

**Asotin County Broadband Action Team
March 24th Meeting Agenda**

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86570332898?pwd=c3U0Q05oa29GeUJnQnY4WmhWlC4Zz09>

2:00 Introductions

Jennifer Ashby, Asotin County Library
Scott Thompson, Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories
Todd Brandenburg, Pocket iNet
Noel Hardin, Asotin County Fire District
Chad Miltenberger, Walla Walla Community College
Yvonne Wilcox, Washington State Broadband Office
Wanda Keefer, Port of Clarkston
Brian Shinn, Asotin County Commission
Tammy Mastro, , Washington State Broadband Office
Joseph Savoy, First Step Internet
Joe Higgins, Asotin School District
Debbie Baker, Valley Vision
Justin Moss, Blue Mountain Fire District
Tim Simpson, Asotin County PUD
Zach Wilson, Clarkston School District
Gail Long, TDS Telecom
Sarah Reeves, Tri-State Memorial Hospital

Broadband Office update

Yvonne asks which providers will be participating in Emergency Broadband Benefit Program.

Todd Brandenburg - Yes, did application process. Just got approved

Wanda Keefer - Interested in partnering with providers. Planning to meet with Zach to discuss

Gail Long - Undecided but considering it if staff can handle it.

Joe Savoy - Undecided but wants to know more. Assumes they will participate.

Yvonne: Tammy Mastro just joined office last week, will be contract specialist. Will start doing a weekly BAT Bulletin (there are now 30 BATs across the State) The bulletin will just be hot topics, links and highlights from webinars. Anyone can send items to Jennifer who will forward to Yvonne. Will report grants. FCC Emergency Broadband Benefit Program. Two sides – provider and consumer. Lifeline has about 22% of eligible consumers participating; would like

spreadsheets from providers. Aiming for 100%. Asking providers to say Yes, No, or Question mark if they are participating. Lots of hoops to jump through and might only last 6 months so providers may be reluctant to participate. Waiting for more details from FCC
The Broadband Office is looking for shovel ready projects: Russ says the more they know, the easier it is to direct monies.

2:10 Discussion of projects being prepared

Wanda: thank you to everyone for being on call and working together. Strategic expansion to find out next steps. Make more connections to emergency services.

4 parts:

- a. Cell tower connectivity projects
- b. One focus is a road that doesn't have fiber yet but has many businesses
- c. Focusing on area shown on map from last month
- d. Partner with service provider to get fiber to home

Would love to discuss these with anyone else in group.

Todd: Can share a little bit. Working to understand programs from federal fund. Some of them are:

- a. Emergency Connectivity Fund. Little overlap to EBB.
- b. Big infrastructure bill being considered in Congress right now.

Happy to support state broadband office in any way possible

Joe Savoy: Currently no projects. Will reach out to Wanda.

Gail: No new projects other than those mentioned in January. Working to deploy those projects.

Questions:

Mark Havens: does group have goal? Anything quantifiable so we can decide what success looks like.

Yvonne: will share state's goals by sending to Jennifer who can distribute. Quickly ran through 2024, 2026, 2028 targets. Two parts to no access— infrastructure is not there/people can't afford it.

Jennifer: Library starting Digital Navigators program to help connect people to providers but mainly to help people develop skills.

Yvonne: Group coming together.

Gail: fiber to home project went live on March 8.

Mark: commends Yvonne and office. Does access to all really mean all, even those in remote areas?

Yvonne: Yes, it does. Washington State is best connected in nation thanks to public entities and providers. Areas that are still hard to reach are mainly those that don't offer return on investment. Russ passionate about public/private partnerships.

Todd: New bill being introduced to redefine "served" and "unserved". If infrastructure bill goes through, definition is: low tier (25 by 25), Most communities don't meet that definition so would be unserved and so likely eligible for federal money. Medium tier: 100 by 100.

Brian: A month ago Russ was very excited about the timeline and suggested that we had a week to 10 days to apply for first money, then month until next, deadlines coming fast so, has anyone turned anything in? Concerned that we're talking and not doing.

Yvonne: Delays in announcing funding opportunities. Will be late spring/early summer. Broadband Office will look at opportunities for entities to work together. The legislature is working on appropriating dedicated match money for state so that broadband office can help with matches.

Brian: Just wants to make sure we don't miss out.

Yvonne: Projects have until 2024 to be finish.

Brian: We are spinning wheels wondering what we can and can't do. Don't want to miss out on pot of money.

Jennifer: knows that there is at least on federal bill designed to spread deadlines out.

Jennifer: Thank you everyone. Next meeting on April 21.