

Greater Arizona Educational Leadership  
**AZBSN** Arizona Broadband  
Stakeholder Network  
Arizona Telecommunications and Information Council  
**COVID-19 DIGITAL ACCESS TASK FORCE**

**Meeting Transcript**

**February 14, 2022**

**Disclaimer Notice: The following is the meeting transcript recorded through ZOOM. This document is not edited and contains numerous errors.**

07:34:11 Now I want to record. So I am recording this meeting. So, watch what you say.

07:34:28 Okay. Good morning, everybody. Welcome to another version of the task force, glad to see you all here this morning.

07:34:38 And Happy Valentine's Day. Yes it is, and statehood day, Arizona statehood.

07:34:48 I forgot happy vd everyone.

07:34:52 Yeah.

07:34:53 Okay, good morning. Glad to see you all again this morning.

07:34:57 Let's get started because I know Jeff was going to have to be out of here pretty soon. So as always I want to thank our sponsors Care First Arizona Health Plan, the Satellite Broadcasters Association Valley of the Sun United Way, Kajeet and; Triad Wireless is our new sponsor and we welcome them, and you'll hear about them a little later today.

07:35:34 So do we have some new people who are joined us this morning but haven't been on the call before

07:35:44 This is Ben blank, formerly the governor's office that worked really closely with Jeff Sobotka, and really excited to get engaged with this group once again.

07:35:54 Yeah, good, good to see again.

07:35:56 Thanks, so you are the private sector.

07:36:00 I am yep doing a little bit of independent consulting but working to stay in the loop on all the great broadband stuff happening in the state.

07:36:07 So going to do some broadband consulting think so, Yeah, the goal of course, expanding connectivity, reducing prices, helping a couple of folks right now, but really excited by what I saw in the state broadband plan and, and, yeah, thanks again everyone.

07:36:24 You bet.

07:36:26 So we should talk about and learn more about what it is that you're that you're doing these days so let's talk some more about today.

07:36:34 So, Any other new people who have joined us today.

07:36:41 Going once, going twice. So once again I want to remind you if you to please please go to our form, and to fill out the Google form with your contact information so we know who's participating in the task force. So once again I'm begging you please to do to do that for us.

07:37:10 So, moving on.

07:37:16 Everyone got so meeting schedule of course today is the 14th next week there is no meeting next week. The 21st for Presidents Day. So we're going to take a little break and then we'll be back on the 28th, so please make sure you got your calendars marked accordingly.

07:37:34 And then, just a reminder that after the the task force meeting, there will be kibitzing with colleagues. For those of you who don't know what kibitzing with colleagues is, it's an informal gathering that those folks who choose to stay online, and to participate in a informal discussion, no presentations meetings not recorded and just an opportunity for people to ask questions, share information and so forth so we encourage you to stay on.

07:38:14 And so with that, Jeff, I want to turn it over to you. Since you're gonna have to leave fairly soon.

07:38:24 Everybody. Yeah, just a real quick update and Ben You're too modest. Ben contributed, if not as much or more to the statewide middle mile plan and I or anybody else did so glad to have you part of the group.

07:38:38 So a couple things. One, the broadband Grant 100 million dollar Arizona broadband development grant was a incredible success in terms of number of applications. Things are going to take a little bit longer because it was a tremendous success. We were expecting 32 for you the most applications we received at seven. So from our standpoint, it's going to take some time, we want to make sure that each one of these is given the full evaluation and given the opportunity to compete for the funds. So we ran into this a little bit last fall, with NTIA when they had a grant. They had given a deadline of Thanksgiving, and we're still waiting. So rather than have multiple pushback deadlines, I'm just going to let you all know in advance that this is going to take longer than we expected. We were hoping to have a quick turnaround, and this is quite honestly a good problem to have. Because this means we have that a lot of great quality, the applications. We've also got additional funding coming this year. So as I've told people before if you're if you're not a winner of this grant, there's going to be many, many other opportunities to get your project funded. So I'm asking everybody in advance, just to be patient that this is going to take a little bit longer than expected. Also the middle mile plan was rolled out recently and we've had a ton of positive response both here locally in the state, and from around the country from NTIA and other federal groups everybody seems to like the plan. Stay tuned for some additional announcements on that as we start to move forward. Very exciting time, very happy to have the opportunity to work for the governor who believes in what we're doing, and had great response from our federal representatives as well. so just thank you for all your support and just know that with the grand is going to take a little bit longer, and the plan you're going to start to see some results here pretty quick. So, thanks everybody and have a great week. Take any questions for Jeff.

