**SC BAT Meeting Notes DRAFT**

**April 13, 2017; 1-3 PM**

**Stevens County IT Conference Room**

Participants:

Debra Hansen Mayor Dorothy Knauss

Bert Klimas Dave Klimas

Bryan Raines Monica Babine

Amanda Six Kevin Jacka

Brandon Rainey Kinsey Larsen

Commissioner Wes McCart

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/TL;DR**

* Mayor Knauss reported on the Partners for Rural Washington meeting with Governor Inslee. (Item a)
* Amanda reported on the No Go status of the White Space Grant. (Item b.)
* The mapping project hasn’t really moved forward. Notes from the conference call are included as an addendum at the end of this document. (Item c.)
* Mayor Knauss shared information from the Next Century Cities newsletter articles that touched on Pew research supporting municipal broadband and a letter from senators calling on the FCC to support Universal Service Fund for broadband. (Item d.)
* Mayor Knauss updated us on Charter Spectrum process in laying fiber as well as a low income access opportunity for Spectrum customers. (Item e.)
* Kevin Jacka and Brandon Rainey provided a real life issue with poor internet quality as it affects schools. (Item f.)
* Bert and Monica reported on the closeness of the NTIA CCI project. This project will collect actual data and information from a variety of entities interested in improving broadband in Stevens County. (Item g.)
* Dig Once policies? (Item h.)
* Robotics postcards were handed out as a visual for one of the reasons broadband is important. (Item i.)
* Governor’s Summit: Debra and Monica are working on a statewide conference on career-connected learning on May 31st. There will be a local component at TEDD. (Item j.)
* Monica has a variety of updates including WSU’s new CIO/Vice-President of IT, legislative updates, the nationwide FirstNet award to AT&T, new members for the Broadband Opportunity Council, and a conversation with CenturyLink about CAF II projects. (Item k.)
* BAT Fun Fact
* **Next Meeting**: BAT Meetings are the second Thursday of each month. Our next scheduled meeting is May 11th, 2017.
* Addendum

**Meeting Notes:**

1. **Mayor Knauss:** Mayor Knauss attended the Partners for Rural Washington (PRWA) meeting in Olympia with Governor Inslee. He spoke of the things he feels are important to rural Washington including cross-laminated timber, broadband, wildfire resiliency and forest management, education (career and technical), expansion of skill centers, recreation and tourism, and economic gardening.\*

\* *An approach to economic growth and development that emphasizes nurturing and cultivating local, second-stage companies (companies that have outgrown the start-up stage but have not grown to their full potential) by providing strategic information.*

PRWA is focused on what people in rural areas need, how they can be resourced, etc. The topic that came up at Mayor Knauss’s table was a discussion of the word “rural” and how it means different things to different people. Her table asked if the word could be re-defined closer. Commissioner McCart brought up that the Growth Management Act had a definition of rural as 100 people per square mile; Stevens County has 17 people per square mile. By that definition, 26 of the 39 Washington counties would be considered rural.

It is in its infancy so Mayor Knauss hopes that it won’t lose sight of what rural means. She did notice that discussions tended to go off on tangents/pet projects; 12-15 tables (of 8-10 people each) were asked to discuss topics of interest and only two tables brought up broadband.

She also noted that the broadband discussions did echo common complaints that CenturyLink isn’t willing to invest in updating their own infrastructure.

Mayor Knauss said she wasn't sure what the overall goal was. Attendees included the Federal Reserve, Department of Commerce, Will and Monica, the governor’s office, etc. One of the things that came out of it, though, was that the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) is putting on five small city connectors around the state and Chewelah will be one such site on May 9th. TEDD should come since the Department of Commerce will there.

Debra mentioned that the PRWA held a meeting in Ellensburg about two years ago about rural issues and it would be good if groups don’t duplicate issues. Monica is part of the PRWA. She noted that the group is trying to figure out how to best support rural Washington with community and economic development, and part of what their recent meeting was about was going out to find out who is already doing things and not duplicating/replicating efforts. There is certainly a strong need for someone to help facilitate communication, coordination, and connecting people — helping communities help themselves.

Mayor Knauss and the mayor of Long Beach co-chair the Small Cities Advisory Committee (for cities with population under 5,000) for the Association of Washington Cities. She was frustrated that surrounding cities (Colville, Kettle Falls, etc.) don’t seem to want to come and voice their needs when an opportunity like the May 9th event comes up.

