NWX-DOC-NTIA-OTIA

Moderator: Lynn Chadwick
September 21, 2016
1:00 pm CT

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time all participants will be in a listen-only mode for the duration of today's call. Today's call is being recorded. If you have any objections you may disconnect at this time.

I will turn the meeting over to Mr. Bryan Gibbons. Sir, you may go ahead.

Brian Gibbons: Thank you (Mia). And thank you and welcome for joining us today for BroadbandUSA's Monthly Webinar on broadband topics of interest. The policymakers, decision makers, practitioners, and consumers.

As mentioned, I'm Brian Gibbons and I'm joined today by Katherine Bates here at NTIA and BroadbandUSA.

Katherine Bates: Hello.

Brian Gibbons: And we're going to be working at this end to help provide you with this presentation on Stakeholder engagement. That's our topic for the afternoon. And for today's Stakeholder Engagement Webinar we've got two presenters.

We've got Anne Byers who will be coming to us from the eHealth and Community Manager for the Nebraska Information Technology Commission. And Kathy Johnson, Executive Director at the Governor's Office for Broadband Development at the state - for the State of Alabama.

Now prior to…

Katherine Bates: We're having a technical…

Brian Gibbons: There we go. All right, just a reminder that BroadbandUSA Webinar series, this happens the third Wednesday of every month, both today, September 21. We'll also be here on October 19 and through the remainder of the year.

These are again, events that you can register for o a regular basis. You'll register for each one. You'll be able to go to the BroadbandUSA Web site. Under the events you'll be able to find it.

The series is under development, so if you're interested and have ideas for future Webinars, you're welcome to submit your suggestions to Lynn Chadwick here at NTIA.

Again as I mentioned, here's our presenters Anne Byers from Nebraska Information Technology Commission, and Kathy Johnson from the Office of the Governor, Robert Bentley of Alabama. She's the Director of Broadband Development.

And we'll be starting our presentation today with Anne Byers in Nebraska. So thank you Anne for coming on board.

Anne Byers: Well thank you Brian for inviting me. Today I'm going to talk about lessons learned from broadband partnerships in Nebraska. And I'm going to start with a little background information just on understanding Nebraska, a little bit on why we rely on partnerships, and the process.

And then the heart of my presentation will be really looking at two broadband projects, Network Nebraska, and NeHII, Nebraska Health Information Initiative, and looking at the lessons we can learn from those projects.

So first to understand Nebraska, in terms of population we're a rather small state with a population just shy of 1.9 million people. Omaha and Lincoln are the largest cities and are just both 50 miles apart and are probably part of the Silicon Prairie.

The rest of the state is largely rural. In fact on a football Saturday, the University of Nebraska's stadium. Memorial Stadium in Lincoln, is the third largest city in the state.

As far as people, we're friendly, pragmatic people, often early adopters of technology, as long as it offers clear benefits and is practical. And if it doesn't offer clear benefits and isn't practical, we may be among the last to adopt that technology.

And as far as politics and government we're populist, physically conservative, and wary of government intrusion.

We rely on partnership for three reasons. First, we can accomplish more on a small budget if we partner. And since we're a physically conservative state we always have small budgets.

Second, we can leverage the strengths of partners to create a better project than if we did it alone.

And third, stakeholders are more supportive if they have ownership in a project.

So the basic process that seems to occur in Nebraska and I'm sure other places too, is that a stakeholder need emerges. And a convener will bring stakeholders together to further define that need and to help the stakeholders develop a shared vision.

And especially if the stakeholders have not worked together and haven't built a lot of trust, it's usually very helpful for the stakeholders to partner on a small, easy win project or maybe a demonstration project that could lead to a bigger project to build that trust.

And although champions are important I think, at all stages of the project, they're particularly important at the stage where you start to identify opportunities and resources to actually bring that project to implementation.

If you have all those elements, you have a project. And it's not always a linear process. And you know sometimes if it's very simple you might go through these stages very quickly.

Sometimes if it's a more complicated project you might have to repeat some of the phases a couple of times before it starts to gel. And if you could just move on.

We're going to start talking about Network Nebraska. And Network Nebraska is really a two-phase project. It started as the state telecommunications

backbone. And the stakeholder need that really drove the development of Network Nebraska was to look for ways to save money and also to encourage investment and telecommunications infrastructure in the state.

And the convener for this idea was the Nebraska Information Technology Commission. That's the Commission where I am a staff member at the State Technology Advisory Group.

And we had two commissioners at the time -- this was in 2003 -- Lieutenant Governor Dave Heineman who was the Chair, and University of Nebraska President, L. Dennis Smith.

