

Oregon Telecommunications Coordinating Council
Minutes
January 22, 2009

Attendees:

Council Members: John Irwin, Link Shadley, Pam Berrian, Cathy Britain, Ed Parker, Curt Pederson, Phil Barker representing Marlyn Schafer, Michael Weidman, Art Hill, and Onno Husing.

Staff: Chris Tamarin of the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department

Others: Lonny Macy of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and Ginny Lang of Qwest.

Public Input:

Ten Digit Dialing - 503/971 NPA overlay

Ginny Lang of Qwest provided an update on a ten digit dialing issue created by the 503/971 NPA overlay implementation in Oregon. Ed Parker had expressed concern about the way Qwest has implemented ten digit dialing in the past—by making it “twenty-one digit dialing” for customers who follow their long term habits of dialing a “1” in front of the area code or NPA. Ed explained that for customers who make that “mistake” Qwest gives them a voice recording saying dial again without the “1.” Every time this occurs, it results in twenty-one digit dialing for the customer. Ed noted that most wireless carriers complete the eleven digit call without an error message, which reinforces the customer habit of dialing eleven digits in cases where ten would be sufficient. Ed also noted that people understand that dialing “1” before the number might result in long distance charges, but don’t always know which calls are toll calls and which are non-toll Extended Area Service (EAS) calls when dialing ten digits.

Ginny reported that in Qwest’s experience, in all the area code changes implemented in the fourteen Qwest states, is that dialing the “1” as a toll indicator is helpful to customers who otherwise may not know when they are being billed for a long distance call or when it is local. That includes customers who have measured EAS who would be unaware of when they were being billed toll charges. Ginny noted that while it may be an annoyance for the first few days and some may have to redial a number, it doesn’t take long for customer’s to get used to it. She believes that putting a different process in place for this project would require additional customer education and would cause more confusion and frustration for customers not knowing if they were being billed for long distance calls than the nuisance factor of getting used to the new dialing pattern. Ginny added that it is also a significant technical issue for Qwest, as it would require complex translations in all the Central Office switches, which in Oregon are from multiple manufacturers and running different generic versions of software.

Ed responded that it is his observation that the adjustment period is more that a few days. He agrees that it would not be good to automatically process ten digit calls that would

incur long distance charges, but it would not be a problem for customers dialing eleven digits and being pleasantly surprised by no resulting toll charges. If the switch is smart enough to know when it needs ten or eleven digits and switch to a recording, it should be able to process the calls appropriately. Ed noted that other telephone companies have been able to accommodate this approach.

Ginny responded that in the 541 Area Code, Qwest and Malheur Bell have a total of 55 Central Office switches and that each switch would need to be evaluated for its specific generic software version and feature packages. Ginny will take the additional information provided back to the Qwest engineers. Ed thanked Ginny for the detailed information that she provided.

Economic Stimulus Package Discussion

Ginny Lang provided information on the Qwest proposal regarding federal broadband Stimulus funding that has been distributed to congressional delegations, to the President Elect's transition team, and now to the new administration. The Qwest proposal is to focus on unserved areas. John Irwin raised the issue of how we identify the unserved areas. Ginny believes that a list of unserved areas in Oregon could be compiled fairly quickly. Onno Husing raised the question as to how funds might be distributed and projects selected. Ginny noted that Oregon has the benefit of having been through the SB622 project implementation and has a model for project selecting and fund administration. Chris Tamarin reported that there has been discussion of many different distribution methods from tax credits to grants through federal agencies such as USDA, EDA, NTIA and distribution of federal block grants through state agencies. The development of the stimulus packages at federal, state and local levels will be monitored and opportunities to provide input will be taken.

New York State Interoperability Project

John Irwin reported that the state of New York announced that it has terminated a \$2 billion contract to build a statewide public-safety network. The initial network build-outs were considered to be "unsatisfactory and unacceptable" by the State.

Council Business:

Action Item

John Irwin moved that the November 20, 2008 minutes be approved as distributed. Onno Husing seconded the motion. The Council approved the minutes.

Nominations and election of Chair and Vice-Chair

John Irwin stepped down as Chair of ORTCC and Link Shadley stepped down as Vice-Chair of ORTCC at the end of 2008. Prospects for replacements in these two positions were discussed. John discussed duties, responsibilities and tasks associated with the Chair position.

Action Item

Michael Weidman moved that Onno Husing be unanimously elected Chair and that Art Hill be unanimously elected Vice-Chair of ORTCC for 2009. The Council unanimously elected Onno Chair and Art Vice-Chair.

Onno thanked John Irwin, again, for his years of leadership and for the amazing job he has done and the countless hours of work he has contributed in conducting research and drafting the Council's concept papers and reports. Onno noted that he will need the active support of all the other council members to even begin to fill John's shoes.

Cathy Britain observed that ORTCC will be at the end of its current life cycle in 2009 and that the Council needs to be re-energized if it is to continue to make contributions to the state. John agreed that 2009 will be a year of transition. He noted that over the past eight years a considerable community of interest network has been established around ORTCC. At the same time, the landscape that existed in 2001 has dramatically shifted. Though we haven't solved all the supply issues, the discussion has shifted toward the demand side of the equation. Qwest reports that it has broadband services available to 85% of its Oregon subscribers, but what is the take rate? How are people taking advantage of broadband to enhance their lives? John believes that there is no shortage of work for the Council to do. He noted that it will be interesting to see if the Legislature extends the life of ORTCC. Link added that the need for the council as a sounding board and as a forum for different interests from around the state to come together to discuss telecommunications issues goes on, whether or not ORTCC sunsets in January 2010.

