Access Phonenumber (AZ LibTAP, <https://sites.google.com/view/azlibtap/free-tech-help>) A big grant was announced last week to establish the Arizona Virtual Teacher Institute at ASU Digital Prep (<https://www.asuprepdigital.org/training/>).

From Nicole Umayam to Everyone: (7:45 AM)

@Lea <https://www.fcc.gov/document/community-use-e-rate-supported-wi-fi-permitted-during-closures>

From Lea Marquez Peterson to Everyone: (7:45 AM)

Thank you, Nicole!

From Nicole Umayam to Everyone: (7:46 AM)

@Mark, you can just use the same link <https://go.azsos.gov/wifi> for the Library tech help/digital navigators service

From Nicole Umayam to Everyone: (7:50 AM)

Dept of Ed is sending a letter to all school districts asking them to add their school locations to the wifi map

From Mark Goldstein to Everyone: (7:50 AM)

Arizona State Land Department (ASLD, <https://land.az.gov/>) just gave the AZGeo Data Hub a big refresh, relocated it to <https://azgeo-data-hub-agic.hub.arcgis.com/> and is now including more publicly available geospatial datasets and mapping tools.

From Nicole Umayam to Everyone: (7:55 AM)

Common Sense Media's report was cited in this piece on communities of color and the homework gap: <https://muninetworks.org/content/homework-gap-hits-communities-color-harder>

From Lea Marquez Peterson to Everyone: (7:58 AM)

Good idea, Mauricio!

From Nicole Umayam to Everyone: (7:59 AM)

Please have them add their location to the map! We got our first church added this weekend. Forms to add or update location info is on the site: <https://go.azsos.gov/wifi>

From Lea Marquez Peterson to Everyone: (8:02 AM)

Can the libraries/state purchase [www.connect-arizona.com](http://www.connect-arizona.com) as an easy url to promote this site? Excellent information but hard to find and tough to communicate a longer web address. We could even promote with PSAs through the media (radio/tv). Thank you for the excellent work!

From John Kelly to Everyone: (8:03 AM)

Lea - TUSD is now paying for connection to homes along with devices. It is now a budgeted item. Several legislators have been asking about whether this needs to be specifically funded at the state level, or if the school formula already should cover. But different problems in different districts lead to different solutions.

From Mark Goldstein to Everyone: (8:08 AM)

[file: AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force - Arizona Broadband Consultants V02E.docx]

Here's the updated Arizona Broadband Consultants List V02E with now 50 entries and augmented, reorganized resources on the last two pages.

From Mark Dallmeier to Everyone: (8:14 AM)

Thank you for the info. I need to drop and join another call. Please stay safe and healthy. :)

From Nicole Umayam to Everyone: (8:14 AM)

What Steve and John are both describing is digital equity-- laptops and parking lot wifi are only temporary bandaids

From traceybeal to Everyone: (8:15 AM)

Mesh networks are really amazing opportunities!

From Mark Goldstein to Everyone: (8:17 AM)

Though community mesh wi-fi networks take local organization and households to opt-in and choose to share their secondary circuits. Takes some champions, work, and time to bring those up.

From traceybeal to Everyone: (8:17 AM)

It is an interesting idea to think about ASU Digital Prep on a TV channel!

From Malavika Muralidharan to Everyone: (8:18 AM)

Univision is ready to do PSAs

From Melissa Boydston to Everyone: (8:19 AM)

New York is using TV to reach families for learning. [https://www.thirteen.org/programs/lets-learn-nyc/?utm\\_source=shorturl&utm\\_medium=redirect&utm\\_campaign=learnnyc](https://www.thirteen.org/programs/lets-learn-nyc/?utm_source=shorturl&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=learnnyc)

From traceybeal to Everyone: (8:19 AM)

Great to use volunteers to get more info for our map! That would be Amazing!

From Mark Goldstein to Everyone: (8:28 AM)

[file: Nokia Bridging the Digital Divide Update Presentation 08\_20.pdf]

From Mark Goldstein to Everyone: (8:28 AM)

Here's Nokia's presentation from last Tuesday's Tech Committee meeting. Good stuff!!!

From Jeff Sobotka to Everyone: (8:31 AM)

I have to drop for another call. Thank you again for the great work on the free WiFi Map!

From Mauricio Orozco to Everyone: (8:32 AM)

Maybe volunteers can also assist in promoting resources in their respective schools. Thanks

From traceybeal to Everyone: (8:34 AM)

Thank you so much for the wonderful gift this document is!