

January 25, 2021 AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force Teleconference Report

Attendees

Steve Peters, Oris Friesen, Henry Goldberg, Mark Goldstein, Robert Alvarado, Marni Anbar, Dwayne Atwell, Tracey Beal, Andrew Bevington, Melissa Boydston, Kirk Busch, Gene Carl, Michael Cohen, Josh Cohn, Jerry Crow, Dominic DeMark, Alexandra Dominguez, Milan Eaton, Brandon Eggleston, Terence Ford, Rick Gibson, Karmen Griffith, Ian Hathcock, Steve Hill, Cindy Hogan, Shereka Jackson, John Kelly, Robert LeGrande, Tarma Liranzo, Ilana Lowery, Janet Major, Derek Masseth, Sophia Mayberry, Clarence McAllister, Ryan McCaigue, Frank Milstead, Georgina Monsalvo, Kenneth Morckel, Mala Muralidharan, Mauricio Orozco, Cody Pedersen, Lea Marquez Peterson, Paul Ross, Jeff Sobotka, Paul Stapleton-Smith, David Whitt-Ruckus, Karen Ziegler

Task Force Database, Participants Survey, Funding

Task Force Database of Stakeholders

Steve Peters stated ATIC/GAZEL has a database of stakeholders such as city managers, county managers, economic development directors, school superintendents, and important associations that should be contacted about task force activities and receive the task force recommendations report. However, a number of these contacts are out of date or need to be supplemented, so Steve requests task force participants send him relevant stakeholders' contact information for inclusion in this database.

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

Steve will send an e-mail today to task force participants requesting funding for the task force to perform its work in 2021, and Steve asked that this request also be forwarded to organizations that may be interested in providing such funding. Karen Ziegler commented that it is important that this task force receive funding, including funding to pay Steve for managing the task force, to continue its operations.

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

State Broadband Director Update

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

Jeff is following state legislature activities pertaining to broadband including: bills clarifying how ADOT deployment of fiber along state highways will be enabled; the Governor's proposed \$10 million for Rural Broadband Development Grants; and funding for fiber conduit to be deployed along I-40 (in addition to what has already been allocated for fiber along I-17 and I-19).

The NTIA received \$1.6 billion for broadband in the federal stimulus funding. Jeff is communicating with NTIA on their writing of the rules for how this funding will be allocated.

Jeff noted that the FCC has \$100 million for a Connected Health grants program.

Jeff stated Tulsa, Oklahoma is a good model for Arizona communities on how CARES Act money can be allocated for broadband (see Jeff's link to this in the Appendix Chat).

Mark Goldstein asked about the \$40 million in the Governor's budget for K-12 broadband. Jeff responded in the Appendix Chat that this is the GEER funding from the CARES Act for fiber along I-17 & I-19 that arrived in June after the FY2021 budget was published so it is listed in the FY2022 budget which starts 7/1/21. The \$33.1M for fiber deployment along I-40 is a new funding request.

Steve Peters asked Jeff if he will be putting together a document summarizing all the broadband funding sources available, and Jeff responded he will provide such information as more becomes finalized and clarified.

ADE Update

Sophia Mayberry, Project Manager in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction at the Arizona Dept. of Education (ADE), and Milan Eaton, State E-rate Director at ADE, reported on recent ADE activities.

Sophia reported that ADE has released a guidance resource for family engagement during the pandemic.

The ADE Technology Task Force is continuing its work, and one of the subcommittees is about to release its parents toolkit that focuses on resources for parents engaging with virtual learning.

ADE is working with the Sun Corridor Network, and will be releasing results of that activity.

Milan reported that he has had discussions with the Arizona Rural Schools Association on their newly-formed "Final Mile Project" to bring broadband Internet to student homes. Steve Peters stated he would like this organization to become involved with our task force, and Milan responded he would invite Wes Brownfield, Executive Director of the Arizona Rural Schools Association, to participate.

Telehealth Update

Janet Major, Associate Director of Education & Facilities for the Arizona Telemedicine Program and Chair of the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA), reported on recent state telehealth and USDLA activities.

Janet noted that broadband and telehealth are high priorities for Governor Ducey.

The Arizona Telemedicine Program hosted a Rural Health Arizona Legislative webinar on January 13th discussing the Governors' Telehealth Omnibus Bill, which includes parity for telemedicine reimbursement, interstate licensure, and other areas. See Janet's links in the Appendix Chat to view this webinar and to follow state legislation on telehealth and broadband.

There are various new federal and state grant programs available to support technology and infrastructure. The USDLA publishes information on how to apply for grants. The Arizona Telemedicine Program/Southwest Telehealth Resource Center and the USDLA will be partnering to deliver more grant writing workshops (see the Appendix Chat).

Arizona State Library Update

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

Mala and Milan Eaton are busy shepherding various state E-rate applications. The E-rate application window for schools and public libraries applying for reimbursements for Internet and internal connections for July 2021 – June 2022 opened on January 15th and closes on March 25th.

