

NWX-DOC-NTIA-OTIA

Moderator: Lynn Chadwick
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1:00 pm CT

Coordinator: Thank you for standing by, this conference is now being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time. I would now like to turn the conference over to Lynn Chadwick. Thank you, you may begin.

Lynn Chadwick: Thank you, Operator. And I'm going to turn it over now to (Brian Gibbon).

(Brian Gibbon): Thank you, Lynn, and thank you for joining us today for BroadbandUSA's Monthly Webinar on broadband topics of interest to policy makers, decision makers, practitioners, and consumers. This afternoon, our topic is State Broadband Planning, achieving success and overcoming challenges. Our presenters today are Jeff Sural, Director of the North Carolina Broadband Infrastructure Office, and Gar Clarke, Broadband Program Manager at the New Mexico Office of Broadband and Geospatial Initiatives. Okay, and what we want - and both are experienced leaders in their respective states, establishing and implementing state broadband plans.

We'd like to know right now before we get into the meat of the presentation as to whether or not folks are actually picking up this signal. Do you see and hear us? At this time if you can please use the chat box to send us a note so that we

know that we're on board and you're able to take advantage of this presentation that we have for you today.

Lynn Chadwick: Someone has just sent a message that they can't hear what's speaking. I - you need to dial in to the conference call. I should probably type that information or can someone send a - is there anyone else who's listening that can hear us, because I just got a message they are not hearing us.

(Brian Gibbon): They're not hearing us. Okay.

Lynn Chadwick: Yes. Oh, I hear someone that said yes, yes, all is well. Okay, thank you so much. Thank you. We're good.

(Brian Gibbon): So if there's an individual that can share that call in number in the chat box that will be great.

Lynn Chadwick: I'll tell you - I'll give you the call - well, I guess you can't hear me.

(Brian Gibbon): Right.

Lynn Chadwick: Okay.

(Brian Gibbon): Okay. Well, we'll continue and hopefully people will be able to join us. Because, again, we've got some great talent on board this morning. We've confirmed that we're coming in loud and clear, so we're going to turn it over right now to Jeff Sural, who will be talking about broadband planning and what they've accomplished in North Carolina. Jeff?

Lynn Chadwick: Oh.

Jeff Sural: Hey.

Lynn Chadwick: Hey, let me change the presenter here for a moment.

(Brian Gibbon): Okay.

Lynn Chadwick: And there you are, Jeff.

Jeff Sural: Okay. Great. Let me just pull up my slides. There we go. Well, thanks Brian and thank you Lynn for allowing North Carolina to present. And we always appreciate NTIA's support and guidance and council over the years. So we're excited to be a part of the webinar series. As Brian mentioned, my name is Jeff Sural and I'm the Director of the Broadband Infrastructure Office here at the State of North Carolina. We are housed within the Department of Information Technology. The governor created our office to better leverage broadband efforts and programs and assets across the executive branch.

Last year was the first time we were funded by the general assembly and we currently have 4.5 FTEs - don't ask me how. We are a little less than two years old, so during this presentation when we talk about some of our successes and failures on the planning side in particular, it may be somewhat limited. We've got a lot of projects that we're working on currently, and I'll explain a little bit more about those in a minute.

We also house the First Net program, and I'm sure most of you are familiar with that. Given the limited resources that we do have, we need to rely on other agencies throughout North Carolina to be effective. And so we have - well, I have named this group NCBIG -- the North Carolina Broadband Inter-Agency Group -- which has not really met frequently. So the goal going forward -- especially after this election year -- will be to formalize that group

so that we can better communicate across the various agencies that have broadband assets or have right of way access like our North Carolina Department of Transportation and so forth.

We have also made quick friends with people that have money. We don't - we're not a regulatory body, we don't have any regulatory authority, and we don't have any - we don't have a grant fund. But we have been working with a couple of groups; one is the Appalachian Regional Commission and we are partnering with them to administer a downtown Wi-Fi program for small communities in the Appalachian area. And then we also - our general assembly has passed session obligated to some money from the community development block grant fund to be awarded to communities that are working on broadband deployment programs. And consistent with our plan and then a couple of other counties received direct appropriations for their broadband initiatives.

So we're seeing some really good things within the state as far as focus on broadband deployment. We published a plan -- the first ever in North Carolina broadband plan -- governor announced it in June. Our primary goal for the plan is to have - for every North Carolinian to have affordable access if they so choose to broadband service by 2021. To reach that goal, we have over 80 recommendations for stakeholders to implement. So it's quite a document and - but we're fairly proud of it.

