

Oregon Telecommunications Coordinating Council  
Minutes 3/28/02

Location:

Teleconference Room (Basement)  
Public Service Building, 255 Capitol St, Salem, OR

Attendees:

Council: Karen Gertulla, Oregon Counties; Ron Schumacher, Oregon Health Sciences University; Cathy Britain, Eastern Oregon Telecommunications Consortium; Chair John Irwin, Southern Oregon Telecommunications & Technology Council; Brant Wolf, Oregon Telecommunications Association; Ed Parker, Connecting Oregon Communities Advisory Board; Cindy Weeldreyer, Fiber South Consortium; Andrew Spreadborough, Central Oregon Telecommunications Consortium; Sal Sahme, Oregon Tribes; and Kyle Engen, North Coast Telecommunications Consortium.

Staff: Pat McLarney, Chris Tamarin and Cheryl Gropp, Oregon Economic and Community Development Department; Milo Mecham, Lane Council of Governments; Phil Krug, Department of Administrative Services; and Dan Stark, Eastern Oregon Telecommunications Consortium.

Others: Shelly Jensen, Verizon; Frank Miller, Oregon Trail; and Lisa Breckenbridge, Umatilla Tribes.

I. Chair John Irwin convened the Oregon Telecommunications Coordinating Council meeting, 9:00 AM. He said that one of the recommendations of the final report to the legislature should include a continuance of the Council after the sunset date because the topics were too much to cover in just a year. He requested that:

1. More council members participate in the committees.
2. More dialogue on the issues should happen outside the meetings. He expressed his hope that more members would participate.
3. The Council be prepared to bring a package to the next legislative session similar to the Michigan State Telecommunications Legislation.

He praised the Council and stated that he had felt hesitant to advance his own ideas, but no longer feels that way. He also wants his voice heard.

Cathy Britain suggested that the Council draw on the consortia and other researchers to assist the committees in their contributions to the final report. She said that there will be several telecommunications bills this next legislative session and that the Council needs to create guidelines for the legislators to evaluate each of the bills.

Chair Irwin agreed with Ms. Britain and requested that the Council form a committee to work on the guidelines. The Guidelines Committee members include, Ed Parker, Chair John Irwin, Cindy Weeldreyer and Cathy Britain. They will report back at the next meeting. The Eastern Oregon Telecommunications Consortium will provide staff support.

II. There was no Public Input

III. Old Business

**Action:**

Ed Parker moved that the Council approve the February 28 minutes. Karen Gertulla seconded the motion. The Council unanimously approved the February 28 minutes.

Updates:

Telehealth Committee Meeting

The Telehealth Committee has scheduled a meeting on reimbursement issues, April 18, 1:00 – 4:00 PM at the Association of Oregon Counties conference room. Stakeholders have been invited to attend. If the Council or staff has other stakeholder information, please email their name, association and email address to Ron Schumacher. The Committee has a list of current stakeholders for everyone to see to avoid duplication. Cathy Britain reported that seventeen states have reimbursement legislation and they can use that as a template for their legislation. Ms. Britain announced that she will be attending a national conference on telemed leadership and will report back to the Council on what she learned.

Staff Budget (Attachment):

Milo Mecham reviewed the public meeting rules and cautioned that when a Committee meets either by face, email, or phone with the goal of making a policy decision, public notification is necessary. If the Committee meets on the basis of gathering information to present to the Council without making any recommendations, then a public notice is not required.

Mr. Mecham stated that Council members should contact him at least one week prior to meeting under the public meeting venue so that he could make arrangements for public notification.

Cathy Britain mentioned that the listserv is an excellent way to receive public input before the group meets to satisfy part of the public meeting requirements.

Milo Mecham reported on the redistribution of staff resources due to the shortage of funding. The use of the studio and video connections does incur a cost, but that cost is not billed to the Council because of the support of the Department of Administrative Services. Staff support is provided by the Department of Administrative Services, Oregon Economic & Community Development Department and the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC). The AOC needs to pay their staff to support the Council, therefore, Mr. Mecham needs to keep an account in order to ensure there is funding available.