1. **Amanda Six**: The library will not be pursuing the White Space Project Grant. The grant is federally funded for the intention of expanding broadband; it wasn’t specifically for rural areas but appeared at first glance to be an ideal application for them. An initial thought was that the libraries could beam their high speed internet via microwave to other areas. An example would be to have wifi in the Chewelah city park for the Farmers’ Market, community events, or even any time. The Stevens County application was even accepted in the first stage but then it was realized that the E-Rate K-20-funded guidelines prohibit beaming the signal outside of the library. A high percentage of rural libraries are not eligible because of that restriction. In summary, it probably seemed like a good idea when the grant verbiage was drafted but was probably put together without connecting the dots with E-Rate funding. There could be communities who could get the grant because they don’t get E-Rate funding, but those are generally wealthy communities. (E-Rate funding is based on the percentage of children in a community who are on the reduced/free lunch program.) Bryan Raines from Senator Cantwell’s office will look into the grant since it seems to defeat its own purpose. Narda has done some work in the TV White Space arena. Amanda will send Bryan the particulars.
2. **Mark/Trevor**: Neither Mark nor Trevor were present to update about the speed test. Monica and Bert were on the April 4th conference call. In general there has been no progress on the speed mapping project. Later in the meeting Monica pointed out that the issue seems to be that we are running into situations that the developer has not run into with previous “big city” situations. Tests are timing out, giving weird results, and even strange locations.

Mark, Trevor, and Will were booked for a presentation at a conference in Spokane on the 20th.

[Note from Bert: I see that I didn’t distribute any notes after that conference call so I am appending them at the end of these minutes.]

1. **Mayor Knauss**: The **Next Century Cities** newsletter had an article about new Pew research which found significant support for municipal broadband networks (which we can’t yet do in WA). 70% of the public believes that local governments should be able to build their own broadband. It’s even non-partisan with 74% Democrats and 67% Republicans in agreement.

The other article of note was that 50 Senators signed a letter calling on the FCC to increase support for the Universal Service Fund (USF) for broadband, particularly in rural areas. Bryan expanded that the USF is collected by Telcos (it originated with telephone service); Narda has worked for the FCC and has helped draft legislation in the past.

USF page on the FCC website: <https://www.fcc.gov/general/universal-service>

1. **Charter/Spectrum update**: Mayor Knauss mentioned that she’d heard from Steven Gerber of Charter (Spectrum Internet) that they are laying fiber in Chewelah the first of April. They will be coming into Chewelah via Lincoln St. and will split when they get to Second St. with a branch going to the golf course where there are 170 homes. (Internet Express is also laying fiber to the golf course but they will be hooking into CenturyLInk’s DSL.) By the end of May CenturyLink expects to have 60 Mbps service in place. Mr. Gerber also said that students who get free/reduced lunches can get 30 Mbps service for $15 a month. Bert had recently looked into the program on behalf of Kettle Falls; it is not yet available there but expected soon. It allows the 30 Mbps speed, includes the modem, has no data cap, and there is no contract required. There are three ways to qualify: Being part of the school free or reduced lunch program, being part of the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) of the NSLP, or 65/older on Supplemental Security Income (SSI, which is not Social Security). The “gotcha” is that it is only for NEW subscribers — people who have not been a subscriber in the previous 60 days.

<https://www.spectrum.com/browse/content/spectrum-internet-assist.html>

Amanda added that CenturyLink had/has a similar program but the gotcha there was that there were so few qualifying households who lived in an area where the CenturyLInk service was available. There were a few in Kettle Falls who qualified; the KF Library partnered with Head Start and CenturyLink to provide devices and classes. Of about 20 families there were only two or three who had access to CenturyLink so it fell apart. <http://www.centurylink.com/home/internetbasics/>

1. **Kevin Jacka/Brandon Rainey**: The Mary Walker School District is struggling. They are with a hardline provider (STAR) which provides service through Spokane. Service is up and down; this is particularly vexing now since MWSD is undergoing state mandated testing. There may not be a way out of the contract (based on reliability issues) or if they would even have other options if they did. Amanda sympathized based on similar issues in Kettle Falls where it took CenturyLink 18 months to install what was contracted for— and it’s still not at the speed promised. K-20 was hoping to have a Gigabyte at all schools by 2020 and encouraged them to sign up for possible inclusion by next year, but the fact remains that the infrastructure does not exist to support it. NoaNet was providing internet and would be capable of that speed, but CenturyLink underbid them, resulting in the 18-month gap. Even Ecliptixnet doesn’t have the power that is needed.

This disconnect between goals and actual availability underscores the dilemma of rural schools like Mary Walker. Ione and Metaline seem to be in a unique position since they are sitting on the PUD line.