Going through and developing the plan, two major themes emerged while we were writing the plan. One, communities that have skin in the game impact deployment and affect adoption. And two, where competition is lacking, communities need to partner with private sector entities or ISPs or some kind of entity that -- a co-op, for example, runs an ISP -- to expand affordable options. And to innovate. So this is a great quote that we found from Mr.

(Laven) and included it in the plan as sort of advocacy and some guidance for communities around the state.

The top takeaways from our plan were challenges that we identified through a survey of local leaders in all types of government across the state and then of course we met with over 60 experts and held almost two dozen listening sessions to come up with the recommendations to address those challenges. So we think of it as a group effort, it just wasn't a policy document created by a bunch of wonks sitting in an office. We tried to include as many people that have an interest in broadband deployment throughout the state.

And so how do we engage on the plan and implement? We have a technical assistance team that was created actually under the SPI initiative that we carried through and continued and received appropriations to support from our general assembly. Right now we have three gentlemen who are a member of that team. We divided the state up into three different regions and each individual has responsibility for the counties in that region. We have -- by the way -- 100 counties in North Carolina.

So the TA team works with communities on the ground to plan and organize. We conduct inventory assessments, we do demand aggregation, we have - or host provider meetings in those communities. So there's a whole process that the team goes through. Some of the success stories that we've had here in North Carolina involve some counties in some fairly remote areas. And we're seeing that, you know -- like everywhere else -- more the population dense communities are going to be attractive to providers and they have ample enough competition to drive innovation and affordability.

However, in rural areas like Yancey County and Mitchell County, North Carolina -- they are neighbors up in the far western part of the state -- they got

together as a community and -- with some help from us -- engaged in some planning and they were able to secure almost \$25 million from the USDA and work - they worked with a local regional cable provider called Country Cablevision and the counties -- the two counties -- chipped in almost \$9 million of their own money that they raised. And their goal was to have - or to construct a fiber to the home network for every citizen in those two counties that wanted it.

And they were able to do that. And they provide a fiber to the home service. They actually probably get better, faster, cheaper Internet service than most folks in our urban areas. This has resulted in economic development benefits for the counties. It's also been attractive for those folks that are looking at the state to relocate.

Another success story is Haywood County - again a far western county, rural county. They -- through our technical assistance team -- created a task force. We helped them with demand aggregation by using some of the tools that we have. And then we prepared the community leaders for a providers meeting so that providers from all around the state that were interested in deploying in the county came together in a meeting and we presented several things to them like our - the county's goals and objectives, how many people were, you know, were asking for the service, what types of services and so forth. So we counted that as a success and the county is currently working with a couple providers on deployment as we speak.

And then another neighbor of Avery -- I mean, of Yancey and Mitchell -- is Avery County. Same thing, we were able to work with the county manager and economic developer there in the county, do some demand aggregation, we did some provider recruitment. One of the providers is actually going after USDA grant for a million dollars to deploy. And what was neat about this one,

too, is that you have two providers -- one is the one that I just mentioned, Country Cablevision -- that's going to do fiber to the home where they can. And then where they can't in some of the more remote areas of the county, we have a WISP -- a Wireless Internet Service Provider -- that's going to deploy to those others. So they've kind of partnered together to provide service to the entire county.

So we came up with a process and this is a very, very simplified version of that process that our technical assistance team uses when it goes into counties. But one of the things that we feel very - we feel very adamant about is that first off you - communities need to set their goals and objectives. They need to know what they're going after. Is this an economic development initiative? Is it to close the homework gap? You know, what are you trying to do.

And then we step them through this process that you see on the screen. A little more involved than that, but for our purposes, this is - this represents pretty well the process that we take them to, to get to a provider meeting so that they can recruit providers.

And then, Brian and Lynn asked just for maybe some failures, too. I don't know that this is exactly a failure, but when we had - during the SPI initiative, we were given permission by NTIA to do some inventory assessments of the 13 most disadvantaged counties in the state. And we did that. The inventories assessments were very detailed and I thought they were a great asset for these communities. However, we're finding that less than half of those - of counties are actually using the inventory assessments for any purpose - for any planning purpose. So I think what we learned out of this scenario is that inventory assessments or mapping are good things, but they're really good things and most useful if they're incorporated into a planning process.

So it just can't be standalone, because knowing where all your assets are, knowing where your towers -- for example -- are or where you may have fiber in the county is instructive, but it doesn't do anything for you if you don't have a goal or objective regarding deployment. So we thought that that was a learning experience for us.