And at a meeting one day they decided that the State of Nebraska and the University of Nebraska should aggregate telecommunications contracts for statewide backbone transport.

And at the time this was kind of like almost an earthshaking idea because universities and state governments usually do not partner on technology projects like that. But you know, they were in charge so there was no further discussion. And we went ahead and started to implement the project. And so if you would go on to the next slide.

It worked. The project saved money, it stimulated investments in telecommunications infrastructure. It proved that the State of Nebraska and University of Nebraska could work together.

It also led to the formation of a collaborative governance structure that involved the University of Nebraska, the State of Nebraska Office of the Chief Information Officer, as well as other entities within the state including the

Public Service Commission and the Department of Education and Nebraska Educational Television.

And then lastly and more importantly, it made possible the future development a statewide education network.

I think we learned some important lessons from the Network Nebraska Backbone Pilot. First, it's important to build trust by starting small. Champions are important. Third, a shared services model can reduce overhead. Fourth, aggregating demand for telecommunication services can reduce costs. And last, a participatory governance structure is very important.

So now we're going to move on to Network Nebraska, the Education Network.

So here is a map that kind of gives you a schematic of Network Nebraska. And I'm not going to spend any time really going through and describing that. But it does give you a view.

And the stakeholder need that really drove the development of Network Nebraska was the need to have - we had at the time, 12 different incompatible Distance Education consortiums. And you can advance to the next slide.

And these all needed to be replaced. And so the NITC Education Counselor had representatives of K through 12 education and higher ed. And they really came to a shared vision for a statewide, synchronous video network.

But it just kind of stalled because it didn't have any resources or any authority to create a statewide Distance Education Network until one of the Champions,

Senator Ron Raikes took it - took charge and worked with the legislature to develop a Distance Education Task Force.

And that task force - out of that task force came legislation which directed the Nebraska Office of the Chief Information Officer, with assistance from the University of Nebraska, to develop a statewide Distance Education Network. And the legislation also provided incentives for participation.

And it's important to note, although it provided incentives for participation, it did not provide any funding for operating the network. So out of necessity the State of Nebraska and the University of Nebraska had to keep administrative costs very low.

And so to this date there are no full-time staff members assigned to Network Nebraska. There are staff members within the University of Nebraska and the State of Nebraska Office of the Chief Information Officer who work on the project on a part-time basis as needed. But we have no full-time staff.

And as a result, Network Nebraska is one of the largest, most affordable statewide education networks and has one of the lowest commodity Internet rates.

Internet costs have decreased 99.1% since 2007. And just this year, after ten years, 100% of public K through 12 and higher education entities now participate.

And that kind of segues nicely into the additional lesson learned from Network Nebraska education, and that is, achieving 100% participation takes time, patience, and a lot of effort.

So now we're going to move on to talk NeHII, the Nebraska Health Information Initiative. And the need that really drove the development of NeHII - oh, and here's a map of the - of NeHII.

The counties shaded in green have hospitals that are participating in NeHII. The ones in pink are planning to join in the near future.

You'll notice that we also have several counties in Western Iowa shaded in green. Those hospitals are part of the Omaha Medical Trading Area and some of them are also owned by health systems that are in the Omaha area.

So now if you could go on, the stakeholder nee that really drove the development of NeHII was the need to have more complete patient information at the point of care.

So if you ended up in the emergency room, the doctors there could pull up your medication history and avoid an adverse drug event. Or if you were receiving care from a specialist and your primary care physician, that they would both have access to the most recent lab results and your medications so they could better coordinate your care. If you could go back.

So NeHII was really driven by the Omaha Hospitals and Blue Cross Blue Shield which is also headquartered in Omaha. But they wanted - they knew that to make this successful it really had to be a statewide network. So they convened stakeholders from across the state to a decision accelerator.

And they really count this are really the turning point for NeHII. And after that -- you can go on to the next slide -- is when those champions decided that it was time to move forward. And in 2009 the piloted the Health Information

exchange within the Omaha Hospitals to demonstrate that the technology really could work. And so then after that they started adding hospitals.

Those of you who have worked with health information exchanges know that sustainability is often a challenge. And so NeHII and the State of Nebraska have partnered to receive federal funding which has helped NeHII grow and add participants and additional functionality including several grants from the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT.

And PDMP Prescription Drug Monitoring Program grants from the CDC and the Bureau of Justice. And they've also worked with our Medicaid Program to receive 90/10 matching high tech funds. So that's been very important to them.

As a result, NeHII is one of the largest statewide health information exchanges with data on 3.2 million individuals and 7000 users. NeHII covers 64% of the hospital beds in Nebraska, and utilization continues to increase.

The lessons that we learned from NeHII are again, it's important to build trust by starting small and demonstrating proof of concept.

