Greater Arizona Educational Leadership

AZBSN Arizona Broadband Stakeholder Network

Arizona Telecommunications and Information Council

December 14, 2020 AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force Teleconference Report

Attendees

Steve Peters, Oris Friesen, Henry Goldberg, Mark Goldstein, Robert Alvarado, Tracey Beal, Andrew Bevington, Melissa Boydston, Gene Carl, Michael Cohen, Jerry Crow, Terence Ford, Ian Hathcock, Steve Hill, Shereka Jackson, John Kelly, Ryan Kelly, Anoop Kumar, Derek Masseth, Sophia Mayberry, Clarence McAllister, Georgina Monsalvo, Mala Muralidharan, Mauricio Orozco, Cody Pedersen, Lea Marquez Peterson, Lawrie Prickett, Paul Ross, Jeff Sobotka, Karen Ziegler

Task Force Recommendations Report, Participants Survey, Funding

Task Force Recommendations Report
Steve Peters noted the task force recommendations report is posted on the task force website report landing page. Kathy Kramer of Insight has been working with Steve on a cover letter and press release. The press release should be sent out soon. Steve will send a cover letter to task force participants that they can use and personalize to send the task force report to their contacts.

Task Force Participants Survey
Steve reminded task force participants to fill out the Google Form on the task force website to provide their organizational and contact information so he has up-to-date information for all participants.

Task Force Funding for 2021
Steve is finalizing an AZBSN financial support request package for 2021 that he will start distributing in the near future.

Updates: State Broadband Director, AZ State Library, Sun Corridor Network, ADE, ACC

State Broadband Director Update

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

The FCC recently announced the results of their Phase 1 auction for their Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) a $20.4 billion fund to bring fixed high-speed broadband service to rural homes and small businesses that lack it. Jeff has some concerns about how this funding will be used, but he is incorporating the results into the State Broadband Plan. See the link in

the Appendix Chat (provided by Mark Goldstein) to the summary of winning bidders for the FCC RDOF Phase 1 Auction.

Jeff expects federal COVID stimulus funding to be coming soon for support of broadband and telemedicine. He has been speaking with Arizona's Congressional representatives to recommend that federal broadband funding is most effective when it is allocated as state block grants.

Jeff is speaking with members of the Grand Canyon State Electric Cooperative Association to consider constructing fiber-to-the-premise networks for their customers similar to what Mohave Electric Cooperative has done with support from the ACA Rural Broadband Development Grants program.

Jeff noted that the Arizona legislative session will start in January and he will report to our task force on broadband issues discussed there.

Steve Peters asked Jeff about when the task force can hear about the State Broadband Plan, and Jeff responded that he is working with the Governor's Office on this and he will report on this to the task force in January.
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Arizona State Library Update

Mala Muralidharan, E-rate Administrator for Public Libraries at the Arizona State Library, reported on her recent activities.

On December 8th, the U.S. Senate confirmed Nathan Simington as a new FCC Commissioner for a term of five years (replacing Michael O'Rielly). Simington has been a senior adviser in the NTIA.

On December 10th, the FCC released Order 20-178 updating the E-rate program's invoice deadline rules. The new rules allow up to 120 days to submit invoices after USAC issues a Revised Funding Commitment Decision Letter, and the new rules provide a waiver opportunity for program participants that were unable to timely submit an invoice because they were awaiting a post-commitment decision. In taking these actions, the FCC continues to promote the goals of the E-rate program ensuring subsidies for schools and libraries' broadband services without applicants and service providers facing unintended obstacles when submitting.

Mala continues to be involved with SHLB discussions of key issues with the FCC including improved broadband mapping, school bus Wi-Fi reimbursement, and cybersecurity reimbursement. This morning the Benton Institute published an op-ed written by SHLB Vice Chair Rachelle Chong and Board Member Larry Irving titled "The Broadband Mapping Flaw that's Harming Education and Healthcare". This op-ed explains the issue with the FCC's proposal to exclude anchor institutions from the broadband maps being created under the Broadband Data Act, and calls on Congress to refuse to appropriate additional funding for these maps until the FCC agrees to include anchor institutions.

The FBI, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), and the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) are assessing cyber attacks on K-12 educational institutions, including ransomware attacks (threatening to leak confidential student data unless the institutions pay ransom), theft of data, and disruption of distance learning. These types of attacks are expected to continue and get more sophisticated in 2021. These

issues will be particularly challenging for schools that face resource limitations, and educational leadership and Information technology staff will need to assess the risks when determining their cybersecurity investments.

The RFP filings for E-rate for the 2021 fiscal year are being done now. E-rate applicants or those assisting E-rate applicants can now login themselves to the system.

Lea Marquez Peterson asked how many Arizona schools and libraries have not yet benefitted from E-rate funding. Mala responded that she keeps such information for libraries, and Milan Eaton keeps this information for schools. It is complicated to track this data because it can be a multi-year process from the start of the RFP process to when schools/libraries get reimbursed. Mala stated she has done her best to get as many libraries as possible to apply for E-rate grants. Some libraries don't apply for E-rate because another institution pays for their broadband service (e.g. libraries that are part of the ASU network or libraries located in buildings owned by cities that pay for the buildings' broadband service). Mala offered to meet with Lea to provide such data if she needs it.