07:40:41 Okay, Mala. I know you've got some allergy issues, but hopefully we'll be able to hear you. I'm sorry. I think I will send my default Steve because I've got non stop sneezing. Okay. I'll just send in my report.

07:41:05 Holly. Holly are you on? 07:41:11 I am.

07:41:13 I just want to say that we're getting closer on that telemedicine project that model has been working on so it's all about procurement trying to get the right equipment, and get the grant get that money awarded to Pima County Public Library so that they can purchase the equipment so that we can get that project started really, can you just explain quickly.

07:41:35 I know that most people know, Holly but just quickly what that is. Well, basically is there are a couple branches of Pima County Public Library that will be offering some telemedicine services and so model is working with, with Janet major, and with Pima County Public Library to coordinate that project, and we'll have more details as they become available.

07:42:03 Okay. 07:42:06 Anything else. 07:42:10 If not, we're moving on. 07:42:12 Oh, Nicole Are you on. 07:42:17 Don't think so.

07:42:19 So, Cindy. You guys have some digital inclusion updates. Cindy Hogan Are you there. Yes, I am. Thank you very much. Yeah, I'm, I'm here and I'm here right now in Portland for the National Digital Inclusion Alliance annual conference so that's pretty exciting. 07:42:41 And that starts tomorrow.

07:42:43 Digital Inclusion network of AZBSN. The inclusion network was initiated by the Arizona State Library has, has a number of things in the works. The website has been updated and includes the start of a statewide Digital Inclusion

directory, and also a very informative section on the affordable connectivity program. So go to that website it's Connect Arizona. And we're also holding meetings for practitioners right now around specific topics. Currently, and hope to start another kind of meetup space, space for discussion centered around digital inclusion, generally, to have a general discussion, or figuring out the details of that right now. I also wanted to report out that Pima County has begun work on a strategic plan for digital access inclusion and adoption. Andrew Bevington and I are the CO chairs of the digital inclusion and equity subgroup and Steve has also been asked by the County to sit on that group, and we are working on increasing digital literacy throughout Pima County so we're getting a lot of input from, from the community at the moment. And then Stephen Peterson of SEAGO and I are also working on a group that was co founded by the United Way of to sign in southern Arizona and Pima Council on Aging to address Digital Inclusion barriers, being experienced by older adults so we are having a meeting our next meeting for that. At the end of February to kind of chart a path toward action and in dealing with digital inclusion for this population. Let us know if either the final mile project As our as a consortium as a group, or if Arizona rural schools Association, can be of any help.

07:45:08 I know we try that one site known wasn't what I hoped it would be. But we're here if you need us.

07:45:26 And show, are you on the call maybe you want to talk to that. Michelle Simon.

07:45:32 Yeah, because there's a there's a connectivity, there's an access and connectivity in the broadband group also. So I will make sure I will make sure that the the committee knows of your interest and willingness to participate.

07:45:45 Thanks. real.

07:45:50 We can be a little bit like calling the Keystone cops to help you. But we're here to help you anyway. Yeah.

07:45:55 I had, I had a nice conversation with Bob Dooley last week, are you do.

07:46:02 I want to be sure I'm covering rural, as well as Metro So, Yeah, it was good to

07:46:12 always pretty, pretty much at the end of the road sorta.

07:46:18 Go ahead, Michelle bendy. Yeah. Yeah, I was gonna say I'm here, having an issue because I was in my car, and I only heard part of the questions that you want to meet to address.

07:46:29 the Arizona rural schools association is always available to help where we can.

07:46:44 So is the final mile Consortium.

07:46:47 We, you know, the consortium is focused on bringing internet to students, but when you're talking about the elderly population which I just joined myself.

07:47:01 I realize we may have some real common, common interest in common approach to bring the internet to underserved community if that community is indeed underserved.

07:47:18 Awesome. Well, I will send you an email later today with the, with the details last Okay, good. Thank you.

07:47:27 So Cindy since you brought it up since Wes brought it up. Do you want to just give a cookie about the AARP initiative that they're going to be rolling out.

07:47:38 Yeah, I know that I know that AARP has joined or oats, oats has joined with AARP, and they, they have put a big bucket of money toward digital inclusive for older adults, that's, that's all I know.

07:47:59 At the moment, I haven't had a chance to talk to, Brandon closely about that but he's going to be on that next meeting I believe so.

07:48:09 Yeah, there was like \$10 million or something. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

07:48:16 so they'll be rolling that out.

07:48:16 In the next few months to a year, I believe, right, but exciting. Yeah it is.

