

## **BCN Advisory Council Minutes**

UW Pyle Center, 3/18/2010 3PM

**Attendees:** Jay Jaeger, Tom Taibl (phone), Bob Bocher, Bruce Mathew, Mike Mietz (phone), Tim Schell (phone), Tara Baxter (phone), Jamie Poindexter, Matt Rains (phone), Larry Bader (phone), Connie Bandt (phone), Marge Jeffers (phone), South Central Library System (phone), Elena Pokot (phone), Oskar Anderson

### **Introductions**

Welcome to Marge Jeffers, our new WADEN representative.

### **DOA BCN Grant Status**

The DOA BCN Grant has been approved.

- The August submission was the culmination efforts working on the federal ARRA and significant consideration for some period of time.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> cut was reached in November, requiring responses including an environmental review that had to be done with very short notice – there were several iterations well into January.
- Now we are in implementation planning.
- There will be benefits even for TEACH sponsored organizations that are not getting new fiber connections, due to the overall impact of this grant. There is ongoing outreach to those organizations, and is also on the minds of a lot of these school districts. These bandwidth increases will still depend upon infrastructure work that will be happening related to the grant.
- Progress has been slow, unfortunately. There was duplication of one grant number at the US Department of Commerce (USDOC) which has created a lot of confusion. As a result, DOA has not yet received the formal documentation that they ought to have had a number of weeks ago. DOA did receive a letter from the USDOC indicating approval. USDOC is well aware of the issue. The Wisconsin application was reportedly well regarded by those reviewing the applications.
- DOA participated in a conference call with 40 organizations in our “group” of submitted ARRA applications, and the BCN application seems to be a bit more “clean” than some other organizations with respect to not spending money that is not yet allocated.
- There were some sites that have fiber included in the grant, and some copper sites that were not included, but ought to have been, as well as some new interested parties that would be eligible. It is expected to be able to accommodate them give the expected availability of grant funds.

- DOA leveraged the state GIS environment to do initial layouts with a relatively high degree of accuracy, given the limited planning information available at the time.
- It is apparent that the USDOC is taking reasonable care to make sure that overlaps with existing fiber have not occurred.
- **The BCN Advisory Council extends its considerable gratitude to those who contributed in the effort to prepare and shepherd the grant application through the process.**
- What might a tentative schedule look like? Some hypothetical legwork was done in advance of the grant to see what a schedule might look like. Expect to follow a process not dissimilar to the conversion process from BadgerNet to BCN. But they need to hold off until things are more nailed down because once we start, we want to be able to proceed without a lull.
  - AT&T has broken the plan down into 7 sub-projects, and is working through the process of creating a timeline.
  - Once DOA has a final grant document, then DOA and the vendors will adjust as needed, so that we will start just as soon as we can.
  - AT&T and DOA have also had some discussions with Cisco so that they can be ready to supply equipment, and Cisco has indicated that they stand ready to do so.
  - DOA has three related projects going on at the same time, that correspond to the 7 AT&T projects, including multi-tenant consolidation, rate changes, and the work directly related to the grant.
- There will be a lot of tracking work required once contracts are written and work begins.

There is a FAQ on the DPI web site at <http://dpi.wi.gov/pld/pdf/grantfundedfaq.pdf>, and also an article in the most recent DPI newsletter available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/channel/pdf/chn4502.pdf>.

### **UW Extension CAN ARRA Grant Status**

- There was funding in the Madison area, for MUFN (Madison Unified Fiber Network). There has been some communication with Pat Christianson on the topic. For more information see [http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/journal\\_media\\_detail.asp?locid=19&prid=4985](http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/journal_media_detail.asp?locid=19&prid=4985).
- They will apply in round two for a second request to expand their presence.
- UW Extension plans to submit a second round application for some CAN initiatives.
  - Support has been indicated from the Governor's office.
  - There has also been work from each possible location around the state.
- The Google initiative has raised some visibility on these kinds of efforts.