So this is my contact information. Feel free to reach out; we're pretty active. We have a newsletter - a monthly newsletter that goes out to almost 5000 community leaders across the state, we have an active Twitter feed. And we have an easy to navigate Web site that we built and put online earlier this year. And then of course we have the plan. So if there's any interest or questions, feel free to reach out to me. Thank you for your time.

(Brian Gibbon): And thank you, Jeff. It was a great presentation. A reminder to folks that we will be able to take questions. You can submit them now, but we won't address them until after we have the presentation from Gar Clarke. And we have a - want to remind folks that you're listening to BroadbandUSA; this is our new monthly webinar series that'll be occurring the third Wednesday of every month.

So the next time we'll be getting together will be on September 21st and we appreciate the fact that you're tuning in right now. In fact, if you have ideas about webinars, we've got - we'll have contact information for us and we'll want to hear from you if you think that there's a particular topic that will be of service -- again -- to the folks that we hope that are turning in, which besides the general public include policy makers, decision makers, practitioners, and consumers.

Lynn Chadwick: So Gar, was I - did I successfully transfer it over to you from Jeff? It seems to - I'm looking at my own slides now. Hello, Gar? Did I turn everybody off here

somehow? Let me go back. Let me go back. Did I just kill the webinar for everyone? No, I don't think I did. There you are. Great. But we can't hear Gar. Take yourself off mute, Gar.

Gar Clarke: Well, thank you for that. Yes, I'm - I had the button pressed. But boy, I sure sounded good when I started. So (unintelligible)...

Lynn Chadwick: Well, just do it again.

Gar Clarke: Okay, I'll start again. So hello everybody, I'm Gar Clarke and I'm the Broadband Program Manager as well as Geospatial Program Manager for the State of New Mexico. And we - and thank you Lynn and Brian for doing this. God, it's been fabulous working with you two for the last years with the NTIA's SBDD, which was changed to SBI - State Broadband Initiative. And without that program, we wouldn't be where we are here today in New Mexico.

So I'll just very quickly go through what we've done in a rather - an overview manner and then if there's specific questions we can answer them. Well, one of the beautiful things that came out of our broadband initiative -- (unintelligible) say broadband program -- was the development of the Office of Broadband and Geospatial Initiatives - the OBG. Excuse me, I'm going to be coughing a little bit because of allergies. But the purpose of the OBG was - is to coordinate broadband and geospatial activities within the state of New Mexico and to collaborate with state, local, federal, and private entities. Also to leverage the returns on investment, economies of scale, and sustainability.

So those are those big words that really we all need in order to umbrella specific activities. And the outcome really is an integrated statewide implementation of broadband infrastructure, digital literacy very important,

and geospatial technology that consolidates resources in actionable solutions. So we don't believe in shelf paper.

The structure really is looking at the Office of Broadband Initiatives, which is a part of the Department of Information Technology, which is an executive agency. And the Office of Broadband and Geospatial Initiatives - umbrellaed underneath that is a New Mexico Broadband Program. And the New Mexico Broadband Program was morphed out of our NTIA state broadband initiative grant. And that's what we branded it very early on, five years or so ago - six years. And so it's got some - it's got some recognition, both in our legislature as well as our population, private industry, and other agencies.

And then from that we're developing these programs. And we call them BB4E for Education, BB4B for Businesses, and BB4H, which is health. We have BB4L, libraries. Things of that sort. So it's sort of getting again some branding associated with the projects that we are moving forward on. Some of the OBGi services and resources - a big part of it is coordination, creating collaboratives between government industry, tribal. And in that structure we have a framework, which, you know, would have working groups as well as advisory groups, steering committee, things of that sort.

We have a lot of reports that we have generated, strategic plans, sector solutions, education, such (unintelligible) things like the committee of broadband master plan guidebook. We have a state broadband strategic plan that we are following in a lot of regards. But those are all important in order to get the momentum that we have today.

We also provide -- our department really -- engineering, network design, and equipment. Looking at RFPs for a specialty rate and other such programs. Testing; we have a bunch of network performance. We as an agency operate

as a NOC -- Network Operating Center -- operation center. We also have speed testing. And see up in the upper right hand corner there, test your broadband speed and quality, that's on our Web site. So we've loaded the application locally is UCLA so that we didn't have to hop around the nation in order to get back to us. So it's a better -- as you know, speed testing has its flaws -- but at least it's a better number than what we can do for off a tester in another state.