Second, engaging stakeholders and building a shared vision requires champions and a lot of work. NeHII has an annual meeting every year and this year there were over 100 participants. And the CEO personally called all of the CEOs of the hospitals in Nebraska. There are about 100 of them, and invites them to the meeting. Sometimes it really requires that one-on-one contact to engage stakeholders.

And then lastly, a public/private partnership model has helped NeHII access federal funding. That's been very important to NeHII and it's also a lot of work.

And that kind of leads into my conclusion here that in general I'd say partnerships are a lot of work. But sometimes they are the only way we can accomplish a project. And often it leads to better projects than if we had done it alone.

And then here's some contact information. If you want to talk to me or if you want further information on Network Nebraska or NeHII.

Brian Gibbons: Well thank you very much Anne. I appreciate that. Reminder folks, you're listening to a stakeholder engagement Webinar brought on by BroadbandUSA. You just heard from Anne Byers with the State of Nebraska talking about partnerships in developing both education and health delivery and health information systems within the state using limited resources and lots of partnership and engagement to build it right.

I want to remind folks that you'll have the opportunity to ask questions. We'll take them after our second presenter, Kathy Johnson. She'll be coming to you in a moment.

But there's on your control panel you'll have the opportunity to enter your questions. Also, slides and transcripts of this will be available. They'll be posted at the BroadbandUSA Web site after the Webinar. And there is the URL for the BroadbandUSA Web site.

Or if you just put NTIA BroadbandUSA or NTIA BB USA in the search engine of your choice, the first selection coming up will probably be BroadbandUSA's Web site.

A reminder too, that BroadbandUSA, when you do go there, there's a lot of tools that you can use, and we encourage you to explore the BroadbandUSA Web site.

If you're just starting out on a project, it's just something that you have in the back of your mind. You're really chewing on it now, or you need some remedial work too, BroadbandUSA can direct you to a variety of different resources.

And whether it's technical assistance, we have numerous publications, new tools being developed by community connectivity initiatives, plus events like this one today where people can learn more and hear from true practitioners, BroadbandUSA is able to do that for you.

I'd like to introduce to you know, Kathy Johnson. Kathy Johnson is with the State of Alabama and she's going to be talking about her presentation on Stakeholder Engagement.

Kathy Johnson: Thanks Brian and Katherine. I appreciate, as Anne mentioned, really appreciate the opportunity to share a little bit about our program and what we're accomplishing in Alabama with Broadband.

And I did want to mention too at the start of it that, I think Anne gave you a couple of really great examples of how stakeholder engagement and partnerships can really be productive in the state and accomplish a number of things.

And I thought I would focus on how we are managing stakeholders. How to bring them to the table; why it's important? And some of the information I hope will be useful, no matter what scale your project or geographical area is.

I want to talk about statewide stakeholder management. But hopefully you'll be able to relate that down to even a community level or a various project level. I think the ideas of how stakeholder management engagement is accomplished can be translated, even to a small project than a statewide.

So again, thanks so much for inviting me to be a part of this Webinar today. I'll share a little bit with you to start with so you can understand how important our stakeholder engagement efforts are.

We have a very comprehensive focus with the Governor's Office of broadband development. We are looking at not only access to, but also adoption and utilization of broadband. And we know that those are three very different efforts.

Having access to broadband does not necessarily relate to someone subscribing to broadband. And even though someone subscribes or adopts broadband technology does not mean they're using it.

So we do need to look at all three of those and make sure that not only is it available to our citizens, but for them to truly benefit and take advantage of the opportunities broadband affords, we need to be sure that they adopt this technology, and that they understand how to use it and all the benefits of using it.

So we do have what we have lumped into six key strategies and tactics. The first thing that we have is based on what this Webinar is really focused on, and that's our partnerships. Engaging our stakeholders and really facilitating partnerships. Partnerships, projects, people; we bring those all together.

I try to be very aware of various stakeholders, stakeholder groups, people that are working on certain projects, companies that are willing and can come to the table to help out with those projects. And trying to connect people with projects and vice versa.

We also collect and analyze data and then share that on broadband access adoption and utilization. We are hopefully, with the next legislative session, going to be able to resume our broadband mapping efforts. And that's going to be a really critical piece of data that I think will be beneficial again to people in the state.

We also assess and make recommendations on policies, both those that are currently on the books or the state laws. Or those that possibly would help make this a more broadband friendly state and make more broadband available and used by Alabamians.

The next series that we look at is collaboration. I collaborate with every single agency. There's pretty much not a state agency whose services and information sharing is not handled through broadband. And it's even becoming more increasingly so.

