

# Ohio Broadband Council



## MEETING MINUTES:

From the meeting June 2, 2008

**Attendees:** Katrina Flory, Executive Director; Stan Ahalt, Co-Chair; Steve Edmonson, Co-Chair; Harry Andrist, Mark Ansboury, Connie Browning, Steve Burigana, Norman Chagnon, Jeffrey Clouse, Shawn Clemmons, Fred Deel, Ronnie Fergus, Representative Jennifer Garrison, Stephen Hedges, Chris Henney, Bruce Hotte, Ed Kozelek, Gary Little, Rob Luikart, Brian Phillips, Alan Shellhause, Congressman Zack Space, Robert Stuart, John Wanchick, and LaMar Wyse

Handouts: (1) Agenda; (2) presentation slides; (3) Connect Ohio 1<sup>st</sup> quarter report; (4) NGA Issue Brief and Press Release on State Efforts to Expand Broadband Access.

### I. OPENING

Katrina Flory welcomed the Council members to the meeting and reviewed the handouts and meeting agenda. Co-Chair Stan Ahalt thanked everyone for their attendance and commitment to furthering broadband accessibility in Ohio. He then called the meeting to order.

### II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Flory performed the roll call.

### III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Flory indicated that she had not received any corrections or additions to the March 3 meeting minutes. The Council did not offer any corrections or additions at this time.

<p><b>Motion:</b> To approve the March 3 meeting minutes as written.</p>	<p>Steve Edmonson moved to accept the meeting minutes as written. LaMar Wyse seconds the motion. None opposed. Motion passed.</p>
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### IV. REPORTS and ADMINISTRATIVE

**A.** Subcommittee status – Ms. Flory provided an overview of the subcommittees and their status. This included the chair of the committee, previous meeting date and upcoming meeting dates. She indicated that the formation of the Strategic Planning and Migration subcommittees were approved at the March 3 meeting and

since then she had been working with the respective chairs to kickoff their efforts in July.

- B.** Policy Subcommittee Report – Steve Burigana stated that the subcommittee has met two times since the March meeting. He thanked the subcommittee and Katrina Flory for their participation. One of the ongoing activities the subcommittee performs is reviewing other states as well as Connect Ohio to see how they have defined broadband. The subcommittee met with Connect Ohio on May 5<sup>th</sup> to gain clarity on how to set expectations going forward. Future agenda topics include:

- Discussion of affordability
- Review Iowa broadband expansion for possible best practices
- Research business needs as relates to broadband services
- Research other state’s tax incentives to providers to build out.

Mr. Burigana also noted that moving forward the Policy Subcommittee and Outreach Subcommittee would be working together to ensure that all are making informed decisions and can direct the OBC to fulfill the mission of the Executive Order.

- C.** Outreach Subcommittee Report – Fred Deel thanked Katrina Flory and began to provide a recap of the pilot projects. Mr. Deel noted that these projects are all based on public-private partnerships and excellent examples of what we can accomplish with the provider community. The Lancaster pilot project objective is to become the aggregation point for City, County and State broadband traffic as well as help distribute service to underserved areas of the county. Currently the Outreach Subcommittee is working with the vendors to achieve a better understanding of technology availability.

Ed Kozelek asked how “underserved” was defined in this instance. Chris Chapman indicated that the definition will become clear with the Connect Ohio mapping effort. In this specific community there was a wireless provider that was bought out and did not continue to provide the same level of service. Those customers became underserved or even non-served.

The Galion Pilot Project objective is to create jobs through increased availability of competitively priced broadband service. The City plans to team with the local ISP to manage an existing fiber network to deliver service to area residents, businesses, hospitals, City, County and State entities. The Galion Pilot Project has been working with vendor community to better understand technology availability. A draft of the Memorandum of Agreement has been provided to the City for input and review.

The Rio Grande Pilot Project has connectivity to OSCnet services and wants to support Gallia Count’s strategy to leverage that connection by providing last-mile distribution through existing county-owned fiber lines. AT&T and the State have reached a tentative agreement on a plan to extend OPTEMAN service to the area. The university continues to agree to invest the monthly savings into area

broadband distribution. Details such as service to the industrial park still need to be worked out.