07:48:25 Okay. Any other questions for Cindy and Nicole Are you online.

07:48:33 Thanks so much. Okay, Janet Are you online.

07:48:41 Okay, Janet Are you online. And major Are you there.

07:48:49 Okay, Sofia, Milan, Kelly Kelly I know you're online. See my honor, Sophie Are you guys there. I think it's just me this morning. Okay, no official updates.

07:48:59 Okay.

07:49:02 Alrighty, and then Leah, I don't, I think we as in Washington.

07:49:07 I don't know if you heard the conversation earlier we I was on a flight to Washington, and that they had an unruly passenger who tried to get into the cabin, and then tried to open one of the side doors, and they had to do an emergency landing.

07:49:23 they had passengers and staff that tackle this guy and subdue them, and then they had to make an emergency landing I believe it was in Kansas or someplace like that.

07:49:35 So it was. I'm sure it was quite an experience for her.

07:49:41 Anyway, moving on.

07:49:46 Derek you online.

07:49:46 Am I am I don't have a lot. I don't have a lot today though i mean i construction continues on I 17 and 19, largely on on target in terms of timing.

07:49:59 We're about to announce go live with edge Roman the Paranal County Schools, so that's exciting, that'll be our first first non higher education edge drone deployment in the state.

07:50:13 And probably within the next month, some quarter will be launching its 400 gig core, so that's pretty exciting at least for us, will be running at 400 gig in the core of our network which is pretty remarkable.

07:50:32 So, that's all I got today.

07:50:34 So, so Derek if I understood correctly you got some staff on.

07:50:39 Yeah, yeah, we're, we're adding adding personnel, a little bit slowly.

07:50:46 So yeah you met Laura is.

07:50:48 Yeah.

07:50:50 So, you've been waiting a long time for that long time. yeah it's good to have some help. Yeah going on. Well you've been expanding and doing a lot of good stuff here in the states and so it's good to see that you have some help.

07:51:03 Yeah, and derek derek mark here Good morning.

07:51:08 Will your 400 gig core, just be Flagstaff to Phoenix to Tucson or you're currently reaching uma with some portion of your core Aren't you. Yeah, yeah but that the other 400 gig core is exclusively to those to those major points of presence yeah we've

07:51:24 got 10 gig up to you. So I'm sorry, we have to buy 10 gig up to you.

07:51:29 Great thing.

07:51:33 So Wes I think you're still online, hopefully, do you want to just talk briefly about what's happening with the final mile project.

07:51:41 Sure, I'm still here.

07:51:45 We are I believe the week of March, 20, we're going to have our first ribbon cutting for our first successful product project.

07:51:57 In, Paloma. It's Barcel Maricopa County Plymouth, Paloma will meet your district will have a ribbon cutting ceremony with the State Superintendent Cathy Hoffman will be there we don't know who else will be there.

07:52:26 And that little celebrate our first live site.

07:52:19 We are the other four are in various stages of holes in the ground concrete poured and towers up.

07:52:28 We expect that probably about the time we celebrate Paloma, and warrior on call. Correct me if I'm wrong.

07:52:37 We will have at least three of the other sites stood up and ready to operate will be a little bit, yeah okay we're Rory can reach a better than I can.

07:52:50 On going to do is give you an over caffeinated summary of where we are. But we are looking forward to the celebration in Loma, and of course I will invite all of you to attend when I have the day in the date from the superintendent's office.

07:53:05 Can you do that remotely. Also, Master just know we're trying to work that out once we get a day in a day, my own will be working with.

07:53:17 Superintendent Hoffman's comms people.

07:53:21 And I suspect that will be a part of it.

07:53:24 Okay.

07:53:26 Thank you everyone now I do indeed we do take off but Rory can brief you far better than I, on projects like to find a lot. Thanks a lot.

07:53:38 Thanks rest.

07:53:41 Okay.

07:53:43 So, just a reminder that we are now moving into a fundraising stage for the task force.

07:53:50 We will need additional funding to continue the work of this task force. So we're looking for sponsors.

07:53:57 Information is available, and I will be sending an email to everybody.

07:54:01 With request for sponsorship and support. And if any of you have any interest.

07:54:08 We'd really appreciate your their support.

07:54:13 And with that, I guess we'll just jump right into our presentation looks like we may even get done earlier today.

07:54:22 So, I want to and I need to I'll stop sharing if you need it Rory.

07:54:27 But I want to introduce Rory kind of way, and Katrina Parker with triad wireless. They are our new sponsor, and we appreciate it. Rory for stepping up really appreciate it.