So we do collaborate with every state agency and try to assist on broadband related issues. Then we try to identify federal funding sources. NTIA BroadbandUSA has been very helpful in that front. They even published, if

you're not aware of their funding guide, that's been a very important resource that we've been able to share with others.

And then we try to assess and propose state funding opportunities when it's potentially an option.

So that all boils down to number six. We are the one-stop broadband resource center for anyone in the state. And I'm talking about nearly five million Alabamians. And all of the 67 counties and over 450 municipalities, and all the other people that are within the state, we are a resource to them on anything related to broadband access adoption or utilization.

So I told you all that to show you why it's so important that we have stakeholder engagement.

It's not that we really have any challenges with broadband access. I'm absolutely kidding. You can see by the maps here.

These maps were produced under the State Broadband Initiative. That just ended the end of 2014.

Version 5 was produced around 2011. Version 10 was produced at the end of the program so, that was the fall of 2014.

You can see that there's not a lot of advancement in the number of broadband providers across the state. We have a pretty significant geographical territory that still is lacking more than one broadband provider option, even over the timeframe that I just mentioned.

So with access to broadband we do have some challenges. And what about our speed tiers? You can see that those did not advance very much either, over that timeframe.

And as our data efforts - data collection efforts ended the end of 2014, that's the latest data that we really got access to. But again you can see with our access and our speed we have a significant part of the state that is still really being left behind.

And I'm not pointing fingers at anyone because broadband deployment as you know, is very time consuming. It's very costly. And it's not an overnight solution, or not an overnight effort, I should say.

So our broadband providers are diligently working, but it takes time and most significantly, it takes money. And that's just something that the state has not been able to help subsidize up to this point.

Alabama is 41st in the country for broadband access. So even though we are working diligently to try to address all these issues, we still as you can see, have some significant challenges ahead of us.

So is stakeholder engagement important to us? Absolutely. When we start looking at stakeholder engagement we look at these areas of the state, you can see on the far left, that's the broadband access map that I showed you.

The other three maps to the right show our economic indicators. Those are areas where there are high rates of high school dropouts and high rates of teen pregnancies. High rates of children living in poverty, unemployment, on and on.

So you can see the darker areas on the three maps to the right, almost perfectly aligned with some of those areas that do not have broadband access.

So if they have broadband would that be a solution to keeping kids in school and children out of poverty, and everyone having a job? No, absolutely not. And we never claimed that broadband is the silver bullet solution. But we also know -- and I imagine everyone on this call understand -- how critical it is towards addressing those issues.

Our structure is, our office is directly under Governor Bentley. He created this office last year. And within our office, all those things that I mentioned that we do, and all of the challenges that our state faces, you see the staff that we have available to us.

So, like Anne mentioned, we are like Nebraska. We are a very physically conservative state, but we also are facing budget challenges in many, many areas.

And so right now we do not have additional resources to put into our Office of Broadband Development. So I feel that we are accomplishing a lot. It's happening through our stakeholders.

So let's talk about how to bring stakeholders on board. With our minimal staff, in July of 2015 when Governor Bentley created this office, we brought on board automatically, 50 Board members. They're Advisory Board members. They are critical to everything that we do.

They provide very, very important input on what we are achieving, how we achieve it, and who else is brought to the table. I just can't brag enough about our Advisory Board because I couldn't do what I do without them.

In addition to that, shortly after we were created we developed work groups that were task forces. And we initially engaged about 100 people that quickly expanded to about 250 people from across the state that wanted to be engaged in the efforts that we are on working on.

As of last month we have the capability of reaching out to over one million Alabamians with our mission and our message. And I'll tell you how we are accomplishing that in a short period of time.

In identifying stakeholders, I think the first thing that is important for you to ask is, who cares? And that's a positive question actually. Who cares that these areas of Alabama are being left behind? Who cares that a lot of children are living in poverty here?

Who cares that a lot of people are dropping out of high school? And on and on and on.

Low access to healthcare - we have 67 counties. Fifty-five of them are considered rural and in great need of greater access to healthcare.

Who cares about those issues? Well those are your stakeholders. So these are just some groups that initially became our stakeholders and became very, very important to us.

And this project is important to them. They do care if this project advances because they do see value in it. And they understand how it can help -- I'm sorry -- help Alabama as a whole, move forward.

So with so many people and so little time and so little energy and resources, we knew that we needed to narrow our stakeholder management efforts to those who are most impacted by our work. Most interested in it, and those that have power and influence to either help advance the mission or can hinder our efforts.

And those are critical stakeholders as well. And I'll talk a little bit about how to manage those.

As I mentioned our initial stakeholders were the Governor's Broadband Advisory Board members. Those are listed here. And you can see that it's everyone from heads of the Governor's cabinet. They had the state agencies, all the way through legislators, the heads of very important associations across the state.