Another thing, too, is analytics. We do radio frequency propagation analysis, which is - an example of that is in the lower right hand corner. The red means there's good coverage for LTE. In this case I think it was 4G LTE. So we take the spectrum from the provider and we run it through this radio frequency propagation in order to get an idea of where the coverage is. Also, view shedding, line of sight. The lower left hand corner, that's an example. So from a tower to a school is really what this is showing. It shows that we can't hit it directly. And the red means that that's non-covered. So we'd have to build a tower higher or put a bigger antenna on the school or get rid of that mountain. But note that these are based upon digital levelization models and with LIDAR technology we're very thrilled that USGS is putting a national program together. In fact State of New Mexico's able to corner about \$8 million of (unintelligible). We'll have about 20, 25% of the state and then we'll utilize that date within this type of analytics.

We also look at co-location. On the upper right, the green and the yellow is just a half mile and one mile radius just to get an idea from a school -- let's say -- if they are looking at CAT-1 fiber install, what other CAIs or community anchor institutions can we pick up, utilizing a - getting fiber to that school. And so it's just kind of a first blush look at where we can put handholds in order to maybe bring in the - a clinic or a government building or some to that effect.

So a lot of that kind of analytics is what we do with data. Infrastructure, anchors, businesses, residential. We've got residential from your E911 address points, businesses from our tax and revenue department, as well as info group and (unintelligible), which we geo-located that data. And also CAIs, which we call CASA, due data bank, which is a center graphic there where we bring in government buildings -- health facilities from all the departments and agencies, both the local and statewide -- into a interoperability model. And so we have a data set of all these information - of all these things. So we can look really hard at co-location and take rates and things of that sort. And then, of course, mapping. We have online mapping services and map products that are available to everyone.

Just to show a couple of our programs, one of them is the broadband for education. We're very thrilled about this because the push from this came from the NTISBI -- sorry -- which had a lot to do with a report and recommendations that came out for education, health, and economic development. And the mantra here for the governor's program is to connect all schools by the last quarter of 2018 with 1 megabits per second per student and staff.

And then also the process is a leverage the e-rate funding, which is really important. Especially in - when you look at a state like ours, where a lot of our plates are 80 to 90% if you understand e-rate. But we can - it can get 80 to 90% support from the USAC or the FCC, which provides the funds. And then we come up with the other 10%, 20%. If its fiber, you know, we can - and it's 80%, the - they'll come up with another 10%, we'll come up with 10%, so we'll have 100% build out. The whole concept here is not to ding the schools for that, because many of them can't afford even the match, so that's why they don't apply.

So the state appropriated 50 million bucks -- 10 million per year -- in order to provide that kind of support. So it's been very, very good for us, considering the state is running a deficit now and we're having a difficult time. But the fact that we have this money to support education, the governor's behind it, it's fabulous.

So we surveyed all the existing conditions within schools, we have over 840 facilities. We have contracted an e-rate consultant, because that's the big problem is getting folks to submit e-rate applications, which can be very complex because of the RFP requirements. And we are providing facility infrastructure mapping, which includes mapping the fiber in the state under non-disclosure agreements and working with the providers in order to get that so we can use it for planning.

It's a collaboration; governor's office, education superhighway, our department, public education, and the public schools capital outlay committee. This is Senate Bill 159 where these funds came from. And then of course we have state library and tribal education in there, too. So that's one project. Excuse me.

And another one that we're just launching is defining the level of effort to provide reliable and affordable broadband service to business. And we can't directly align our funds with private industries, so that's part of the problem. We're assessing the capacity requirements, developing a cost model, regionalizing it. We have contracts to support this which are in the bucket right now but we haven't kicked this off. We're researching the administrative options, one being a public-private partnership for statewide project. And we're providing business focused digital literacy content and Web presence.

So this resources is 400k from state appropriation for the study. We are going to incorporate business data, speed test blip through our chamber of commerce's, which we've already buttered the toast with them and our EDOs to look at a statewide collection of these data, geocode them and look for gaps. And then also to expand our broadband availability and facility to our CASA data set, which I talked about earlier. And again, this is another collaborative; legislative, business community, and government, all the way down to of course local agencies as well as state agencies.

So then there's a myriad of other little things that we're working on which are going to turn into big things, and that's our broadband for health where we're going to leverage again USEC health connect funds, engage consultant assistance and utilize existing funds to provide a match. And the model here is to try not to ding the health clinics, the libraries, the schools with coming up with the matching funds. So the state can provide that through existing funds or other funds. And all the more better because then we've got a true collaborative.