07:54:40 And of course you're doing a lot of good stuff but a lot of folks here in the state.

07:54:44 And so with that I'm going to turn it over to you. And do you need to share.

07:54:50 Yes, if you don't mind. Just briefly, not a problem.

07:54:59 Alright, so we just one.

07:55:04 Okay think we got it we were sort of busy so this is really quick put together a presentation, nothing.

07:55:13 You know, super fancy so we're more technical than we are, you know, having more positive presence, but I'm just kind of gives you a brief background of the company.

07:55:28 Little bit about me, and how long we been in business, you know, partly our growth is literally insane right now, you know, five years ago we had three people I think we're at 25 right now and we're still, still having more people, as we speak the words

07:55:45 Yes What do you want to sitting next to you Oh, I'm sorry, this is. So this is Katrina.

07:55:51 Katrina hand is our is our project manager for all of the final mile projects, in addition to obviously other tasks inside try it or government, our government issues, government, things.

07:56:17 The.

07:56:20 Try triad is a, is a technical company. It's been very low key, we're usually the guys in the background but our customer base and our projects list, you know with fortune 500 companies.

07:56:33 Yeah, ESPN, we do all of the cage angels broadcast we've done LPG projects we even designed the system for the Super Bowl back in 2008 or 2007 for New Orleans to try to hook up every single person in the entire stadium.

07:56:50 So we've got a fairly deep technical experience base to work on. And, but we're now just starting to come out into more public public life.

07:57:00 Let's see here.

07:57:02 Okay, make that go the next, next, there it goes. So, um, what we're very good at is trying to figure out how to make wireless work in areas where you either isn't good service, or there is a cost effective service for us lakes is going to be a good example

07:57:21 of that, where they have a lot of trees and the limited service quality that's up there is because it's a smaller area, you know there's only one one major providers DSL and it's not have the standards of the rest of the, of the most of the country.

07:57:38 The we've done tests against wireline providers, where we went up against Comcast and century link for in an area with 2000 homes and we now have 45% of every single house in that area, so are our deployment strategy is pretty much if we come into an

07:58:05 Right now we're delivering speeds up the two gigabit per second. We do a lot of projects where were the last minute call, where they got some emergency.

07:58:13 We did Phoenix Open couple of years ago work with sprint when their people were at site and couldn't make things work the way they're supposed to, you know, four o'clock in the afternoon we're getting the phone call that their towers aren't working correctly,

07:58:26 and asked us to help them out so we are reputation in the industry is pretty good.

07:58:30 This is a quick map of some of the coverage zones of Arizona, obviously you can see Maricopa County, real Rico Tucson we're expanding out that area now, but we even have coverage all the way up to the Grand Canyon in Tucson area.

07:58:45 I'm sorry it's just a picture of the back of our office on Monday morning and the guys are starting to load up the cover to go out and do installations.

07:58:53 This is simple this is an area in the middle of Phoenix, to show you the, the, some of the projects we work on this area is on building at 2600.

07:59:03 It's on Central and Thomas, and I think we have 3538 customers linked off of that in various directions, but this this building covers, we've gotten links out 22 plus miles off of out here.

07:59:18 This is a typical installation will do in a rural area, where we'll add a tower, you can see our guys doing a tower upgrade here actually putting in a heavier duty tower to add more equipment.

07:59:30 This there's a lot of this around the tone of five Arlington 11 area. And this is actually the type of tower that covers Aloma right now.

07:59:40 So, and then, in some areas in the more Hillier as you can see this is us where we're doing a high speed relay point of getting around structures. We work primarily in microwave frequencies which are mostly line of sight, we've developed several non line

07:59:58 of sight techniques.

08:00:01 In Phoenix, for example off of that off of this building. We actually bounce off another building to get around one that was in our way.

08:00:08 In another case we shoot this right, we've got a signal that shoots through a century link building to a location four miles away. The in people, essentially, hopefully are in good healthy position but we are shooting right through the fifth and sixth

08:00:22 floor of the building.

08:00:24 So we bounce a signal through there. And this is a typical residential small area high density environment. So, that's pretty much it. I mean we're not saying not really being on the presentation side, we did, we did do a this brochure, which is, this

08:00:41 is the one that we use before the final mile project came to us.

08:00:46 And it was dead on in line with the goals of final mile. We've been doing a \$10 internet package since 2011, and we've written about it, and published articles, we've had, I've had over, 80 articles published either in blogs industry specific blogs and

08:01:06 areas for water, water, water management oil, oil field management. And what do we did. Oh, government, the big project they had for a while in terms of the shoot.