There were ISPs that came to the table. Not only did individual service providers come to the table, but we also engaged their associations. So the Cable Association which not is known as ACTA. I know that they are recently moving away from the inclusion of the work cable, but they are critical on our Board.

The Wireless Association, even the Satellite Broadcasting Communications Association; Telecommunications Association of the Southeast. You want these people at the table because they are the ones that can help advance the work.

We were very careful to not only engage the larger ISPs in the state, but also representation from some of the very smallest. Some of the people on our Board might have 100, 200 customers that they serve, but they serve a very important niche within their communities.

Another thing to ask is, you really want to understand your stakeholders. I call them the helpers and the haters, but we really don't have any haters. We might have people who have a slightly agenda. We might have people who might see things that should be accomplished a slightly different way.

Possibly they have a different priority, but we don't really have anyone that's trying to shut down anything we're doing.

We have people that bring us ideas of how it could be done differently, or how possibly it should be something different that should be accomplished.

But for the most part it's generally people that have different people they are having to answer to and different priorities.

So you want to understand what the stakeholder's primary and secondary interests are. I'll give you an example of that.

If you have a legislator who their primary mission is to serve in the legislature and make sure that legislation is put forward that will advance the state; that is their primary focus. But they also have a secondary focus.

All our legislators are part-time so, each of them has another employment that they are responsible for and, they also have families. So they are community members themselves. So that would be their primary, followed by their secondary and then third level interest.

What is their opinion of what you're trying to accomplish? It's important for you to know if they're for you or if they are against what you're trying to accomplish. That way you can better work with them.

If they don't have a positive attitude towards what you're trying to accomplish, do they have accurate information? Possibly they don't understand what you're trying to accomplish. Possibly there has been some misinformation or misunderstanding between it.

And a lot of times if you can just go sit down with them and understand where they're coming from, then I very rarely faced a situation where a stakeholder that was someone who was not positive about your situation, did not quickly become positive about the mission and be willing to help.

It's also important to know who is influencing their opinions. And not only do they have people that they are influencing, but who is influencing them. So you want to understand both of those.

And then for instance, I was talking about a legislature. Of course they influence people but they also have people that are influencing their opinions.

A lot of times those are people that are strong enough in their own right and interested in their own right, that they become individual stakeholders as well.

So one step further, and like I said, I hesitate to call them haters, but I have been involved with projects before where you could swear there was someone that was against what you're trying to do. So, how do you manage those people?

First like I said, go sit down and listen. Don't go over and be defensive and start telling your side of the story until you understand what they know and what they feel about what you're trying to do.

Understand that not all criticism even deserves a response. You could be absolutely exhausted by trying to respond to every single negative comment that is ever made about what you're trying to achieve. Really focus your efforts on, if you can't turn them around quickly, try to focus your efforts on those who are trying to help advance the mission rather than wasting all of your time and energy.

I think you should always be willing to admit your shortcomings. We actually have a chart that we call our Slot. It's got our strengths and weaknesses. We're very well aware of them. And we are willing to admit those to others. I think it's important to do that.

And then you need to have a plan. If you can't turn someone around who's trying to hinder your efforts, then how would you manage that? How will you go about advancing your mission in spite of that?

This is the way that we initially kind of came up with how we wanted to build the database. So you can see the matrix here. I call it SAM. Those you have very low interest in what we're trying to achieve and have honestly, very little influence. And I put an example as possibly most urban residents.

It's not that they don't care, it's just that they've got access to adequate, sufficient broadband so they're not that engaged. Not willing to put as much time and effort into what you're trying to accomplish for the more rural communities.

And honestly, residents in and of themselves individually, don't have that much power unless they're associated with possibly an organization or a company or another role that they play, that does have more power.

So those people basically, we just monitor. For the most part they pull information from us. Whether it's news that comes from the media, we have a Web site that will be coming out. We had one we're completely revamping that. But they basically seek information from us and we don't spend a lot of time pushing information to them.

The second group are those that have a lot of interest in what you're trying to accomplish. But they just don't have a lot of influence or power to make it happen. Again that would be individual residents.

But for the most part, those that live in rural areas, because they are very interested in making sure this advances, individual businesses, libraries, schools; all the community anchor institutions. They want to make this happen but many of them on their own are not able to have a lot of influence or power to see that it happens.

Group 3 has low interest but they've got very high influence. An example of that might be some legislators. Every legislator has a lot of power to either help your agenda move forward or they can really put a damper on it quickly.

I think it's very important to, I call it, keep satisfied. But it's basically keep them informed with the right level of information, with the right answers to the questions, at the right time. You want to keep them very well informed of what you're doing.