Mala noted the Arizona State Library has received a lot of positive feedback on the Connect-Arizona portal (discussed at previous task force meetings). They now provide all service on the portal in English and Spanish, and everything is explained in a simple manner. All data on the use of the AZLibTap tech support service is recorded. The portal is dynamically changing to best support the needs of the users.

The Arizona State Library is moving their physical office back to the Capitol Building beginning in January 2021.

Sun Corridor Network Update

Derek Masseth, Executive Director of the Sun Corridor Network (SCN), reported on recent SCN activities.

The SCN is actively collaborating with the Arizona Dept. of Education, Arizona Commerce Authority, the Arizona Dept. of Transportation (on use of their fiber deployments), and the Governor's Office. The goal is to provide as much connectivity to as many students as possible.

They are also working with Page and the Navajo Nation on CBRS deployment for educational purposes.
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ADE Update

Sophia Mayberry, Project Manager in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction at the Arizona Dept. of Education (ADE), reported on recent ADE activities.

ADE has reconvened their schools reopening task force to consider the current needs of schools and help them to make the best decisions on how to respond to the COVID situation.

Cox has doubled the broadband service speeds available under their Connect2Compete program for low-income households with K-12 students at a cost of $9.95 per month. Gene Carl, Public Sector Sales Manager for Cox Business, noted that Cox will also be offering a "Device-as-a-Service" providing laptops with or without LTE for students in K-12, community colleges, and universities statewide. Sophia and Jeff Sobotka expressed their appreciation to Cox for providing these services.

The ADE Technology Task Force subcommittees have several short-term projects where they expect to be releasing documents in the near future: a resource guide for parents, a resource guide for teachers to support online learning, and a white paper on the digital divide in Arizona. There is also a long-term plan being developed, which is led by John Kelly.

Jeff Sobotka remarked that ADE has a difficult job to do in responding to all the educational issues associated with the COVID crisis, and appreciates the work they are doing.

ACC Update

Lea Marquez Peterson, Commissioner of the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC), reported on her recent activities.

The ACC is soliciting input from service providers and communities on reforming the Arizona Universal Service Fund (AUSF) to support broadband in high-cost rural areas. A docket has been opened at the ACC to submit comments on this issue, and any task force participants who wish to submit a comment can e-mail these to Lea which she will post in the docket. Mark Goldstein asked how long this AUSF docket will be open, and Lea responded that it is open indefinitely at this point but changes may be made as the two new ACC commissioners become involved. Steve Peters encouraged task force participants to send inputs to Lea for this AUSF docket.

Lea stated that she has been doing radio shows discussing ACC work on broadband, and she has received a lot of positive feedback.

Lea noted that the ACC regulates electric cooperatives, and offered to work with Jeff Sobotka on his activities with these co-ops.

Jeff Sobotka commented that ACC actions can really move broadband development forward in the state, and is glad that Lea is participating in this task force.

Stand for Children Arizona Presentation

Steve Peters has known Rebecca Gau, Arizona Executive Director of Stand for Children, and invited Georgina Monsalvo, Organizing Director of Stand for Children Arizona, to deliver a presentation to our task force on their activities. Following is a summary of key points from the presentation. The full presentation will be posted on the task force website.

Stand for Children Arizona is a non-profit educational advocacy organization whose goal is to ensure every child receives a high-quality education and graduates high school ready for college and a career. It opened in 2009 and works with several school districts in Maricopa County as partners.

Stand for Children empowers parents to have a voice in their children's education. They want parents to become leaders in this and reach out to other parents so they can create a strong broad overall partnership between schools and the families. They currently have more than 2000 parent members in six different school districts in Maricopa County, have held 90 workshops for these parents, and have a digital online library where 4000+ books can be accessed.

Stand for Children has secured local grants to provide gift cards and cash payments to families in need during the COVID crisis.

Stand for Children is working to address the digital divide during the COVID crisis by working closely with the Cox Connect2Compete program to provide broadband Internet service for low-income families, and providing training for parents on relevant digital platforms such as Google Classroom and Zoom so their children can learn online. They also have a partnership with Valley of the Sun United Way to provide laptops to a community with necessary tech support.

They have an objective of working with school districts to conduct thorough "needs assessments" (as specified by the Education Superhighway) of their families' digital status/needs, including parents' comfort level with technology. They want to ensure parents receive training, understand all relevant platforms, and receive consistent tech support. They engage parents through Facebook workshops since parents are most comfortable interacting this way.

Stand for Children Arizona is ready to advocate at the legislature or with any government entity to address digital divide education issues in Arizona; They look forward to collaborating with our task force in accomplishing their objectives.

Jeff Sobotka emphasized that tech support and training for families is very important, and he offered ACA support for Stand for Children in these activities.