08:01:23 I'm sorry, my apologies have never brain fart on what the latest one was but but we were donating the service to most of our areas already, and then final Malik came along, so we just adapted it for the final mile project and it seems to be expanding

08:01:37 which is good, it does break the digital divide. When Kobe hit, we did. I think we did a couple of hundred of these programs, and quickly.

08:01:46 Most people have upgraded their services from this but at least we got the kids online and that was the primary goal, so that's that's all I got me any Dennis.

08:02:02 When this, when the sharing, stop sharing. There we go. Okay, so we're done. That's, that's pretty much try it I mean we are very good technically what we do.

08:02:08 We've got some amazing guys in house have been doing this for years, and we keep bringing out more, more talented people to expand our offerings, or capabilities.

08:02:20 So Roy, don't you also instant return.

08:02:27 Partially, we actually did all of the video cameras on the traffic lights for sorry heater on while back, we don't offer service out there directly yet.

08:02:39 Honestly, we have got 1015 areas we can't even get to we're so busy that.

08:02:45 But we can we can deploy an area in a couple of weeks once we understand what we have to cover.

08:02:51 That's kind of our, you know the strength of it, but we are offering services, up to one gigabit per second across America in certain areas Maricopa County right now.

08:03:00 And as equipment becomes more available will have keep expanding that offering.

08:03:08 Katrina Do you want to add anything or just want to say hi I know you

08:03:15 putting you on the spot.

08:03:32 No

08:03:24 worries.

08:03:26 at all.

08:03:28 I would like to say that education everywhere is really, really important.

08:03:33 We can't stress enough how important it is to be able to bridge some of that gap in a rural area for the digital divide, especially since a lot of our rural area customers are low income families, and they have a lot of issues with gaining some really

08:03:49 good internet service out there so we've gotten a lot of families that have thanked us in regards to being able to provide a service for them. And like that.

08:04:00 Like I said last week Rory is really innovative, like if he can't come up with an answer I don't think anybody could he is really amazing when it comes to technology.

08:04:12 Other questions for Rory.

08:04:18 Going once Hi, hi Barry This is joy Whiting, I think I asked you. Last time you you got the the bid for the Holbrook final mile project correct. We did.

08:04:30 Do you have any sort of a timeline of when you might be doing this.

08:04:35 Just finished product on that I would just like to go out there and see it and it's fairly close to a patch county where I live.

08:04:41 Our guys are actually going up there on to tonight.

08:04:46 They're loading the towers up the, the rack and so forth. So, let's start construction today, I'd say probably two to three days before they get the base core, the core of it in.

08:04:58 And then once we're, we get it certified which should be Thursday or so, you know, then Katrina will start working with the families and trying to get him connected up.

08:05:07 But, you know, give us a day or two every once a while we run into something we haven't seen electrical issues or something but we're expecting to have it completed by Thursday.

08:05:18 Well that's, that's really awesome I know I talked to the superintendent and homework.

08:05:31 He's really excited and I know he said, You're really easy to work with and it's been great. The final mile project and your technology has just solved so many issues for education space and for those families who needed at low cost so thank you so much

08:05:41 for all you do.

08:05:44 And we actually have a team of guys that if we get a call, we can we can be on site. Sometimes an hour so if necessary, the PGA Tour, or the Phoenix Open couple years ago was one of those examples, but we've done, you know, if we know about a project

08:06:08 we usually get it done extremely fast, so that's that's our, That's our, you know, our kind of our goal.

08:06:19 So where are you going after a lot of grants.

08:06:23 You know we haven't because we weren't really, you know, we're a technical company first we do a lot of engineering consulting, you know, even to companies like Boeing and stuff when they're when they have some challenges.

08:06:34 The.

08:06:35 We are now putting together the facilities to be able to monitor them. A lot of people are helping us marks helping us Derek's helping us West and obviously violin those guys you know this is a new area for us.



08:06:50 We know, we know how to do what we do, but navigating the government funding process and the bid processes, a new experience for us.

08:07:02 Okay.

08:07:02 Any other questions for Rory.

08:07:06 Well, looks like we're going to get done early today. Any other announcements or questions that people have

08:07:17 quiet day.

08:07:19 Everybody's recovering from Super Bowl.

08:07:23 Celebrating the goodness of the bad news depending on what side you're,

08:07:29 you're already a party for Valentine's Day.

08:07:34 Okay, well, if we have no other announcements or comments for today. Then I guess we're going to be done. And we are going to keep it for a while if anybody wants to stay online for a while, will be, will be here.