So, basically keep them satisfied. If they do know what the effort is, why it's advancing, and why you are trying to push forward what you are.

The last group is really one that we focus the most on. They have a lot of interests in seeing this effort become a huge success. And they also have a lot

of influence. These are the media, legislators, Congressional delegates and the Governor and his staff, himself.

We keep them very engaged. Try to keep them very informed. We solicit input from them because it is important. It helps our program efforts be better. And you have buy-in or a lot better chance of buy-in if you are engaging your really, really high interest, high influence stakeholders.

So what I did after we created this matrix. We have to then begin to plug in people where they best fit. So you can see that I created a database here. I call it my SAM database.

And I would like to let you know up front, just in case you know any of these people, I color coded this for the purposes of this Webinar, in a completely different way than what they're color coded in our real database.

So you can see that they are assigned a SAM number, whether they're a 1 through 4. Then if they're a green, they're fully behind your effort. If they're a red they're someone that may not fully understand it. And at the current moment is not productive with helping advance your efforts as they could be.

The key interest column is one of those efforts that they might be most willing to engage in. P is for policy, A, access; U, utilization, and F is our funding sources.

Status is whether they are actively working with you. N is they are completely neutral, or C is, if at this point they are a critic.

Communication I put in there, first and foremost they would like to receive email. Second followed by a phone call, and third by a text message. And

gain, I did color code this for the purposes of this. All these people are highly behind our project. Each of these is the Mayor of a town in Alabama.

From that what I do in my database is if I click on one of the number 4s, it takes me to everyone who's a number 4. So those that have the highest interest and the highest amount of power. And again, I filled in these columns specifically for the purposes of this Webinar.

Again our 4s might be for you or they might be against you in what you're trying to accomplish. So that is broken out like that. And then I also have it broken out by whether they're Board members or, on and on.

That way it's easy to copy and paste these into our Constant Contact form for each of communication.

So communicating with our contacts. First of all we try to determine what information they want to receive. Then we try to figure out how they prefer. Like I said, email or phone. Then how often they want to receive it. Some want you to let them know as soon as you know something. Others prefer you hold it until the end of the week.

Then we wanted to find out, in what situations would you like me to contact you. Or, if you have a proxy, that for other situations you prefer that I pass information through them as well and let them be the gatekeeper to that information.

It's really important; five and six. Be aware of staff fatigue. When you have very limited staff, like in our office one person, you can quickly become fatigued with stakeholder engagement. You've got to make sure that you're

not so involved with managing your stakeholders that you are letting your projects slip and quit advancing your goals and missions themselves.

Also critical, be aware of stakeholder fatigue. You can quickly wear out the people that are volunteering and offering of their time. And we don't have a single stakeholder who their time is not highly valuable, highly precious to them. They're pulled in a million directions. You cannot wear them out of they'll drop out of the project.

I put number 7 up there because I think sometimes we think that if we create a fancy Web site and newsletters and social media and all of that, that that is stakeholder engagement. It's not. Those are tools for stakeholder engagement when they're used effectively.

But those tools within themselves are not stakeholder engagement. So we've got to be really focused on the fact of putting all of these communication tools together. We've then got to use those effectively or, they're not engaging anyone.

So these are some of our current and under construction communication means that we use. Like I mentioned, our Web site is totally being revamped. Social media is under construction. We're beginning newsletters and surveys. We had our first Governor's Summit on broadband this year. That will continue.

We are planning a number of really exciting events for 2017 but, those are all on the horizon. So, what? You're talking about you have the ability to reach one million people or over that amount right now at this time, even with everything that's up there listed in that box.

Yes, and this is how. Our stakeholders. Our stakeholders help communicate our message. We have the AlabatNet that has over 400,000. Those are veterans in the state. And those are individual veterans.

And we've got AARP that works with us to push out messages. ALPHA, all the Chambers of Commerce which are all over the state. You can see the list there goes on and on.

These people are critical. I can send out -- you could see here -- eight or nine emails and the message could get pushed out to over a million and a half people. That's really important. Why would I spend all the time and energy and resources out of the one person office to push a message out, trying to get it out to over a million people?

Really the only way to do that would be the media, and then you would be relying on them to pick up your message and share it. And you'd be relying on people to read it.

So these people are critical to us. And this is just a very small list of them. It's really quite extensive but it gives you an idea of, utilize your stakeholders. They want to be used. They are ready, willing, and they've got the ability to help share your message.

So definitely take advantage of that. Don't beat your head against the wall and try to do something that other people can help you do.

We have a lot of other ideas on the forefront. And I actually pulled this chart from a Web site called Cahoots. But this is what I was talking about.