We have change for libraries, a bond language include broadband language so we can use those funds for match. And we want to - we're supporting the concept of Consortia with schools to access e-rate. And we're in the process of conducting a gap analysis with them and identifying access and Wi-Fi needs. Broadband for communities, we've done a number of things there -- I won't go into it -- but some successes in leveraging -- let's say -- the CAF funds - the CAF funds coming out of FCC, Connect American funds. These are the - and CenturyLink, that \$11 million for six years, so 66 million. So we're leveraging with them. And kind of forcing them to pay attention to our rural areas. So we've had a couple of successes there with small towns and lighting them up.

And also we've got a project down the southeast part of the state for TV White Space, which is a - I think an incredible technology or an alternative technology for rural areas which we have a lot of. And we have a lot of digital microwave - in fact, the state has 105 towers that can and is being utilized to light up some public facilities.

So again, First Net -- just like Jeff had mentioned -- we're utilizing the data collection funds in order to expand our data, both in mapping towers. So we've sucked down and we've geo-located and created databased of over 10,000 towers within the state of New Mexico as well as identifying critical infrastructure. So that's a quick look-see and - about what we're doing in New Mexico. A lot of activity and we're having some fun. But we're tired when we get home. Thank you.

(Brian Gibbon): Thank you. Thank you, Gar.

Lynn Chadwick: Thank you. We have gotten a lot of questions that have come in. It's really exciting.

(Brian Gibbon): That's great. We'll get into those questions real quickly. I want to remind folks that you're listening to BroadbandUSA's monthly webinar. This month with Jeff Sural in North Carolina and you just hear Gar Clarke from New Mexico talking about state broadband plans. We know that you probably have a lot of questions about that. We'll get those in a moment.

I want to remind folks - I know that they probably whetted your appetite, whether you've got a state plan that you want to refine or start one or even local and whatever. BroadbandUSA now has a new planning community broadband road map that's available. We'll provide you with that information later on, on how to get a - Google BroadbandUSA, you can come to our Web

site and find out about that new publication, which is really handy and our other publications that are available, too. But we do have questions.

Lynn Chadwick: Let me tell you some questions - get my slides back organized here. Okay.

(Brian Gibbon): Okay.

Lynn Chadwick: First question is for you, Jeff. How does North Carolina agency deal with state law blocking muni-ownership of fiber?

Jeff Sural: Any presentation I've ever given -- no matter what the subject -- the first question out of the gate is always about that, yes. Well, seriously, we - I know it's a hot topic because of the recent circuit court decision and we did get in our survey that I mentioned earlier a number of write-ins regarding that bill or that statute. And so we acknowledge that in the plan. We just - we put it up there in a short few paragraphs the fact that people felt like this was a major - this was a concern. And that - and then put in kind of, you know, here are some pros and cons. And then I think it's something that we pointed back to the - you know, to the lawmakers to decide. We registered the complaints so that they were aware of it at the general assembly.

Lynn Chadwick: Okay. Now here's a question for you, Gar. Does New Mexico have a dedicated person or agency with a focus on maximizing applications by schools and libraries for e-rate funding? And I think you went over that, but you might want to go in a little more depth.

Gar Clarke: Yes, sure, we do. And it's based upon this \$50 million appropriation that we got for five years, 10 mil a year. But we have a structure around that, which incorporates the governor's office as a representative and a steering committee. And we also have a working group. And as I said, it's a

collaborative between the technical managers and CIOs of three different departments, ours, PED, as well as Public Facility Authority. And so - and that's -- sorry, sorry -- so that's the - that's the structure that we have which - we pair it with the other -- let's say -- disciplines or, you know, be it libraries and health. But our biggest one is education right now. So there's structure, there's support, there's funding, and we're very excited.

And we went through the -- sorry -- we went through the first cycle of e-rate and from outsiders they said, "God, you've accomplished in a year, year and a half what we - took us four years to do." So we've got a good crowd and a lot of great support. And we've been able to bring in at this juncture, you know -- the awards haven't been actually created -- but I think we've got 40% increase in e-rate participation and funds coming into the State of New Mexico as a result of collaborating.

Lynn Chadwick: Well, that's great. Here's another question for you, Gar -- cough, cough -- is the New Mexico broadband project primarily fiber or wireless based and what are average speeds and speed at present versus what the goals may be? How many people subscribers are current customers? That's...

Gar Clarke: Yes, so it's - we're technology agnostic as far as the Office of Broadband and Geospatial Initiatives, which the New Mexico Broadband Program is a part of. And so it's - when you say primarily wireless or not, it's -- as I said -- agnostic. We don't care. The education component of it, the incentive is to get fiber to every single school, you know, 840 plus of them. But where we can't we're going to be looking at alternative and we are looking at alternative technologies. So that's not a big deal as far as - we're looking at the best fix for the problem.

