



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

Attendees

Steve Peters, Oris Friesen, Henry Goldberg, Mark Goldstein, Tracey Beal, Andrew Bevington, Melissa Boydston, Amanda Bruno, Kirk Busch, Michael Cohen, Jerry Crow, Alexandra Dominguez, Terence Ford, Steve Hill, Tarma Liranzo, Ilana Lowery, Derek Masseth, Sophia Mayberry, Mala Muralidharan, Mauricio Orozco, Cody Pedersen, Alan Pruitt, Michelle Simon, Jeff Sobotka, Graham Taylor, Nicole Umayam, Karen Ziegler

Updates: State Broadband Director, AZ State Library, ADE, 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 met with the state broadband directors of all 50 states at a meeting organized by the NTIA of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Jeff stated he is involved in discussions with ADOT on the responses received to their RFI regarding public-private partnerships for fiber middle-mile infrastructure along state highways to reach Arizona rural communities. ADOT will be preparing a public document on this.

Jeff commented that the broadband sections prepared by Mark Goldstein for the Arizona Technology Council 2021 Public Policy Guide will be valuable for state government public policy considerations.

Jeff will be writing a report on the results from the previous \$3 million Arizona Rural Broadband Development Grants (RBDGs). He is hopeful that a larger RBDG grant program will be approved in the next state government budget.

He is working with several Arizona communities, including the Northern Arizona Council of Governments (NACOG) and the Western Arizona Economic Development District, on federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant applications with assistance from Cindi Ptak, the Arizona EDA Representative.

Steve Peters asked Jeff when the next state government legislature session would be, and Jeff responded it will likely be in January 2021.

Arizona State Library Update

Mala Muralidharan, E-rate Administrator for Public Libraries at the Arizona State Library, reported on her recent activities. The Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband Coalition (SHLB) and the American Library Association (ALA) have been promoting proposals to improve federal E-rate funding for the COVID-19 crisis, and the State E-rate Coordinators Alliance (SECA) took the lead to put together a request to the FCC on this. This It requests augmenting on-campus funding by \$69 - \$104 million (due to 10% – 15% of public school districts having the intention to double bandwidth) for the 2020-21 fiscal year retroactive to July 1, 2020. There may also be a filing to increase off-campus E-rate support (modified version of previous “E-rate to the Home” proposal). The gift rule has been extended to December 2020, but they want to extend this to the end of the fiscal year. Cisco put forth a petition to include network security as an eligible E-rate service, and several organizations support adding cybersecurity as an eligible service.

Nicole Umayam, Digital Inclusion Library Consultant at the Arizona State Library, reported on her recent activities. The Connect-Arizona Portal has had about 90,000 views of the Free Wi-Fi Map, and currently includes 847 locations. The AZ LibTAP team is currently in their 8th week of free tech support and has supported about 140 calls, and plan to begin offering services in Spanish on October 1st. Nicole participated in a town hall with Tom O'Halleran, U.S. Representative for Arizona's 1st Congressional District, to discuss the Broadband Opportunity Act and understand the importance of digital literacy. She is meeting with public libraries on providing software to track broadband usage. Nicole is also preparing reports on the lending of Wi-Fi hotspots that libraries are providing from their IMLS funding: about 30 public libraries as well as some community colleges are lending hotspots. There is heavy usage of these hotspots (e.g. this is the most checked-out item of the Prescott library). The lending program provides the hotspot device and a data plan that goes along with the device (if there is Wi-Fi Internet service in the area). Jeff Sobotka commented that this Wi-Fi hotspot lending program is very successful, and he will look into service providers providing Wi-Fi Internet service where it is not currently available. Mala commented that digital literacy training goes hand-in-hand with this hotspot lending program to inform users on how to use these devices and the data plans that come with them. Mala added that Common Sense Media provides a lot of digital literacy training.

Holly Henley, the State Librarian, provided a written report on CARES Act funding. The Arizona State Library awarded \$173,000 in grants throughout the state for more than 23 library projects. The grant money was made possible with federal CARES Act funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Libraries around Arizona are using the funds to respond to the coronavirus and to expand digital access for their communities. Priorities in this phase of CARES Act funding were given to projects that focused on library partnerships with museums and workforce development organizations. Some of the activities supported by the grant program include virtual museum tours, Wi-Fi access expansion, online student tutoring, job search support, virtual meeting rooms for public uses, digital preservation, and documenting the COVID-19 crisis through photography. IMLS has posted a grant spotlight featuring Arizona's use of CARES funding.

