

Wisconsin State Plan Steering Committee Conference Call
April 24, 2012
10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Attendees are listed in bold:

Bob Bocher, WI Dept of Public Instruction
Joe Brickweg, Veolia Environmental Services North America
Greg Flogstad, Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission
Cliff Grand, Ashland Area Development Corporation
Joe Hegge, Grow North Regional Economic Development Corporation
Tom Jackson, Office of Senator Dale Schultz - Wisconsin Legislature
Sam Perlman, Door County Economic Development Corporation
Don Sidlowski , Town of Three lakes
Chris Straight, West Central Regional Planning Commission
Chet Strebe, Northcentral Technical College

Christopher Larson
Pete Jahn
Jeff Richter
Brian Rybarik
Bill Gillis, LinkWISCONSIN
Karen Manuel, LinkWISCONSIN
Lisa LaBorde, LinkWISCONSIN

- Roll Call
- Review Meeting Objectives

We are checking in to let you know highlights of the provider focus group and implications regarding the May focus groups which have been scheduled. We are looking for any additional questions or suggestions.

- Highlights from Provider Focus Group Forum (written summary will be provided in advance)

Bill: It was an excellent meeting with good attendance. The providers participated productively. We got good input regarding what is real and possible. The most realistic opportunities (details are in the notes) fell into two boxes: 1] providers were interested in ops around reducing barriers to broadband investment (right of way issues, tower rules and resulting costs); 2] adoption initiatives are important to them. Cable and CenturyLink have programs with public/private cooperation for low income customers. There is a role in the plan for awareness. The UW Extension could play a role.

Sam: Was there a split between wireless or wireline providers regarding adoption? More traffic is going wireless. A: That was not part of the discussion specifically. Regarding investment, tower siting affects wireless only. Right of way affects both. The only area that went into this was wireless providers asking the PSC and local leaders to get involved in advocacy at the Federal level regarding spectrum limitations. We directed the group to focus on things that are realistic and do-able.

Bill: We had a discussion of the term "Plan". The interest is not in producing a document, rather identifying actionable initiatives that stakeholders can get behind. The term that came up is "Playbook" for broadband development.

Tom: I recall one company saying that the real barrier is money...flat out cost. I believe something is possible in the legislature, regarding taxation, as long as it is targeted to unserved areas. The meeting did not get in to this. WSTA mentioned wanting to revisit a 2005 tax credit bill. In general there were a number of good ideas.

- Implications for Upcoming May Focus Groups, if Any

Was there any indication of trying to cover real rural areas? Were they looking for incentives or funding to do that? In Region 1, it is sparse. A: TDS mentioned this as they serve rural areas. Niche fixed wireless players are entrepreneurs, indicating there are things they can do. Reducing barriers to getting on towers, costs of right of ways and expanding demand will help. Low density areas are where the problem is, but solutions are not easy. In rural, forested areas, Country Wireless mentioned that state-owned towers largely deny access. The PSC will look into this...issues regarding interference/interoperability. This is important for north woods areas.

Regarding #3a in the notes (nurturing BadgerNet) vs. #6 (leaving it to the private sector), what was the discussion? Access Wisconsin argued it needs to stay in the private sector. This is an argument regarding the UW Extension. This is not a forum for that debate. We want to identify and focus on other issues that are achievable and take us forward. This debate may still come up once it hits the legislature. Tom and Cliff concur.

We need to continue activity at the statewide and local levels. We take a different approach at the local level. We have to marry these as we go along. There will be differences in urban vs. rural areas.

We have 5 more virtual focus groups (by phone) coming up, which will engage a broader group of stakeholders. We'll start with the framework from the provider meeting of things that are do-able. In addition, we'll seek the things that can and are being done that could be replicated in the state. We are after stories that illustrate issues that can be built into the plan.

Comments / advice for these meetings:

What you did for the provider group is key. The initial questions will be different (e.g. healthcare) and need to be well framed and targeted.

Item 6 – what is the single most important action - would be good.

For each group, be sure there are enough of us here in those meetings, not just the stakeholders, but those who have been involved for year.

Strive for the geographic mix on each focus group. Forward any additional contacts for people to invite. We'll send to these and a reminder to the existing list

- Next Steps

We'll implement the focus groups and will draft a plan based on this prior to the next call with the Steering Committee. We will ask for edits and amendments to this document.

Reaching unserved people is critical to have in the Playbook.

- Adjourn