Mauricio Orozco commented that using Facebook is an excellent approach for reaching families because they are already familiar with it and can readily access training videos there. He also stated that parents need to know how to access the "Canvas" online learning course management system used by schools. Georgina responded that parents benefit from all such training on how to navigate school websites.

Shereka Jackson asked if the Stand for Children Arizona Facebook Group is private. Georgina responded that it is currently a private group, but they may create an open group in the near future.

Mala Muralidharan stated that there is a lot of overlap between Stand for Children Arizona work and the Arizona State Library resources available to all state residents. The Arizona State Library offers tech support, broadband adoption programs, digital literacy training, and homework tutoring. Georgina responded she will arrange a meeting with Mala to discuss this.

Steve Peters concluded saying he would like our task force to facilitate effective collaboration between various state organizations with common objectives. Steve will put up a list on the task force website of all task force participants with their contact information to help enable this.

Next Steps

There will be no further task force meetings in December due to the holidays. The next AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force overall meeting will be held on Monday, January 4th at 7:30 am.

Jeff Sobotka, Mark Goldstein, Derek Masseth, Sophia Mayberry, and Terence Ford thanked Steve Peters for his great work in organizing/managing the task force this year and all the task force participants for the valuable progress made (including completing the task force recommendations report) this year.

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

Happy Holidays to everyone!!

Appendix: Chat from Zoom

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (7:36 AM)
My Next-Gen Wireless Overview & Outlook presentation to the IEEE Computer Society
Phoenix last week is available on SlideShare to view/download at
https://www2.slideshare.net/markgirc/nextgeneration-wireless-overview-outlook-update-12920
Next Century Cities published a Mesa, AZ broadband case study available from their home page
at https://nextcenturycities.org/

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (7:44 AM)
[file: US FCC Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Phase 1 Auction Winning BIdder Summary
12_07_20.pdf]

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (7:46 AM)
US FCC Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Phase 1 Auction Winning Bidder Summary attached
FYI. Auction 904 landing page at https://www.fcc.gov/auction/904 and attached file at
https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-20-1422A2.pdf

John Kelly to Everyone (7:53 AM)
can someone provide a link to the Paul Ross presentation that Steve mentioned? I don't see it on
the website yet. thanks!!!
thank you Paul.

Steve Peters to Everyone (7:57 AM)
John the Paul Ross presentation is on todays meeting announcement web page

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (7:57 AM)
[file: Jonathan Nuechterlein& Howard Shelanski - Building on What Works Analysis of US
Broadband Policy 09_20.pdf]

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (7:58 AM)
Interesting paper by Jonathan Nuechterlein& Howard Shelanski "Building on What Works
Analysis of U.S. Broadband Policy" available for download at
https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3698055 or attached here FYI.

Jeff Sobotka to Everyone (7:59 AM)
Mark, I'll read this when I get a chance. Love the title!

Tracey Beal to Everyone (8:02 AM)
So sorry to leave early but so appreciate this group and the great work we have done together!

Jeff Sobotka to Everyone (8:02 AM)

Thanks for all of your hard work Tracey!

Malavika Muralidharan to Everyone (8:03 AM)
Will catch up with you Tracey! Thank you.

Lea Marquez Peterson to Everyone (8:08 AM)
LMarquezPeterson@azcc.gov - please email me letters or information you would like me to place in the "Arizona Universal Service Fund" docket at the Arizona Corporation Commission.

Mauricio Orozco to Everyone (8:15 AM)
Governors office additional community resources. https://arizonatogether.org/

Malavika Muralidharan to Everyone (8:23 AM)
Yes we are promoting the Arizona together Website. This is an awesome site.

Malavika Muralidharan to Everyone (8:27 AM)
Georgina, we would love to connect... We do digital literacy, broadband adoption program and free e-resources for all Arizonans at all levels. Mala@azlibrary.gov 480-221-5120

Georgina Monsalvo - Stand For Children AZ to Everyone (8:29 AM)
Georgina gmonsalvo@stand.org 5202758278

Shereka Jackson to Everyone (8:30 AM)
Shereka Jackson - Future Stars, Inc futurestarsaz@hotmail.com

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (8:34 AM)
Have a safe and great holiday with your family and friends! See you in the new year. Cheers!

Georgina Monsalvo - Stand For Children AZ to Everyone (8:34 AM)
Happy holidays and happy new year everyone!

Shereka Jackson to Everyone (8:34 AM)
Happy Holidays Everyone!!

Melissa Boydston to Everyone (8:34 AM)
Yes, thank you Steve! Happy Holidays!

Derek Masseth to Everyone (8:35 AM)
Happy holidays to All!

Clarence McAllister to Everyone (8:35 AM)
Happy holidays and be blessed.

Derek Masseth to Everyone (8:35 AM)
Well said Mark! Thanks much to Steve!

Lea Marquez Peterson to Everyone (8:35 AM)
Happy Holidays, everyone! Have a safe and joyful holiday with your families.

Malavika Muralidharan to Everyone (8:36 AM)
Thank you all team members... for everything you do