Steve Peters noted that he distributed a short article about a new T-Mobile initiative to offer free wireless hotspots (with up to 100 GB of data per year) to school districts for student use at home. Jeff Sobotka responded he would ask T-Mobile to present on this initiative at a task force meeting.

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 is updating its guidance (previously released at the end of May) on best practices for opening schools and distance learning, including information on nutrition. ADE is keeping track of whether schools are operating in hybrid learning mode or doing only remote learning.

Steve Peters asked if ADE is collecting information on students' access to Internet service and devices at home. Sophia responded that ADE is considering conducting a 2nd survey on this but a number of school districts have difficulty providing such information.

Nicole Umayam asked where ADE shares information it collects. Sophia responded that ADE has a COVID webpage where it provides schools' status on whether they offer hybrid learning or only remote learning. (based on information from County School Superintendents). Alexandra Dominguez, Director of State Government Relations for the College Board, remarked she is interested in using this information.

Steve Peters asked if ADE has information on whether students know how to use the devices. Sophia responded that some large school districts have such information but this information is not available for all schools. Jeff Sobotka commented that Phoenix Union High School District, Tucson Unified School District, and Paradise Valley Unified School District may have the resources to collect such information but other school districts may not have the required resources to do this. Sophia added that school districts are prioritizing distance learning and nutrition so may lack the resources to do such information collection. Tracey Beal asked if there is a way for our task force to assist with this, would the school districts support this -- Sophia responded that ADE would be open to this and Jeff responded that school districts are locally controlled so they would have to individually support such work. Mauricio Orozco commented that different groups beyond school districts, such as parent groups, may have useful information to share.

Sophia stated ADE expected the need for on-site services such as special education to be overwhelmed, but they actually have been below capacity.

Steve Peters stated he would like to organize a sharing session of different organizations involved in this task force about how we could collaborate on various issues.

ACC Update

In the absence of Lea Marquez Peterson, Commissioner of the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC), Steve Peters stated Lea is a participant in the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) broadband task force that is working on broadband issues relevant to Arizona. Mark Goldstein added that the issue of reforming the Arizona Universal Service Fund (AUSF) to support broadband services in high-cost areas will be put on the docket for the commissioners of the ACC to consider.

Sun Corridor Network

Derek Masseth, Executive Director of the Sun Corridor Network, reported on his recent activities.

The Sun Corridor Network offers an EduRoam service in which Wi-Fi service providers advertise their SSIDs and educational participants can login securely. There is a lot of interest

in this service, and it will be rolled out to community colleges and the Navajo Nation. Nicole Umayam commented that she would like to connect with Derek to discuss how EduRoam may be related to the Arizona State Library Connect-Arizona portal.

The Sun Corridor Network will be upgrading point-to-point microwave backhaul for the Navajo Nation and the Tohono O'odham Nation.

The Sun Corridor Network is working on deploying an aggregation POP in Yuma.

The Sun Corridor Network has been approved by the National Science Foundation to provide community-based Wi-Fi and CBRS in Page as well as seven additional sites.

The Sun Corridor Network is planning on expanding its core network connecting the cities of Phoenix, Tucson, and Flagstaff to 400 Gbps with redundant paths from the existing 200 Gbps.

Steve Peters remarked he would like to have a discussion at next week's task force meeting about how people can engage with the Sun Corridor Network on community Wi-Fi.

Arizona Technology Council Smart City and IoT Conference

Kirk Busch reported that the Arizona Technology Council Smart City and IoT Conference will be held on September 17, 2020 (Steve Peters sent an e-mail out about this). Kirk will be moderating the IoT panel at this conference. He asked if someone from the task force could prepare a slide on our task force to present at this conference.

Mark Goldstein remarked there is a \$10 discount for task force members to attend this conference. Kirk stated he will make a video recording of the conference available to the task force.

Jeff Sobotka added that public-private partnerships in this are an important area the ACA is considering.

Task Force Recommendations Document

A core group of people provided editing feedback on the task force recommendations document to Steve on September 4th. Steve reviewed the revised document with the overall task force on September 8th.

Mark Goldstein reported that after receiving from Oris Friesen a new introductory "Report and Recommendations Overview" section for the report, he put in a lot of work to revise the document and include various sections in the Appendix of the report. The document is now a full report including a Table of Contents.