Mr. Mecham discussed staff allocations, and some of the reallocations that will be made. The primary contact for the video scheduling is, Cheryl Gropp, OECDD. Mr. Mecham will continue to coordinate the meeting agenda and Committees should be self-supporting. He stated that some of this might change over time.

#### Items Requiring Council Action

1. Tax Incentive Revisions (Attachment) Staff will work with the telcos to help improve the SB229 language. Brant Wolf suggested that Ed Parker form a Committee on tax incentive revisions with Pat McLarney's assistance.
2. LADS Circuit Cost  
Ed Parker reported on his meeting with Dave Booth, Public Utility Commission (PUC). One solution to the tariff increase is to add LADS Circuits to basic phone services although it would most likely increase the Universal Service Fund. He recommended that Oregon Trail petition the PUC to include LADS Circuits as a component of basic service and that the Council will support Mr. Miller's efforts.

Mr. Miller noted that Qwest hasn't delivered product pricing since his November request. Pat McLarney will speak to Qwest regarding Mr. Miller's request. Mr. Miller said he is concerned for the rural communities being charged such an outrageous bill due to the tariff increase.

Cathy Britain said she is concerned about the Council's timeframe to finalize the report and suggested that another group work on the LADS issue. Discussion ensued about the need to devote resources to the problem now and that the final report should address the LADS issue with recommendations.

#### IV. Member Reports

Lisa Breckenridge, Umatilla Tribes.

Ms. Breckenridge reported that the Umatilla Tribal community has similar issues as the rural communities in Oregon. Many of the residents need affordable phone service before more advanced services can be added to their bills. She stated that the Tribe has begun to take advantage of Qwest's Lifeline Service that reduces the phone bill based on low-income eligibility. However, Qwest doesn't confirm when you will receive the discount which makes it difficult for a resident to plan a budget. She's also looking at the Washington state six-month plan to pay a phone bill. Ms. Breckenridge noted that one of the greater needs is telehealth. The community also needs to learn how to search for information on the Internet. The tribe needs technical education and assistance. She reported that the tribe has a NASA partnership that is evaluating river health and salmon.

Sal Sahme, Oregon Tribes (Attachment)

Mr. Sahme reported that Karen Quigley, Executive Director of the Legislative Commission on Indian Services, is the liaison for tribal communications.

Mr. Sahme reviewed the Tribes top three priorities; technology transfer, infrastructure development, and affordable cost of advanced services to reservations. He said that the greatest need at this time is technical assistance in evaluating the proposals to the tribe for broadband/wireless services.

Brant Wolf will look into the federal guidelines for the Lifeline application process.

## V. Stakeholder Reports

### Shelly Jensen/Verizon

Ms. Jensen reported on Verizon's rural deployment plans. She stated that Verizon uses radio signal and infrastructure to facilitate redundancy. Discussion ensued on public/private partnerships and the potential partnership of Verizon, Fiber South Consortium and CoastNet. Ms. Jensen discussed a failed attempt to partner with Qwest and noted that some incentives that would interest Verizon to invest in infrastructure would include business expansion and relocation plans.

Discussion ensued on what key incentives would further investment in infrastructure. Touch American, as an example, used a survey to stimulate awareness to create a market for DSL. Another incentive included ODS confirming their status as an anchor tenant.

### Frank Miller, Oregon Trail Internet (Attachment)

Mr. Miller discussed the consequences of SB622 on rural communities' ability to afford broadband. He stated that before the tariff increase, LADS circuits were the most cost effective method to deliver DSL. Mr. Miller has about 240 customers in Qwest territory that will have to pay the prohibitive cost or cancel their service. So far, Mr. Miller has received six terminations in one day. He stated that one possible solution is the co-location model, but he has no idea on the return on investment. He stated that his only hope is to double his user base, and that doesn't look remotely possible. He noted that Qwest did not warn customers about the impending tariff increase.