Now, when it comes down to speeds, we don't care. Essentially, is it adequate or not adequate? I shouldn't say we don't care. But it's - really is it adequate or not adequate? And in some areas -- like the (Tonnegala Stale), which we lit up, of course, with CenturyLink and some of this CAF funding -- they're all only on satellite. And so when they got 10.1, they were in heaven. They threw a big party. I mean, the community center was rocking after it lit that place up.

So again, the satellite was inadequate, 10.1 they're happy. But they're going to be wanting 25.4 soon. So, yes, (unintelligible) to the speeds. With the schools, we are looking at one megabit per student and staff. So yes, we have a goal there.

Lynn Chadwick: Well, okay. I - we - I've caught up with the questions that people have sent in and do we have any questions from our moderator, Mr. (Brian Gibbon)?

(Brian Gibbon): Well, actually, yes, I do have a couple of questions. So let me start with this one. This is for both of you. And that's basically the element of any broadband plan or otherwise is that the plan presents something achievable, it has a goal. And you're outlines presented this afternoon stated goals on the second page of each deck, thank you for keeping that well-organized. How are these goals identified and what does it take to insure that the goals were concrete, realizable, and acceptable by your state leadership, assuming that you don't have goal autonomy on your programs?

Lynn Chadwick: Let's take it to Jeff and give Gar a break.

(Brian Gibbon): Yes.

Jeff Sural: Okay. Well -- as I mentioned -- the way that we identified the key challenges that most people were facing across the state was to survey 3,500 local

leaders. So, you know, we could pretty much guess at what the challenges the state was facing, but we wanted to hear from folks. As you can imagine, the primary concern was access as a whole, access to higher speed internet infrastructure - you know, infrastructure that would provide higher speed internet services. And then close second or right up there was (unintelligible). So we knew that that was a key area and based on what we heard back on challenges we gathered together groups of folks that maybe experts or at least stakeholders in those - or under those relevant issue areas.

So for example, in the homework gap, we convened listening groups that involved an education think tank here in North Carolina, the Department of Public Instruction, and other educators, but also technologists that work within the schools, for the schools. So like Gar had mentioned, how can we leverage e-rate infrastructure a little bit better -- or I mean -- the funding a little bit better, making sure that we have all of our schools connected to fiber, which we do. And then we're rolling out a Wi-Fi program within the schools.

But what about those kids, you know, outside of the schoolhouse? How do we get to them if they don't have internet service? So we took recommendations directly from those folks and we included them in the plan. The way that we make sure they were achievable was by having us -- you know, our staff - our policy staff -- kind of sit down and go through them and make sure that, you know, some of them, you know, are pretty outlandish. You know, we need \$100 million. Well, we know that that wasn't achievable or that's not realistic.

So we looked at the things that we knew were good or that we could do -- like, for example -- in the e-rate applications -- or I should say the RFPs that go out from the schools to providers when they're seeking someone to support the WAN, for example -- there is some weight that the communities can give to providers that are willing to come in and provide service to the community as

a whole. So there's little things like that that we tried to look at that we knew were achievable.

They were - all of the recommendations were reviewed by the governor's policy staff, too, that we work closely with. And so we had - we felt like we had a good kind of team to kind of filter those that were achievable and weren't. And right now we're going through and assigning ownership to certain - to the certain recommendations and we're building metrics around how to measure them.

(Brian Gibbon): All right. Well, thank you, Jeff.

Lynn Chadwick: That was good.

(Brian Gibbon): That was really great. And Gar, do you have a response or anything to add?

Gar Clarke: Yes, well, the thoughts really are when we put together recommendations for our strategic plan as well as for our -- before that -- economic development and education and health, and -- sorry -- and before that, our community broadband master plan guidebook, we just said, you know, "What's important?" And rather than what's achievable, what do we want? And this is a buy in from industry, public. We had quite a few facilitated meetings, both regionally as well as statewide. And that's where these came on out.

And, you know, they weren't vetted by the governor's office or anything like that. So this is grassroots stuff in a lot of respects. So we've been following that in spirit and saying, "Okay, based upon this want list of recommendations and options, what's affordable given we don't have a whole lot of money in this state?" And one of the places that we focused on is, you know, we all

follow the money and e-rate is really the incentive to get a bunch of stuff done.

So that's why we're putting a lot of focus on e-rate being the driver to expand broadband within our discipline, such as education and health and libraries and businesses. So that's - you know, whether it's achievable or not we're looking at this on a case by case basis. And that really is our near-sighted, achievable path for the moment.