Mark briefly overviewed the sections in the new document. The document contains five sections: Report and Recommendations Overview; Digital Access Introduction; Digital Access Needs and Issues; State of Arizona Initiatives; and AZBSN Task Force Recommendations. There are five Appendices in the document: State & Community Broadband Business Models; Broadband Connectivity Technology & Trends; Arizona Broadband Grants, Pandemic Response & Recovery Resources; Arizona Broadband Initiatives Recap 2010-2019; and AZBSN Task Force Leadership and Participants.

Mark noted he included the California proposed reform of the broadband definition to be 100 Mbps download (from the current 25 Mbps download) as well as reference to the Pew Research Center work on what is happening on broadband in different states (as requested by Ben Blink, the Governor's Policy Advisor for Transportation & Technology Innovation).

Jeff Sobotka commented the report looks very good and the 100 Mbps download is an appropriate recommendation for the future.

Mark noted that after the report content is finalized, Insight will put the document in a nice format for publication.

Steve Peters thanked Mark and Oris for their work on revising the document, and will discuss the revised report with them. Karen Ziegler stated she will provide editing comments on the revised document to Mark. The document will be discussed at the Technology Subcommittee meeting on September 15th, particularly the Appendices on broadband business models and broadband connectivity technology.

Next Steps

The next AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force overall meeting will be held on Monday, September 21st at 7:30 am.

This week, the Technology subcommittee will meet on Tuesday September 15th at 9:30 am.

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: (7:42 AM)

[file: AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force - Arizona Broadband Consultants V02H.docx]

Here's the latest AZ Broadband Consultants List now at 52 entries. Also available on the AZBSN Resources page.

From Tracey Beal to Everyone: (7:43 AM)

Awesome, Mark!

From Mark Goldstein to Everyone: (7:44 AM)

[file: AZBSN COVID-19 Task Force Report & Recommendations Draft V01D 09_14_20.docx]

From Mark Goldstein to Everyone: (7:44 AM)

And here's the consolidated draft of the AZBSN Report & Recommendations that Oris then I have been working on for your consideration. Shaping up and coming together!

From Nicole Umayam to Everyone: (7:53 AM)

We've got great support!

From Nicole Umayam to Everyone: (8:00 AM)

Many parallels to small and rural libraries

From Ilana Lowery to Everyone: (8:07 AM)

We try to work with district tech coordinators and event that is challenging

From Mauricio Orozco to Everyone: (8:11 AM)

Parent groups, Counselors, Nurses, McKinney Vento liaisons, Title I specialists need access to this information and resources. Thanks

From Malavika Muralidharan to Everyone: (8:15 AM)

It would be great to use this time to have a different organizations do a presentations every week. Those of us who want to partner will pick up on the presentations and start a conversation and move ahead for the common good.... Just as we did with Common sense Media and School Connect.

From Mauricio Orozco to Everyone: (8:15 AM)

Agree

From Alexandra Dominguez to Everyone: (8:19 AM)

Sharing in case anyone is interested or wants to help spread the word through their networks: College Board is hosting a webinar for school counselors in Arizona next Monday, Sept 21 at 10 am. We will be covering important and relevant info on SAT Suite of Assessments fall testing updates, free online AP Program resources, Scholarship information, Connecting students to college, etc. Counselors can also receive CEU credits for joining and completing a short quiz after the event. See more details here: <https://counselors.collegeboard.org/professional-learning/workshops>

From Alexandra Dominguez to Everyone: (8:20 AM)

[file: AP Instructional Resources 2020-21.pdf]

Here are details on our free AP resources

From Terence Ford to Everyone: (8:27 AM)

Looks great, flowing very well Team...

From Tracey Beal to Everyone: (8:32 AM)

Needing to head off to a new call! Thank you for the great information!

From Ilana Lowery to Everyone: (8:36 AM)

That's a lot of work, Mark. Nice job!

From Mauricio Orozco to Everyone: (8:37 AM)

Great work! can't find the link, thanks

From Kirk Busch to Everyone: (8:37 AM)
AWESOME JOB MARK!

From Alexandra Dominguez to Everyone: (8:37 AM)

On the recommendation to establish a Student Digital Access Fund, here's an example of something similar, a public-private partnership to get kids connected in Nevada, that we can consider highlighting in the report: <https://connectingkidsnv.org/>

From Ilana Lowery to Everyone: (8:38 AM)

@Mark and @Steve I am happy to do an edit on it for grammar and punctuation, etc. I need to jump off for another call. Great job all!