Ed Parker will assist Frank Miller in petitioning the PUC and if necessary, the Council will work on recommendations for legislative changes.

Cindy Weeldreyer and Brant Wolf were appointed to the Public/Private Issues Committee to assist in finding solutions to help make telecom services reliable and affordable.

## VI. Improved Deployment

### A. Overview of Topic

Milo Mecham reviewed the Needs and Issues Matrix. He stated that within the improved deployment area there are four categories the Council needs to consider; (1) technical, (2) economic, (3) social/cultural and, (4) government. Discussion ensued on how the Council should approach the technical side such as encouraging the communities to make their own decisions as to what technology fits best with their area and the Council giving some input to assist in the evaluation of specific types of technology.

Ron Schumacher said that the Committees should look at each of the categories and tie their ideas back to the report. Chair, John Irwin said that the four categories are a common thread throughout the framework and the Council needs to come forward with more specific proposals to improve broadband, identify problems and take the next step.

### B. Current levels of service

Pat McLarney distributed Link Shadley's maps to the Council.

#### C. Economic/Financial Issues

Milo Mecham stated that the Council had proposed only two recommendations, the tax credit and the LADS solution. He suggested that the Council outline specific steps on how to deploy broadband and that the Committees focus on specific issues to help in that endeavor.

The Council discussed several different approaches in tackling the final report. Chair Irwin mentioned the Michigan legislation as a possible template, but prefers a more holistic approach of integrating the pieces the Committees generate that will allow the Council to achieve their mission. He stated that the Council should review its' mission in coordinating statewide approaches and to facilitate partnerships and that this mission statement should help frame the report.

#### D. Social/Cultural Issues

The Council discussed the need to focus on the social/cultural aspects of telecom deployment. Many of the rural communities are struggling with marketing advanced services. The Council formed the Community Education Committee with Wes Hare, Kyle Engen, Sal Sahme, John Irwin and Karen Gertulla. They will focus on the educational piece of telecom and look at ways communities can evaluate options that would best meet their needs and ways they can market telecom services.

#### E. Government Opportunities

Phil Krug, Department of Administrative Services (DAS) reported on how to use state services to leverage better overall services. He stated that the SOEN contract is going to consolidate and converge technologies and networks within the state in the next few years and that will give DAS the opportunity to build infrastructure where it doesn't exist. Mr. Krug reported that DAS is working with Touch America and NoaNet and that Qwest will install a Point of Presence in Burns that will allow alternate paths. Mr. Krug stated that DAS is creating a more uniform set of standards for citizens to do business with the State and is ensuring that the web content is up to date so that citizens can access current information.

#### F. Other Deployment Issues:

The Council decided that another group with more time could better address the issue and agreed to insert a footnote in the report denoting that franchise agreements are a serious issue.

Link Shadley will address Rights of Way for the next Council meeting.

#### G. Barriers/Solutions

Ed Parker discussed the need for results based accountability through legislative changes. He stated that there is a need for an agency such as the PUC to monitor telecommunications in the State and that the agency should be mandated to assist in the deployment of telecommunications. He suggested that the Council continue a three-way

dialogue with PUC and the industry to create solutions. The Council agreed to make arrangements to meet with Joan Smith, PUC. Brant Wolf and Ed Parker will work on the PUC Committee. Brant Wolf agreed to ask Bill Weinman, CenturyTel, to give a presentation at the next Council meeting.

#### VII. Meeting Closure

The next Council meeting topics are: CenturyTel presentation, Charter Communications; Wireless and Satellite Opportunity Briefing Paper; Committee Reports in Telehealth Guidelines, Public/Private Partnerships, Community Outreach and Financial Incentives; DAS update; PUC discussion; and Rights of Way, Link Shadley.

The May agenda topics will include; Education, Schools, and Libraries/ LEO.

Chair John Irwin adjourned the meeting at 3:35PM.