Bottom left-hand corner, minimal effort. They're the ones. Let them pull information from you if and when they would like to do that.

The number twos in the bottom right-hand corner, show them some consideration. Push out some messages to them and they will you know, take advantage of them if and when they care to.

The ones in the upper left-hand corner, I said, keep satisfied. Those are the ones that you really want to begin to push more information to and receive information from and actually engage them much more frequently.

And then of course the number four is in the upper right-hand corner. Those are the ones where there needs to be a lot of hands on management, hands on engagement, and two-way communication. So, those are just some ideas. Put that chart out there for you to take advantage of.

And last but definitely not least, these are the end goals of all of our communication and stakeholder efforts. But they are on the forefront of everything we decide to do related to stakeholders.

You've got to know before you launch on a stakeholder engagement or management effort, what is your end result? What do you hope it looks like?

Well ours is, we want to increase awareness of what we're doing, and the benefits of everyone we're doing it, hoping that that will increase buy-in and reduce opposition.

Secondly, we want to connect to people who have the ability to connect to others. We want to connect to people who are influential and can help shape

our efforts. Like I mentioned before, I couldn't make it without our 50 Board members.

And I will tell you as a side note, 50 Board members is a lot of people. And when the Governor asked for my list of people that I would recommend for the Advisory Board, when I gave him that list he said, "Do you think honestly, you will ever get 50 people engaged in this effort." And I said, "Absolutely. It's that important to each and every one of them. I do believe that they will come."

After the first Board meeting he asked me, how many of the 50 Board members show up and I told him, 86. Not only did the Board members come but, a lot of other people that had heard about the meeting came as well. And a lot of Board members brought other people with them.

This effort, broadband, everything that you're working on related to it, is so critical for our communities. Absolutely so critical.

If you could hear the phone calls that I hear every day of people that are hurting; people that are crying from lack of access to the same opportunities, we have to advance this across our country or, we are just leaving more and more people behind.

So back to number 3. As I mentioned, you want to connect with those who can help communicate your message. You want to increase transparency. As a state government entity working directly for the Governor, we want our efforts to be transparent. And we are in everything we do, right down to our meetings which we pot on line, and everyone is welcome to attend.

And then last but definitely not least, you want to help people understand so it will help reduce objections. And there will still be objections. You just pretty much, if you're doing something positive in life, you know, even as an individual, there are going to be times people will be against you.

But you have to keep your eye on your mission. Keep your eye on the goal and who you're here working for and, it will help you work through those objections.

So that's it Brian.

Brian Gibbons: Thank you very much Kathy for that presentation and to Anne too. Again you're listening to BroadbandUSA's Webinar series that's on stakeholder engagement.

We've had a couple of questions come in and, you too can submit a question if you'd like. We're going to take the questions now. We'll have a wrap up in a bit on future Webinars and what have you.

But Katherine, I understand we've heard from some folks which is great.

Katherine Bates: Yes, we have and I've grouped them to questions to Anne and then questions to Kathy. So Anne, how many miles of fiber are included in your statewide network?

Anne Byers: I would have to ask my colleague, (Tom Rossis) about that. I can do that and get back to - give that information to Katherine and Brian.

Katherine Bates: Okay.

Brian Gibbons: Okay, great.

Katherine Bates: And then, what year did the NITC begin?

Anne Byers: In 1998.

Katherine Bates: Okay. And, did the Nebraska Healthcare Information Exchange Project include both the development of medical information and broadband infrastructure? And if not, does it run on your Network Nebraska?

Anne Byers: It does not run on Network Nebraska. The participants set up a CPN usually to - if they're providing information. And the participants already had an electronic health records system.

                   NeHII was simply a mechanism for exchanging that data. I hope that answers that question. Health Information Exchange is kind of a challenging concept to explain.

Katherine Bates: And then lastly Anne, regarding the fiber infrastructure for NeHII, who owns the network? How are providers engaged and, is there a competitive environment? Is that what lowers the price per mg, and/or increases your user base?

Anne Byers: NeHII does not own any fiber. Network - it's really more of an application than you know, a network infrastructure. You know all the facilities have to have broadband access if you're going to participate in NeHII. But they get that through generally, their local providers.

Network Nebraska leases telecommunication facilities from providers in Nebraska. Network Nebraska doesn't actually own any fiber. It's all leased infrastructure.

And we think that's very important because that encourages private investment in Nebraska's telecommunications infrastructure, and any investments made by providers to serve Network Nebraska. Then that infrastructure could also be used to serve other customers.

Katherine Bates: Okay. Now I'll move on to Kathy with a couple of questions. And Kathy one, some said, great slides. What is your graphics package? And I agree. I thought that was a cute comment.