1. **Bert/Monica**: The NTIA/Broadband USA (Department of Commerce) CCI Initiative project has been in the works (thanks to Monica, Will Saunders, Karen Perry, and others) for about six months. The tool they are creating is an internet-based self-assessment where each participant assesses how “we” are doing on many different aspects of broadband availability and adoption in the area. A sample report was sent out on April 12th to show what the data results should look like — our input will drive the graphs and charts. This is a Beta project being done in several rural areas; once the Beta stage is complete the developers will tweak the product and continue on. The exciting thing is that the results will be actual data/actual information as opposed to the information provided by Telcos to the FCC. We’re on track to kick off (online) by May 18th and we are currently recruiting participants. Because it is a Beta project we will be getting extra assistance from the designers — information like which ISPs say they are operating in which areas, census data, etc. The resulting report will help us to find solutions instead of just discovering more problems. It will also allow us all to have the same story when talking with providers, look for grants, etc.

This tool also has some good “best practices” information on speaking with ISPs, so Monica and Debra decided to push back meeting with providers until we can use that information to our advantage.

Watch for requests for participation and information!

1. Debra brought up the question of “Dig Once” now that the county has so many weather-related road issues. Does the county build in the cost of fiber or even just conduit into a project? The short answer is NO, that it becomes a patchwork of disconnected conduit. An example was the Aladdin project where there were disconnected/isolated segments. It was a seven year, non-continuous project. In Chewelah the NE Washington Health Department wanted fiber under the road when the road construction was in process; the city told them they could have it if they paid for it — and they did. Amanda spoke to Dig Once/Complete Streets as part of the Colville Hawthorne St. rebuild but Commissioner McCart said it was because they had sidewalks and curbs. Debra asked if there was some sensibility to thinking of this in the big picture of planning, perhaps in the permitting process? In ditches vs under a road? Under new bridges? Mayor Knauss noted that fiber is going to the golf course but it will be on the poles in the city of Chewelah. And Dig Once in Chewelah means notifying all agencies (phone, water, etc.) when work is planned.

It was also noted that density can be a factor, and that developers of subdivisions will sometimes see the advantage of paying for conduit/access themselves, but it’s up to the developer. The county does not require them to install it but then again we don’t necessarily have the broadband to offer. (Chicken/egg dilemma)

The Broadband Opportunities Council (BBOC) report had a section that said all federal agencies were expected to think about whether there is a broadband component to any project (housing, rural development, etc.). If there is something happening in Stevens County do we automatically connect the dots to include broadband?

1. Bert handed out postcards from the Kettle Falls High School robotics team’s outreach project; the girls on the team do an annual photoshoot. They share their message and the posters/postcards with other classes, schools, organizations, and businesses to try to get younger students — and especially girls — interested in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) fields. The postcards provide a great visual (with some information on the back) about why Bert fights for broadband. Many students do not have broadband at home or their family shares a data-limited cell phone account for access. Even library access is difficult when a student lives in Orient or Daisy, miles from the nearest branch. Bryan commented that the poster from last years’s photo shoot hangs in their conference room in Senator Cantwell’s Spokane office and it generates lots of comments. Bryan will even get a photo of the Senator with the poster the next time she’s in town so the team can add it to their portfolio.
2. **Governor’s Summit**: Debra and Monica are doing a statewide conference on career-connected learning on May 31st at TEDD. It was going to be a one day summit in Tacoma, but Debra and Monica have managed to expand it to 27 sites across the state. There will probably be 375 people at Microsoft but 600-700 across the state so it is a chance for rural voices to be heard. The remote sites will be able to connect to watch some of the panel discussions and videos.There will be also facilitated local discussions about issues around education/career-connected learning where the results will be fed back later. There will be a mechanism to make sure people understand what rural really is.

Debra is eager to get businesses and schools to attend the local event. It’s not directly broadband but it’s all part of the big picture. The Rural Alliance that Kevin and Brandon are involved in will probably be interested. Amanda offered assistance to Debra, too.

Mayor Knauss added that she met John Snyder, the policy adviser in the governor’s office for outdoor recreation and economic development. Bryan mentioned that John Snyder is a former Spokane city council member. Mr. Snyder mentioned to Mayor Knauss that he took the Gold Line\* with his bicycle, getting on and off for rides. (Debra made note to get a bike map to him!)

