

Oregon Telecommunications Coordinating Council
Minutes
September 27, 2007

Attendees:

Council Members: John Irwin, Rob Myers, Ed Parker, Jon Dolan representing Curt Pederson, Brant Wolf, Michael Weidman, Paul Zastrow, Art Hill, Kim Hoffman and Joe Franell.

[Onno Husing represented the Council at a concurrent meeting
concerning the Oregon Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan]

Staff: Chris Tamarin of the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department and Eric Schmidt of the Association of Oregon Counties

Others: Don Westlight of Oregon Health and Science University

Remote videoconference sites included Pendleton and Medford.

Public Input

Eric Schmidt reported that the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA) is meeting in Portland October 2-6, 2007. Information may be found at www.natoa.org.

Old Business:

John Irwin reported that the June 28, 2007 minutes were approved as distributed through a vote conducted by e-mail since the Council did not meet in July or August. The Council approved the minutes.

John Irwin reviewed the mandate and mission of the Council in preparation for determining the Council's 2008 study agenda. The Council's mission and legislative directives may be viewed on the website at www.ortcc.org. John invited input from the Council members on plans for 2008.

Presentation:

John Irwin welcomed Don Westlight of the Oregon Health and Science University and the Northwest Access Exchange (NWAX).

Don made a presentation to the Council regarding public safety communications planning and needs in Oregon. He is concerned about the price tag associated with the Oregon Wireless Interoperability Network (OWIN) proposal. Don contacted and met with Mike Zanon to research the issue. He learned that the State Interoperability Executive Council is carrying out the directives of HB 2101. Don's concern is with spending over \$600

million to do what HB2101 requires. He feels that that is limited in scope given the cost and that there is the potential to do much more for that level of expenditure.

Don's suggestion is that the legislative directives in HB 2101 need to be reviewed and reconsidered. Don is working on an open letter to the Governor and the Legislature to raise some concerns.

1. If the state is going to invest this much in a new telecommunications infrastructure, it needs to have a broadband component
2. The network needs to be scalable and open to new technologies and applications
3. The costs need to be considered relative to the benefits and capabilities of the network that is built
4. Opportunities to share the cost need to be considered
5. Opportunities for the new network to serve a wider range of users needs to be considered
6. A "pilot project" approach to explore different technology solutions should be considered
7. The current OWIN "all-radio" design appears to have very limited bandwidth for data
8. Different ownership models for the network need to be considered
9. Establishing a new state agency for the project needs to be reconsidered

John Irwin noted that the Don hit on many of the same ideas presented in the Council's report, "Public Safety Telecommunications Legislation Guidelines for Oregon Policy Makers" <http://ortcc.org/PDF/PublicSafetyTelecommunicationsGuidelines.pdf>.

Ed Parker said that Don did an excellent job of articulating issues of concern and pointed the way to a course of action; draft new legislation for the February 2008 session that addresses the limitations of the current legislative charter. Ed would like to see more collaboration with local city and county public safety and health care organizations in the process.

Michael Weidman offered that the Council might review the open letter, when it is available, and consider endorsing the letter.

Don indicated that he would like to offer specific technical recommendations for consideration in addition to raising the general issues. He noted that he is not interested in derailing the interoperability effort, but wants to contribute to developing an effective solution that can be funded.

Eric Schmidt noted that the legislature directed that there be a review of the OWIN plan during the interim, and that a revised plan be presented to the legislature in 2008.

Brant Wolf noted that it is important to share and review proposals with Mike Zanon, the OWIN team, and SIEC. Don agreed and indicated that he plans to continue his dialogue with Mike.

John asked if there has been sufficient participation of telecommunications private sector service providers. Brant observed that given the current charter, there has been limited interest and involvement by the telephone companies. Brant agreed with the approach that revisions to the charter should be considered, but that the OWIN team should be involved in any such effort. Ed Parker agreed that any alternative solutions and strategies pursued need to be worked cooperatively.

Paul Zastrow observed that the current charter and the resulting network design have also been responsible for the high cost of the project. Michael Weidman offered that existing terrestrial networks can be a part of the solution.

John observed that the public discussion of these issues has had a significant impact on the process over the past year. The Council looks forward to seeing Don's open letter.

It was also noted that Onno Husing is representing the Council this morning at an Oregon Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan meeting in Salem.

Council Business:

2008 Agenda

John Irwin invited recommendations for the Council's 2008 agenda for discussion in the October meeting.

Distance Education

Ed Parker observed that the Council has an opportunity to more directly address distance education issues in the state. He noted that there is a major policy issue to be considered: the approval of virtual charter schools by the Oregon Department of Education. He recommended that the Council consider this issue.

Art Hill indicated that we should be careful to distinguish between content and delivery. ORTCC has primarily focused on telecommunications infrastructure and delivery systems. Charter schools and distance education represent content transmitted over these delivery systems. Art also thinks that we need to distinguish between K-12 and post secondary programs. John agreed that there are many facets to the topic; technology, people, organization, funding, accessibility, etc. John believes that the Council should study the topic to understand it. Jon Dolan agreed that the focus of ORTCC around this issue should be on delivery and access, rather than content. Art Hill added that important issues remain for Oregon's rural schools.

Internet Forest

Ed Parker recommended that the Internet Forest Initiative be included in the 2008 agenda.