## **DOA Updates**

### **TEACH subsidy Update:**

- Requests for TEACH (over 400 upgrade requests since last October) are being worked on now.
- Working thru over 100 requests per month for the “minimum amount of required bandwidth” and getting those done, but have had to hold off on any that required grant money to start work, because it is not allowed to commit grant money in advance of formal paperwork.
- There were changes in November to remove the 45Mb “cap” and also set an upper rate limit of \$250 / month. This resulted in over 400 requests for increases of bandwidth. Because of the grant status being incomplete, DOA requests some evidence of need in order to stay true to the rules that TEACH operates under.
- In November 2006, there were 957 TEACH customers, then down to 943 then down to 928, but in November down to 919. With the changes in November TEACH now has 978 customers as a result of these changes.
- There are others that would like to join it, but are limited by contracts with other network providers (e.g. Charter). One issue with these is that they cannot get E-Rate subsidies for both their existing contract and a new facility via TEACH. DOA will be highlighting this issue with the school districts in the new “letter of agency”.

### **DOA BCN Contract Status Update:**

- DOA has used the time gap in grant process to have good, frank service discussions with WBAA & AT&T. There is a meeting with CIO planned for this week.
- There are a lot of pent-up changes that DOA has been holding off on because of other activities, including the grants.

## **FCC National Broadband Strategy Document**

- Mike Mietz observed that the national broadband strategy will have considerable impact on the network communications industry. There is some concern that there not be too much focus on any particular technology.
- Some “high points”
  - Some elements the FCC expects to address using its regulatory authority.
  - Others will require national or state legislative action.

- The FCC reportedly expects to issue 30 to 40 public notices, and begin a rule-making process for those which it can move forward without legislative action.
- We hope to see the E-rate program simplified.
- The document recommended an overhaul of the universal service program to get out from underneath subsidies of “Plain Old Telephone Service” so that funds can then be multi-purposed.
- The FCC hopes to better manage & sell frequency bands to derive additional funding.
- The FCC hopes to get a better handle on the impact of the universal service fees on customers
- There is also a desire to address communications for “first responders”.

## 2010 Topics Discussion

- Fiber ownership and use
  - Concerns were expressed during grant discussions to see how “we” might encourage the most public potential and use from fiber assets.
  - Now that grants are proceeding, it seems to make sense to look at the lay of the land, see if any concerns are developing, and if so, what might be done to address them.
  - (Editorial: I also read an article on the Internet recently which expresses concern about the national broadband strategy not sufficiently addressing “last mile” access and thus not resulting in fiber into homes).
- The grant and CANs are going to generate a lot more overall bandwidth within our state.
- What should the BCN relationship be to other networks (especially CANs)
  - There will likely be impact on BCN user base and BCN revenues.
  - Are there E-Rate considerations that affect the relationships between networks (if more than one network has an E-Rate subsidy)?
    - BCN is a transport network without applications, which excludes those links from the filtering requirement.
    - Most libraries don’t apply for E-Rate on Internet service, and thus don’t need to filter. Most schools do need to filter.
  - Are there opportunities for these networks to use BCN as a failover path or vice versa?
    - BCN reach to “anchor institutions” may become part of the picture.
    - There may be different BCN WAN, CAN “middle”, and “last mile” perspectives.
    - BCN rules and law limit whose traffic we can transport. This might be similar to issues the FCC may be addressing in their plan.
- Potential Summer BCN planning session
  - Similar in flavor to the discussion about two years ago
  - Redundancy and resiliency needs going forward, based on expected use.
  - How important is it to be able to partner / peer with other networks?
  - How much bandwidth should we target in our vision?

- What other entities might we want to involve?
- Perhaps two discussions, one with the BCN customer base, and then another with our peers who are looking at the vision for other networks.
- Health Information planning groups have to submit their plans by July, so we probably can't engage them in time, but we probably should have some interchange at some point.
- The consensus was that a full day would make sense.
  - Next advisory call is June, so we need feedback sooner, and need to schedule soon.
  - Possible additions: Think about our customer groups, and who we might add in – and will need names and contact information. Please contact Tim Schell **[tschell@waunakee.k12.wi.us](mailto:tschell@waunakee.k12.wi.us)**
  - Should set constituency over the next three weeks (April 9<sup>th</sup>)
  - Location: Last time was face to face.
  - Will approach UW about facilities.
  - Will consider June 17<sup>th</sup> as well as other dates in "Doodle".
- Briefing document for incoming administration
  - Not intended as a "wish list" or lobbying.
  - Promote an understanding of what BCN is and what it does.
  - Short document
    - History, services, etc.
    - Introductory level
    - Aim for September meeting.

**Next Meeting: June 17 2010, 3PM. Room 310**