(Brian Gibbon): Thank you, Gar.

Lynn Chadwick: Thanks. Great.

(Brian Gibbon): Okay, I have another question for you both, and this is related, you know. You both basically shepherded, you know, the planning activity, you know, from conception all the way to release and now you're implementing the plans. Broadband and high speed internet -- as you're both well aware -- is a pretty dynamic by nature. How do you keep these plans that you have now current, given the changing nature of broadband and high speed internet?

Lynn Chadwick: And we will ask Jeff.

(Brian Gibbon): Yes.

Jeff Sural: Yes, that - yes, that's a great question and certainly a challenge that we've contemplated and we're trying to address by making sure that we have - that we keep track and have metrics for how we accomplish the recommendations that are currently in the plan. But we decided early on that this plan would live in the virtual world so that we could make changes and adjustments as we saw fit. So - and in fact, the committee that we were obligated to send this plan to -

- it was a mandate in the budget bill -- doesn't accept paper documents. It's a joint oversight on information technology committee. So that kind of led us to, well, let's - we'll deliver it, you know, obviously and have it reside online.

Because we know that and we're seeing various technologies emerge that will probably change the way that folks connect to the internet. And in some cases we're very hopeful that those technologies will aid rural or less populated communities. So we definitely built in - we tried to build in a little flexibility and, you know, we kind of made note that when changes or new things emerge to -- new technologies or new ideas or challenges -- that we could make tweaks to the plan.

Additionally, we have a requirement from our legislative body to have a report - an annual report delivered to them, so we figured that we could use that as a vehicle to also update the plan.

(Brian Gibbon): All right. How about you, Gar?

Gar Clarke: Well, we're not doing a very good job there. And it's a lack of resources because, you know, we got a 1.5 FTE in the Department of Information Technology and, you know, we can access all of our engineers and people of that sort, but a lot of what we've been doing is of course with contracts. And that comes and goes. Our intent was -- when we put a lot of this stuff together -- was to have living documents online. And update and maintain them as they need to. But we just don't have the resources to pay attention to that as we keep on grappling with the next best thing to do - actionable items.

So, yes, it's something that I'm concerned about because, you know, we put together community broadband master plan guidebook and we're on version 1.1, which was March of 2013. And so the intent was to do a new version

every year. And we just haven't done it because don't have the resources to sit down and actually recraft those sections so that they're current.

Lynn Chadwick: Well, we appreciate your honesty. I think that's a challenge for most of us, trying to keep things up to date.

(Brian Gibbon): Exactly. Resources are always an issue in that sort of things and at times of tight budgets and questions about appropriations go and what have you. But I think that, you know, for anybody who's been joining in, we appreciate the audience out there who's been joining us for this BroadbandUSA webinar on state planning with Jeff (Sorrel) -- Sural, excuse me -- of North Carolina and Gar Clarke of New Mexico. They've demonstrated, you know, different ways that states are approaching broadband plans. And although this has been focused on states, this planning activity can be essentially for any kind of jurisdiction, whether it's a school district, a county, a regional development corporation. It's all really important.

A reminder that BroadbandUSA -- besides having resources available like our new planning and community broadband road map -- BroadbandUSA also - or does provide technical assistance that you can find out about through our Web site. And if you have questions about the - you know, your own plans and that sort of thing, you're looking to maybe improve the service or are looking for other examples of what's out there, you're welcome to contact us. Here's the URLs for both the planning and community broadband road map toolkit and also the BroadbandUSA Web site where you'll hear about this and all sorts of other activities that BroadbandUSA are doing to support the development and the deployment and the adoption of broadband and high speed internet across the country.

I've got one last question for both you Jeff and Gar. We'll go to Jeff first. You know, you're one of the principle architects of the state's broadband plan. And we understand that these plans are greeted with great applause and then sometimes cynicism, you know. And just want to know, are you able to stand in the checkout line of a grocery store in your neighborhood without getting an earful from your neighbor or someone else?

Jeff Sural: Yes, oh definitely. No one has any idea who I am or what I do, so I have no worries there. But, seriously, you do get - you know, when the plan came out, I think we got a lot of encouragement and a lot of compliments and then there was some criticism, too. And I can understand that, too. I mean, what we tried to do is create a - you know, a cookbook with a number of different dishes for everybody to be included. And sometimes there are folks that are strong advocates for one type of model or another.

And, you know, they would be -- let's say -- if they were the, you know, the meat eaters in the world or the vegans and they came in and looked at the cookbook and said, "Hey, it doesn't have enough meat in it or it doesn't have enough vegetables" or something like that. So what - I can understand. What we try to do is have something for everyone, knowing that models are different. Every county that we've encountered has different assets, a different organizational structure. So, you know, so we wanted to be flexible there.