Hocking, Perry and Vinton Counties – The proposal calls for the creation of a CAP with fiber optic distribution to Hocking College, the Community Hospital and the Industrial Park. The plan also proposes wireless distribution of service to the bordering counties of Perry and Vinton using the MARCS towers as relay towers. A meeting with the representatives of those three counties has been scheduled. It's a positive proposal and a multi-county effort. Hopefully there will be more information at the next meeting.

- D. Communication statistics – Ms. Flory reviewed the communications data for the quarter. Since the March meeting we have had inquires from Athens, Knox, Franklin and Muskingum counties about residential broadband availability. These inquires are communicated to Connect Ohio to add to their data.
- E. National Perspective – Ms. Flory provided an overview of recent activity at the federal level. She indicated that links had been sent to OBC members for FCC Commissioner Tate's speech, National Governor's Association issue brief and Information Technology Innovation Foundation white paper. We know Broadband is a focus for Ohio but these pieces show broadband is a focus across the nation and internationally. Specifically, FCC Commissioner Tate praised the public/private partnership model in her May remarks as successful in furthering broadband access; NGA examined strategies states are using to encourage/incent providers to expand broadband svc to unserved areas including: establishment of public/private task forces, Tax incentives to encourage investment, mapping current availability, and engaging at the local level; IT Innovation Foundation crafted recommendations to encourage development of broadband infrastructure including: enactment of favorable tax policies to encourage investment in broadband networks such as exempting broadband services from fed, state and local tax, funding a national program to support Connect Ohio like programs, promoting widespread use of a national mapping system that would track location, speed and price of broadband (user-generated), and support of applications – include more public content on line, supporting telemedicine and on line learning.

Congressman Space provided an update on the Farm Bill. The Connect and Nation and provisions for streamlining the USDA grant process were stripped from the bill. The Connect the Nation piece may reappear in a bill related to the Energy/Commerce committee. Overall, Congressman Space indicated that there was an attitude of awakening to the importance of broadband among his colleagues. These were aggressive efforts to address access issues and he does not see them going away.

- F. Operational Update - Pankaj Shah provided an Operational Update for the network including that 8 out of 9 gigabit aggregation points operational. Akron had some problems that are being addressed. BBO has utilized multi-vendor environment for

deployment; designed to provide advanced services (Ethernet and Packet). Network aggregation points will reduce the cost of broadband service for end users.

- G. Broadband Funding – Ms. Flory reviewed some recent developments in broadband related funding to address inquiries that she had received from Council members. The Capital Bill included proposed \$9M for OIT and OSC necessary for optical layer upgrades. The recent Economic Stimulus Plan included permissive language to allow the Public Works Commission to fund broadband related projects. This is a first for the Public Works. The language further directs them to work with Connect Ohio to establish rules for this purpose. It is exciting that broadband was recognized as infrastructure such as roads, bridges and sewers. There was also the question of the PUCO/Verizon order that was issued shortly after our last meeting. Verizon was ordered to work with Connect Ohio to support a broadband deployment project for \$250,000 in one or more underserved areas in Ohio. Todd Colquitt from Verizon will attend the July 17 combined Policy/Outreach Subcommittee meeting to discuss.
  
- H. Connect Ohio - Brent Legg spoke about Connect Ohio recent projects. On June 27<sup>th</sup> Connect Ohio will release its first version of inventory Broadband maps. Connect Ohio commenced execution of a custom marketing and communications strategy in December of 2007 with the successful launch of the Connect Ohio program. Components of this coordinated strategy began several months in advance of Connect Ohio launch and continue through this reporting. On June 27<sup>th</sup> Connect will begin the first distribution of computers for the “No Child Left Offline” program. The actual distribution of computers will take place in July.

**V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Waived

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

Waived

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

<p><b>Motion:</b> To adjourn the June 2 meeting.</p>	<p>Fred Deel moved to adjourn the meeting. Stan Ahalt seconds the motion. None opposed. Motion passed.</p>
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