*\*Gold Line is a bus service with twice daily round trips from Kettle Falls to Spokane with ten stops in between.*

* There will be another Pathways to Prosperity Conference in the fall in the same model but focused on any kind of workforce development that the community will want to address.
1. Monica had a variety of items to share:
* Monica met with WSU’s new CIO/Vice-President of IT (from Wisconsin, who has a good history with broadband). He is in charge of all of WSU’s internet on campuses but he’s also concerned with it out to the County/Extension level. The WSU network is fragmented and he’d like to see it on one network. The rural broadband problem became apparent to him rather quickly.
* There are lots of bills and legislative activity but there’s not a lot of agreement or progress. Because of this, a small, newly-formed group (Monica is a member) is trying to look from a policy standpoint of where we should be headed, what will our statewide policy be, what should our goals be, what has already be attempted/accomplished, etc. There have only been two conversations so far.
* In legislative news, there are still two pots of bills that are still alive. One is on pole attachments, 5G, and mini-cell sites. That bill is still alive but the industry itself is still not in agreement. The other issue is the port bill (HB 1702 by Mary Dye) where ports are still hoping to eventually do retail broadband. There seems to be more support for ports providing internet that there was for PUDs.
* The Broadband Opportunity Council (BBOC) members have been announced. There are two people from the west. Valerie Fast Horse is the Director of Information Technology for the Couer d’Alene Tribe; Monica has worked with her. Kelleigh Cole (Director of the Utah Broadband Outreach Center in the Governor’s Office of Economic Development) is also on the BBOC. Monica is encouraged by having a couple of advocates on the BBOC.

<https://www.ntia.doc.gov/category/broadband-opportunity-council>

* The First Net (a public safety data communication network) award has gone to AT&T but another vendor is protesting the process. A draft of each state’s plan would be expected within about six months of the award; the vendor provides the plan to to governor for his decision. Shelley Westall is WA state’s First Net contact and she is very interested in being able to share the draft, get input from interested parties, and then provide that input as part of the governor’s review process.
* CenturyLink and CAF (Connect America Funds): A short conversation with Ty LeMaster yielded the information that (in Stevens County) anything put into the request for CAF II that the buildout is not planned until 2018. It appears we have time for input to that and Ty seems receptive. Mayor Knauss noted that Ty told her there were 64 projects in Stevens County with 32 in Chewelah — the projects had been defined. Amanda noted that the presentation at the Tech Expo in November 2016 indicated that the projects were set. The Speed Map and other information will be very helpful here in perhaps helping with priorities.

**BAT Fun Fact for the Month**: April Fools, 2015. Google introduced their dial-up mode to “give people an opportunity to pause and take care of the little things—like making a cup of coffee, taking a bathroom break or playing with the dog.”

<https://fiber.googleblog.com/2015/03/introducing-dial-up-mode.html>

**Next Meeting**: BAT Meetings are held the second Thursday of each month. Our next scheduled meeting is May 11th, 2017.

**ADDENDUM**

Bert’s notes from the April 4th conference call about mapping

Present: Monica, Will, Trevor, Chris (OTI), Mark, Bert

Chris is finishing up some code that will make the software easier to use. He expects to be ready for final testing and colleague review next week. He’ll export the existing data, integrate the new code, then import the data. He’ll also work with Trevor and Will.

Will is giving a presentation to Association of County and City Information Systems (ACCIS) Spring Conference in Spokane on April 20th where he’d like to demo the mapping software — and it should be ready by then. Mark will be attending the conference every day and Trevor will attend on demo day.

Monica asked if there was anything else Chris needed from the team. Chris answered only if there was something new to be added to the “form” page the user fills out.

It was discussed to add a link to a page where we discuss why the project is being undertaken and an FAQ, especially in light of the problems encountered by satellite customers. We’ll need a URL set aside for that. Perhaps on the county website? WSU?

Perhaps an email link for those who can’t complete the test? If so, we’ll need an email address.

Mark will draft some text that can be used at ACCIS. Bert offered to help edit it with the thought of using it for our launch/end users, too.

Will asked Chris if he’s got any new projects. Chris is in conversations with Clearwater County, ID. He’s speaking with Chris St. Germaine, Clearwater (ID) EDC about a mapping project. This will allow us to have another rural area to compare notes with once we both are up and running. Chris St. Germaine is also developing a broadband basics video she is happy to share with our team.

Chris also mentioned OTI's new data visualization: <https://viz.measurementlab.net/>

It was also discussed that it will be interesting at ACCIS if they can show a comparison of ISP claimed-coverage maps with actual data.

Bert ended with an FYI that when she tried running the speed test this morning on her Hughes account that (a) it couldn’t finish, and (b) it indicated she was on Cane Gully Rd., undefined city, South Carolina.