You know, and kind of going back to the previous question, too, you know, it's not just technologies that are changing that we have to keep up with but its business models. The way that broadband is being delivered is changing rapidly and you're starting to see different communities try different things. And I think everyone on the call is probably familiar with some of those. Here in North Carolina Holly Springs is a community that has tried something new -- a different delivery model -- and so those types of - you know, those types

of models are good to look at as alternatives to maybe certain state statutes or other impediments that may be out there for communities.

So - but yes, we certainly are - we hear from folks around the state who are very sympathetic to their plight and we have our Web site set up to take their information. We're trying to do some improvements, too, to gather information from them that - so we can get a more accurate picture of what's out there and we can address that. So that's how we're approaching it.

(Brian Gibbon): Okay. Hey, Gar, how about you? How do you handle the yeas and the nays?

Gar Clarke: Well, with New Mexico first of all, I live in Santa Fe. It's a small town. So it's hard to hide, even when you go to the grocery store. But then again, actually, as far as our program is concerned and the way we put together the regionalism with our regional broadband implementation plan pilot, we have gotten wonderful response. And positive responses at how we've put this all together. One of the biggest benefits for engagement - or the reason for engagement in a collaborative model -- especially with regional governances - (unintelligible) and EDOs and folks of that sort -- is the understanding that, "Oh, they're aware now." And they really are grassroots folks with their legislatures.

So in getting that, that's been a - really a good win-win, because I'm going, "Well, we didn't actually lay any fiber down your backyard," but what we're hearing back is saying, "No, no, the awareness is more important than the action right now." And - because awareness provides opportunities to look (unintelligible) specific funding to support a broadband implementation.

And, you know, we - and the way we did our plan is that we engaged all sectors as well as the public in creating much of our planning documents,

which came up with digital inclusion, digital literacy being very important. You know, e-rate. So we're doing a lot of this stuff. We were looking at right of way issues and looking at dig once programs and how to implement that, similar to what Arizona has. You know, and turn shifts and things of that sort.

So we're getting very, very positive responses. And because - especially - and also from the providers. We have 45 -- depending on how you count -- 45 to 55 different IPS within the state of New Mexico and we want them to love us. And we want to love them, because they could -- like in some states -- can put the lobby and put the screws on and pretty soon they could outlaw provisioning and municipal development of broadband.

So we - and that's the only way we can do it in this state. We can't create a public network, because that's going to be \$140 million just for education. And so we need them. But at the same token, we need to be the watchdogs and make sure that we create a competitive environment so we get better prices, because that has not been the case in the past.

(Brian Gibbon): Well, thank you, Gar, that was great. And I again want to thank both Jeff Sural of North Carolina and Gar Clarke in New Mexico for joining us today and providing this insight and their own experiences with regards to planning. And I think, you know, taking away from this the fact that, you know, people want to be able to take advantage of resources, communicate fully with the folks that may be involved, leave no stone unturned -- it seems -- when it comes to coming up with a plan and your likelihood of better success appears to be there.

Again, BroadbandUSA will be having the next webinar on September 21st or ever third Wednesday of the month. BroadbandUSA also has you register for each webinar, so we'll send out that information again. And if you know of

other people who should be getting that information because they should be attending these or you think they'd gain something from us, please let us know. Our e-mail addresses are there and we can make sure that you can get on the mailing list.

Also, be sure to visit BroadbandUSA's Web site and - because we've got a lot of different information that's available on broadband planning, the new community broadband road map, technical assistance is available, too, and you can find about various other events, including our community connect initiative and other activities -- again -- to bring better broadband to you. Here's a roster of the dates -- not the topics yet because we're still working on those -- but the dates.

And again, if there's something that you want to hear about, let us know, because we don't have all the answers. We want to make sure that these events are fulfilling for you and of benefit to the folks involved. Again, Jeff, Gar, please, thank you very much for your time.

Jeff Sural: Thank you.

Gar Clarke: Yes, my pleasure.

Lynn Chadwick: And it has been really great, so thank you again for this. Thank you for your honesty and I look forward to continuing to work with you. It's been one of the great things coming through the state broadband initiative and continuing to work with state broadband leaders. So with that I am going to close the webinar for all.

(Brian Gibbon): Okay, thank you. Please join us again on September 21st, 2 pm Eastern Time.

Gar Clarke: Okay, thanks a lot. Bye-bye.

Lynn Chadwick: Bye-bye.

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