Utah Broadband Advisory Council

Thursday, October 18, 2012
10:00 a.m-12:00 p.m.
Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development

Attendees:

Tara Thue, Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development
Kelleigh Cole, Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development
Sophia DiCaro, Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development
Winston Wilkinson, Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development
Bert Granberg, Utah Automated Geographic Reference Center
Jessie Pechmann, Utah Automated Geographic Reference Center
John Harvey, Utah Public Service Commission
Rep. Jim Matheson, U.S. House of Representatives
Meg Joseph, Rep. Jim Matheson's Office
Rep. Ryan Wilcox, Utah State Legislature
Mark VanOrden, Utah Department of Technology Services
Ken Petersen, Utah Department of Technology Services
Lynne Yocom, Utah Department of Transportation
Craig Neilson, Utah State Library
Deb LaMarche, Utah Telehealth Network
Don Albrecht, Western Rural Development Center, USU
Debra Meyer, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Jeff Egly, Utah Education Network

Sharon Bertelsen, Ballard Spahr
Justin Stewart, Utah League of Cities and Towns
Dean Cox, Washington County
Steve Proctor, Utah Communications Agency Networks
Stan Stoll, Utah Rural Telecom Association
Pat Richter, Americom Technologies
Ryan Marriott, Americom Technologies
JaCee Bullock, Americom Technologies
Rod Tompkins, Americom Technologies
Jason Olson, AT&T
Eric Isom, CenturyLink
Jeff Goodrich, Strata Networks
Todd Marriott, UTOPIA
Roger Timmerman, UTOPIA
Dave Shaw, Kirton McConkie/UTOPIA
Candace Vigil, UTOPIA
Dean Lundberg, Wildfire Broadband

Summary:

U.S. Congressman Jim Matheson (UT-2) was a featured guest at the Utah Broadband Advisory Council meeting and led a discussion on telecommunications issues. Congressman Matheson serves on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which deals with telecommunications and other communications-related issues. Steve Proctor, with the Utah Communications Agency Networks (UCAN), gave the congressman a brief overview of the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NBPSN), which will be a nationwide mobile broadband network that will allow first responders to utilize advanced technologies such as downloading blueprints of burning buildings, giving emergency medical technicians access to medical records, and helping police to identify criminal suspects through facial recognition. Lynne Yocom, with the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), gave an overview of President Obama's executive order to accelerate broadband infrastructure deployment on federal lands, buildings, rights-of-way, federally-assisted highways, and tribal lands. Deb LaMarche gave a brief overview of the Utah Telehealth Network and the progress it has made connecting health care institutions in Utah and recommended that congress continue to utilize Universal Service Funds (USF) to support telehealth buildouts.

Advisory Council members also asked Rep. Matheson about Congress's efforts to continue work on policies that address broadband adoption and deployment in underserved areas and efforts to sustain State Broadband Initiative (SBI) programs beyond 2014. Congressman Matheson said that because of the recent focus on fiscal reform, there has not been a strong focus on broadband policy. He anticipates that several issues, including USF reform, public safety, and broadband deployment on federal lands will become higher priorities in the upcoming year. He also said that the Advisory Council will be an important resource for his office as these issues arise.

On October 18, 2012, the Utah Broadband Project gave a presentation to the Public Utilities and Technology Interim Committee. The presentation focused on recent developments in the continued deployment of broadband service and barriers to future development in Utah. The Project Team presented the Committee with an overview of the Utah Broadband Advisory Council Report and an overview of Utah's broadband landscape. According to research conducted by the Project, less than one percent of Utah households are lacking basic consumer service (3 Mbps download/756 Kbps upload speeds); 95 percent of households have access to broadband service with download speeds of at least 10 Mbps and upload speeds of at least 3 Mbps; and 85 percent of households have access to broadband service with download speeds of at least 25 Mbps and upload speeds of at least 10 Mbps.

Todd Marriott, the Executive Director of the Utah Telecommunication Open Infrastructure Agency (UTOPIA), gave the Advisory Council an overview of a legislative audit recently conducted by the Utah State Legislature to assess UTOPIA's viability. Marriott told the Advisory Council that UTOPIA is considering the recommendations made in the audit and is working on a plan to sustain the network into the future. He stated that the member cities of the Agency view UTOPIA's services as an important element of economic development and they hope to continue working with State agencies, such as UDOT, the Utah Education Network (UEN), and the Utah Transit Authority (UTA) to help expand their network. UTOPIA is currently working with UDOT to connect 72 additional traffic signals across the State.

Steve Proctor updated the Advisory Council on the First Responder Network Authority's (FirstNet) efforts to establish the NPSBN. FirstNet held its first meeting on Sept 25, 2012 and it is likely that the NPSBN will be a commercially-based network. FirstNet has also established an advisory committee and Steve Proctor has been asked to sit on that committee. FirstNet recently released a Notice of Inquiriy to solicit input on the development of the network. Utah's State Interoperability Executive Committee (the State's FirstNet designee) plans to work with Nevada, Arizona, Oregon, Idaho, and Wyoming to prepare a unified response which addresses issues such as obtaining access to federal lands and the barriers of providing service to rural areas.

Bert Granberg, who was recently named the Director of the Utah Automated Geographic Reference Center (AGRC), gave the Advisory Council an overview of the Fall 2012 Data Submission to the National Broadband Map, which included coverage and speed submissions from 50 providers in Utah. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) have recently focused on using the National Broadband Map to make policy decisions. In Utah, the landscape of broadband coverage has been consistently improving as more broadband service providers provide higher speeds in both urban and rural areas.

He also presented the September and October 2012 Maps of the Month to the Advisory Council. The September Map of the Month analyzed the maximum advertised download speeds for mobile broadband across the State, using the speed range classes established for the NTIA's State Broadband Initiative and marketing classifications, such as 3G, 4G, etc. The map shows that wireless coverage is widely available in both urban and rural areas in Utah, particularly along transportation corridors and in populated communities.

For the October Map of the Month, the Project Team mapped broadband availability within all four U.S. Congressional Districts in Utah. The maps included information about broadband speeds and technology types available within each district. The maps will be provided to each of the four U.S. Representatives serving Utah.

The Project Team also updated the August 2012 Map of the Month, which compared factors such as rurality and economic need, to the highest available wireline speed in each community. The team plans to update this map as more information is collected on Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs), business access, and backbone infrastructure, and has invited members of the Advisory Council to review the map and give recommendations.

The Project Team has been reviewing Utah rankings using the National Broadband Map to assess national competitiveness related to broadband speed and availability. Utah ranks 12th in basic consumer access (3 Mbps download/756 Kbps upload speeds), 11th in consumer access at or above 50 Mbps, and has become a national leader in providing the highest speeds of service, ranking 5th in consumer access above 100 Mbps and 1 Gbps.