Oregon Health Network:

Kim Hoffman reported that the Oregon Health Network application to the Rural Healthcare Pilot Program is pending before the Federal Communications Commission. The Leadership group is working on Oregon Health Network organization and project planning while it awaits an announcement from the FCC. A leadership meeting is being planned in Newport on October 24th in conjunction with the Oregon Connections Telecommunications Conference. Information on the FCC program and the submitted application may be found at the Telehealth Alliance of Oregon website: www.ortelehealth.org.

Telehealth Alliance of Oregon (TAO)

Kim Hoffman reported that TAO has scheduled its annual meeting for November 1st. It will include a forum for those interested in crafting a telemedicine reimbursement bill for the 2009 legislative session, a membership meeting, a demonstration of telehealth equipment and programs featuring the Peace Health/OHSU PICU program - In Touch Robot - PolyCom High Definition and Videoconferencing Equipment. Information on the meeting may be found at www.ortelehealth.org.

Legislative Committee Report

John Irwin reported that the Legislative Committee is working on a summary of outcomes from the 2007 session and a preview of the upcoming 2008 session.

Oregon Connections Telecommunications Conference

Chris Tamarin reported that the Oregon Connections Telecommunications Conference is scheduled for Thursday and Friday, October 25th and 26th, in Newport at the Best Western Agate Beach Inn and Conference Center.

The Keynote Speaker will be Morgan O'Brien, co-founder of Nextel and co-founder of Cyren Call Communications. O'Brien served as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Nextel until its merger with Sprint Corporation in 2005. Cyren Call is a new venture seeking to create a nationwide broadband network for public safety communications and Morgan was one of the key proponents of establishing a nationwide public safety frequency band.

Also speaking at the event:

Jeff Johnson of the Oregon State Interoperability Executive Council,
John Powell, Chair, California Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee,
Joe O'Leary, Public Safety Policy Advisor to the Governor
Mary Beth Henry, President-Elect of the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA),
Thomas Buckley of the Federal Communications Commission and
Oregon Public Utility Commissioner Ray Baum.

Planned sessions will include speakers from industry, government, education and healthcare on the topics of WiMAX, e-commerce, telework, telehealth, distance education, fiber infrastructure projects, Telephone / Cable company network enhancements, metro wireless projects and state and federal regulation.

The 2007 Conference will also be honoring individuals and organizations that have positively impacted telecommunications development in Oregon.

Conference information including the program and on-line registration is available at www.oregonconnections.info.

As a reminder, the October ORTCC meeting will also be held in Newport prior to the conference on Wednesday, October 24th, from 1:00 to 3:00 at the Agate Beach Inn.

ORTCC End of Year Report

John Irwin reported that he is working on the draft of a Council end of year report to the legislature. It will be presented for review and discussion in the October meeting.

Open Seats

John Irwin reported that he has made contact with the Governor's office regarding Council appointments that have been submitted and pending for an extended period of time.

John asked Art Hill to investigate the status of the Eastern Oregon Telecommunications Consortium.

Prospective tribal representatives were discussed.

OPUC Broadband Survey

John Irwin passed along recommendations from Pam Berrian that broad involvement should be sought in the preparation of the next Broadband Survey.

Association of Oregon Counties

Eric Schmidt reported that the Committee on Natural Resources in the House of Representatives unanimously passed H.R. 3058, Congressman DeFazio and Congresswoman Hooley's bill to essentially reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Program and restore funding. There is a hope to move this through the House to the Senate for passage this year.

CoastNet

Ed Parker reported that there are several projects underway and that they hope to have an announcement by the Oregon Connections Telecommunications Conference.

Frontier Telenet

Rob Myers reported that there is a lot of activity ongoing and that he hopes to have some announcements and update for the Council by the November meeting.

Oregon Coastal Zone Management Association (OCZMA):

In Onno Husing’s absence, Ed Parker reported that next week, OCZMA will be awarded a \$175,000 EDA grant for telecommunications strategic planning and wave energy outreach programs.

Other News:

Brant Wolf reported that there was a twelve hour network outage two weeks ago that affected independent telephone companies and service in the east side of the Willamette Valley from below Oregon City to the Albany area. The outage was due to a fiber cut and the lack of network redundancy that was supposed to be in place, but was not. The lack of redundancy was due to a network engineering design problem.

Brant Wolf also reported that discrepancies have been discovered in 911 reports to the Public Utility Commission and the Department of Revenue.

Michael Weidman reported that the LS Networks south coast Ring is being upgraded to a 10 Gbps system from the current 2.5 Gbps system. There are plans to complete a 2.5 Gbps north coast ring. There are also plans to extend high bandwidth services to Astoria. These projects will be completed in the next sixty to ninety days. He added that LSN has been successful in deploying a high-bit-rate service over copper achieving up to 40 Mbps on bonded copper.

Michael Weidman reported that he has assumed additional responsibilities as the General Manager of Eastern Oregon Telecom, a facility based competitive local exchange carrier (CLEC), in Hermiston and that EOT will also be deploying high-bit-rate service over copper.

Meeting Schedule:

The council will meet next on Wednesday, October 24th in Newport. The November 29 meeting will be held in the Teleconference Room (Basement) of the Public Service Building, 255 Capitol Street NE, in Salem. The Council does not plan to meet in December. Meeting information will be updated and posted on the Council website at www.ortcc.org.

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