Extension Bill – HB 2083

Cathy Britain reported that HB 2083 has been assigned to the House Committee on Sustainability and Economic Development. This is a new committee made up of legislators that have not been exposed to the ORTCC. ORTCC needs to have a well-conceived, well-articulated message for this Committee. Cathy asked for contributions to develop that message and talking points for the upcoming hearings. John requested that each council member submit a set of talking points within seven days.

<http://landru.leg.state.or.us/09reg/measpdf/hb2000.dir/hb2083.intro.pdf>

It was suggested that feedback and letters of support or non-support of the ORTCC be requested from around the state. They could be submitted to ORTCC c/o Chris Tamarin or directly submitted to the House Committee.

Policy Recommendation – HJR 6

Cathy Britain reported that this resolution has been assigned to the House Committee on Sustainability and Economic Development and to the Rules Committee. John requested that each council member submit a set of talking points within seven days.

<http://landru.leg.state.or.us/09reg/measpdf/hjr1.dir/hjr0006.intro.pdf>

Telemedicine Reimbursement Bill – SB 24

Cathy Britain reported that this resolution has been assigned to the Senate Health Care and Veterans' Affairs Committee. Cathy indicated that information sessions for lobbyists are being planned. A thirty-minute education session is also planned for a future Senate Committee meeting now scheduled for February 19th. Cathy will send out a copy of the talking points for reference.

<http://landru.leg.state.or.us/09reg/measpdf/sb0001.dir/sb0024.intro.pdf>

Other telecommunications related Bills

John Irwin noted that there are other telecommunications related Bills to follow:

HB 2096 - Prohibits telecommunications utility or competitive telecommunications provider from entering into exclusive agreement to provide local exchange telecommunications service in certain circumstances. Referred to House Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Communities Committee.

<http://landru.leg.state.or.us/09reg/measpdf/hb2000.dir/hb2096.intro.pdf>

HB 2097 - Provides that Public Utility Commission may exempt telecommunications utility, cooperative corporation or municipality from carrier of last resort obligations if commission finds that other telecommunication utility or competitive telecommunications provider has entered into exclusive agreement to provide local exchange telecommunications service to four or more residences within territory allocated to telecommunications utility, cooperative corporation or municipality. Referred to House Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Communities Committee.

<http://landru.leg.state.or.us/09reg/measpdf/hb2000.dir/hb2097.intro.pdf>

HB 2253 - Requires consumer-owned utilities, telecommunications cooperatives and cable operators to pay to Public Utility Commission a fee in an amount to be determined annually in order to defray the expenses of hearings and oversight related to safety and reliability of consumer-owned utilities, telecommunications cooperatives and cable operators. Specifies allowable purposes for commission's expenditure of fees paid. Referred to House Sustainability and Economic Development Committee.

<http://landru.leg.state.or.us/09reg/measpdf/hb2200.dir/hb2253.intro.pdf>

Reports

Committee Chair and Council Member Reports

Oregon Health Network: Chris Tamarin reported that the Oregon Health Network Board of Directors is meeting this afternoon in Portland. It is expected that an Executive Director will be on the job by the beginning of February. He reported that RFP#1 has been issued, responses received, winning proposals selected and contract negotiations with service providers are in process. A 2009 Marketing Plan is being developed. RFP#2 has been prepared and submitted to the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) for approval. Chris indicated that RFP #2 will increase the number of end-user locations with access to the Oregon Health Network to over 300 sites. A 2009

Marketing Plan is being developed to continue to add more participants. Ed Parker added that the OHN Technology Committee recently had a very productive meeting with all the RFP#1 selected vendors. Art Hill added that efforts are also continuing to raise matching funds for services as well as funding for OHN administration.

Oregon CoastNet: Onno Husing and Ed Parker reported that the Lincoln County Telecommunications Committee is working on getting cell phone services deployed in unserved areas of the county as well as addressing Telco network problems that resulted in a service outage on the coast in December.

Oregon Coastal Zone Management Association: Onno Husing reported that OCZMA participated in putting on the second meeting of the Oregon Rural Congress last December 5th in Coos Bay. Telecommunications continues to be an important area of interest for the Rural Congress. Onno is also interested in launching a broadband availability-mapping project. Onno reported that he also met recently with the Gorge Technology Alliance regarding the development of a branding workshop to be held on the coast.

Gorge Teleconsortium: Link Shadley reported that despite conventional wisdom, mid-range (2.5 GHz) radio waves follow water and river canyons. The Teleconsortium was able to “shoot-up” Deschutes Canyon to reach unserved locations in Sherman County that could not even get satellite. Link added in support of cellular service efforts in Lincoln County, that he believes that the Siletz Tribe owns a radio tower connected by fiber.

Meeting Schedule:

The next council meeting will be on Thursday, February 26, 2009 in the Mt. Neahkahnne Conference Room, 1225 Ferry Street SE, Salem, Oregon 97301. Meeting information will be updated and posted on the Council website at www.ortcc.org.

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