The Arizona State Library is partnering with ADE and Insight on providing broadband via portable antennas on book mobiles. This pilot project is intended to provide an immediate connectivity solution for very rural areas.

The AZ LibTap technical support help line (discussed at previous task force meetings) is being heavily used to provide assistance in navigating the Web. The Connect-Arizona portal free public Wi-Fi map is also widely used and has had over 190,000 hits since it was launched in October 2020.

President Biden issued a statement to the FCC: "The FCC is encouraged, consistent with applicable law, to increase connectivity options for students lacking reliable home broadband, so that they can continue to learn if their schools are operating remotely." Jessica Rosenworcel is the new acting Chair of the FCC, and is a strong advocate for providing affordable broadband connectivity throughout the country as well as on developing new ways to support wireless services (e.g. spectrum policy and Internet of Things).

The FCC released its 14th Broadband Deployment Report, which reported that the number of rural Americans lacking access to 25/3 Mbps broadband service has fallen 46% since 2016. These reports have been criticized because they are primarily based on data service providers submit to the FCC (on Form 477), where if a provider says it serves one household in a census block the FCC considers the whole block covered thus possibly overstating the coverage especially in large or irregularly-shaped census blocks.

ACC Update

Lea Marquez Peterson, Commissioner and recently-elected Chair of the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC), reported on her recent activities.

Lea stated the ACC regulates utilities in the state, and has a more limited role in the telecommunications space.

As discussed at previous task force meetings, the ACC has opened a docket to discuss reforming of the Arizona Universal Service Fund (AUSF) to support broadband services in high-cost rural areas. Lea encourages task force participants to submit comments/recommendations to this docket.

Lea met recently with the Tucson Association of Realtors, who indicated there are parts of Tucson lacking broadband access. Steve Peters commented that the City of Tucson delivered a presentation to our task force on its municipal wireless project (on November 9, 2020). Jeff Sobotka remarked that they should talk to Simply Bits about their wireless Internet solutions offered in southern Arizona (as presented at the January 11th task force meeting).

Sun Corridor Network Update

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

Derek is involved in outreach activities with communities and service providers along I-17 and I-19 where ADOT is deploying middle-mile fiber.

The SCN has launched work on expanding the EduRoam service statewide, currently partnering with three entities.

The SCN is continuing work on providing CBRS wireless access for community networking in Page, Mesa, and with the Roosevelt School District in Phoenix.

.

“The Digital Decision” Presentation

Karen Ziegler introduced Frank Milstead, retired Colonel with the Arizona Dept. of Public Safety, who is now a public safety subject matter expert working for “The Digital Decision (TDD)”. Frank stated Robert LeGrande is the founder and CEO of TDD. TDD is a master reseller of Wi-Fiber that provides wireless connectivity solutions for communities. Dominic DeMark, Sr. VP of Sales & Marketing at TDD, delivered a presentation on their company’s activities. Following is a summary of key points from the presentation, and the full presentation and recording of the presentation will be posted on the task force website.

TDD led America’s first two public safety deployments of wireless networks, and is a leader in public safety and smart IoT technology solutions for communities, enterprises, and telehealth. It is one of the few companies in the country with operational, regulatory, and technical experience in this field.

They offer Wi-Fiber wireless solutions that are integrated with embedded decision-making applications (provided by their partner Ecosystem) focused on public safety and smart cities.

The wireless connectivity solutions are based on CBRS LTE and unlicensed or licensed spectrum, and can be deployed to provide up to 30 miles access that is integrated with fiber backhaul. The wireless access solutions provide Gbps speeds, can be deployed quickly, and at a lower cost than fiber last-mile access.

The wireless access network is integrated with an intelligent platform that provides data aggregation of multiple types, real-time analytics/decision-making, and visualization. They offer a “Real-Time Crime Center” that offers audio/video surveillance, shot detection/analytics, and intrusion detection. They offer various solutions for smart cities implementations: smart lighting (LED management), smart transportation, smart energy, and smart water solutions. They also offer a remote education platform (including institution and student/teacher relationship management) and an integrated COVID-19 health care solution (including remote monitoring, telemedicine capabilities, cloud-based end-user management, which is HIPAA-compliant).

The City of Canton, Ohio has deployed their Real-Time Crime Center, and they have recently been awarded digital inclusion contracts in Kentucky and Alabama. Wi-Fiber received the Best in Show award at CES in 2018.

Jeff Sobotka commented that Page has the goal of becoming Arizona’s first “smart town”, and he would like to talk with TDD about working with Page or other small communities in Arizona. Dominic commended the task force on its progress, and sees opportunities for TDD to work with the task force on different projects of mutual interest.

Next Steps

The next AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force overall meeting will be held on Monday, February 1st at 7:30 am.

Steve Peters will send a survey to task force participants to inquire about whether they would like to extend our weekly task force meetings beyond one hour to accommodate the larger number of participants that are attending the meetings now.

Steve noted that Kajeet has contacted him about finding a community that would be interested in working on a LEO satellite demonstration project.

Steve has asked Gene Carl of Cox Communications to deliver a presentation to the task force next week or in the near future on Cox activities in Arizona.

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

Appendix : Chat from Zoom

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (7:33 AM)

[file: Keller & Heckman - Overview of Broadband Funding Opportunities in the COVID-19 Relief Act 01_19_21.pdf]

Keller and Heckman's overview of broadband funding opportunities in the recent COVID-19 Relief Act at <https://www.khlaw.com/Overview-of-Broadband-Funding-Opportunities-in-the-COVID-19-Relief-Act> or attached FYI.

Ian Hathcock to Everyone (7:33 AM)
Thank you Mark

Rick Gibson to Everyone (7:36 AM)
Rick Gibson Sustainability Partners 520-661-6797 rgibson@s.partners we FUND
BROADBAND projects on a monthly service basis

Malavika Muralidharan to Everyone (7:39 AM)
mala@azlibrary.gov 480-221-5120

Cindy Hogan to Everyone (7:40 AM)
chogan@unitedwaytucson.org 520-891-1285

Malavika Muralidharan to Everyone (7:40 AM)
Mala Muralidharan AZ State Library
Thank you Cindy

Janet Major to Everyone (7:47 AM)
Link to keep an eye on telehealth and broadband legislation:
www.AZ-LEG.gov
Legislators assignments & contacts
Track Legislation
View committee agendas & LIVE meetings

Janet Major to Everyone (7:49 AM)
Upcoming Health/Telehealth Events www.crh.arizona.edu
AZ Rural Health & Public Policy Forum Feb 1 & 2
www.ruralhealthweb.org
NRHA Rural Health Policy Summit Feb 9-11

Marni Anbar to Everyone (7:50 AM)
good morning everyone. Marni Anbar - Kiwanians, Rotarian, YMCA advisory board member.
looking for ways that the average concerned citizen can help with this issue.
marnibo1@mac.Com

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (7:51 AM)
[file: SHLB Broadband Policy Roadmap 2021.pdf]

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (7:51 AM)
SHLB Coalition has published their 2021 policy roadmap available at
<https://www.shlb.org/policy/roadmap> or attached FYI.

Janet Major to Everyone (7:51 AM)
Webinar Archive for "Rural Health Advocacy: Preparing for the Legislature's 55th Session"
<https://telemedicine.arizona.edu/webinars/previous>

Ilana Lowery to Everyone (7:51 AM)

Thanks, Mark!

Jeff Sobotka to Everyone (7:59 AM)

<https://www.tulsaresponds.org/>

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (7:59 AM)

More information about Governor Ducey's Executive Budget in downlinks at

<https://azgovernor.gov/fy21budget> FYI.

Tracey Beal to Everyone (8:01 AM)

Very excited about the Parent Tool Kit that focuses on resources for parents engaging with virtual learning..Several people on this task force are working with Superintendent Hoffman's Tech task force. Great collaboration!

Janet Major to Everyone (8:03 AM)

Grant writing resources

<https://usdla.org/grants/> and below is a great recorded archive with handouts on how to write a competitive grant

<https://swtrc.wistia.com/medias/lmfh64zv4s>

ATP/SWTRC and USDLA will be partnering to produce more grant writing workshops

jmajor@telemedicine.arizona.edu Associate Director for Education & Facilities ATP/SWTRC

Malavika Muralidharan to Everyone (8:10 AM)

FCC "Fourteenth Broadband Deployment Report"

Malavika Muralidharan to Everyone (8:10 AM)

<https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-21-18A1.pdf>

Janet Major to Everyone (8:10 AM)

we need the number for the docket please

Lea Marquez Peterson to Everyone (8:23 AM)

Please consider weighing in on the Arizona Corporation Commission edocket on the Arizona Universal Service Fund. Go to www.AZCC.Gov to Docket No. T-00000A-20-0336

Link to my memo opening the docket:

<https://docket.images.azcc.gov/E000010051.pdf?i=1611587900046>

Link to the PowerPoint Slides I presented to fellow Commissioners in Dec 2020:

<https://docket.images.azcc.gov/E000010065.pdf?i=1611587900046>

John Kelly to Everyone (8:24 AM)

Thank you, Lea

Malavika Muralidharan to Everyone (8:32 AM)

Got to drop off for another meeting. Steve please post the recording... very interesting.

Karmen Griffith to Everyone (8:37 AM)

Karmen Griffith - Operations Manager, The Digital Decision (TDD). For more information and TDD contact info: www.thedigitaldecision.com. Thanks for your time today!

Jeff Sobotka to Everyone (8:39 AM)

The \$40M in the Governor's Budget is the GEER funding from the CARES Act for I-17 & I-19. It arrived in June after the FY2021 budget was published so it is listed in the FY2022 budget which starts 7/1/21. The \$33.1M is new and is for I-40.

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (8:41 AM)

I wondered about that Jeff since the \$ were the same. Thanks for clarifying, but I was hoping it was new \$. Oh well.

Jeff Sobotka to Everyone (8:42 AM)

Jeff Sobotka

JeffS@azcommerce.com, 602-432-0004 cell