Kathy Johnson: That's so funny because everywhere I've ever worked, somehow I end up becoming the presentation person.

Yes, I have - honestly most of those I just developed myself. I love transitions. I work with those. I can look back - there is a company that sell graphics like that. And I could look through that and I could actually send that to you too as well, so that you can send it out.

Katherine Bates: Okay.

Kathy Johnson: But, thank you.

Katherine Bates: I thought it too, so I had to ask that. Then I know the answer to this but, how many employees do you have and what is your budget? And I think that's important to note because you do a lot of work. So it looks like you have this big staff I think.

Kathy Johnson: Yes, you saw those staff members listed there. I actually had an assistant but she retired recently. And so I do not have staff. That's why I say, the stakeholder engagement is absolutely critical.

I can pick up the phone and call a Board member and they'll make a call for me at any time. I really have to utilize those relationships because it is just me.

As far as the budget, I'm a part of the Governor's budget. I don't have specific money that's assigned to me. I put in a request for anything that I ever need. But the Governor has been so supported of broadband. He really gets it.

And there hasn't been anything that I have asked for as far a resource that I need for my office, that he didn't approve. But I don't have a budget. I really don't. I have to turn in travel and everything and get it approved.

Katherine Bates: Okay. And then lastly for you Kathy, and then I want to go back to some information someone talked about for Anne is, what is your budget - no, I just asked that. I'm sorry.

Is your state allowed to mix public and private funds for projects?

Kathy Johnson: That's something we're actually currently looking at because there have been a number of communities that have asked that question.

Right now, as far as I know, from what I've been able to research, our legislation is neutral on it or, is silent. It just doesn't say. It doesn't say you can have public/private partnerships, but it also doesn't say you can't.

And I'll give you an example of one, and this is why it's basically allowed. It's just that our laws do not address it or prohibit it.

Our Alabama Super Computer Authority is very much, like Anne was describing of their network, the Alabama super Computer Authority connects every K-12 school to high speed Internet. Actually to fiber. So we have fiber at every single K-12 school in the state.

And that is all leased from providers. So that's an example of a public/private partnership where we have a quasi-government entity that is contracting with all the private service providers - or public service providers.

And so I don't know if that answers that, but we're basically neutral on it as far as our state laws go. But we are assessing that to see if that's something that needs to be addressed.

Katherine Bates: Okay, and then I have another question that came in about your map - your broadband map. Are you planning to update - and actually this can go to either Anne or Kathy.

Are you planning to update your broadband map with the end of the FBI grant? And if you are, how? And I think Kathy might know that answer a little bit quicker.

Kathy Johnson: Yes, we definitely are going to. Ours went off line for almost a year and, I got so many phone calls from it. It was critical, not only to individual citizens who wanted to find out who their provider options were and be connected to them. It was not only important to communities that were trying to figure out if they had adequate. It was important to economic developers who were trying to recruit businesses and know where they could best place them.

It was important to all of our state agencies. But it also was important to people who were applying for grants and loans and needed to prove that there was not a current 401 provider in the area.

So we got so many requests for it that I'm going to include with my appropriations request for next year, the ability to resume the mapping efforts. And the way we will do that is, we will send out an RFP and we will get a vendor on board that will collect all that data from the service providers and/or the 477 data. And then we will populate the maps here in our GIS Department of our Economic Community Affairs. So yes, we are going to resume that. We think it's critical.

Katherine Bates: Okay, that's good news. And then Anne, do you know if Nebraska is?

Anne Byers: This spring we updated the map and there are plans to do another refresh soon. And our Nebraska Public Service Commission just asked providers to provide them the same data as they were submitting to the FCC for their Form 471 reporting.

Katherine Bates: Okay, so it's the Nebraska Public Service Commission is the keeper of the map in Nebraska?

Anne Byers: Yes.

Katherine Bates: Okay. Okay, that's great. And then I did want to note that someone sent the links for the Network Nebraska map of where - so we'll add that into the information on the slides. We'll put links in for people who are interested, to see where the map of Network Nebraska is.

And then -- sorry, I'm reading these as I'm talking -- and we'll include that map and another one for Alabama too. And that's it for the questions from the audience. Last chance to ask questions.

Brian Gibbons: And if there are, that's great. And if not, we appreciate everyone who has attended and I also appreciate both Anne and Kathy, your efforts today to present this information which was not only on stakeholder engagement, but it was great that people were also able to find out more about what's happening in your states with regards to broadband and how you're taking advantage of technology and that sort of thing.

I guess one question - one final question for Anne would be, is that you mentioned that the Health Information Network had 3.2 million files, users, or whatever, but there's only 1.9 million residents in Nebraska. So it sounds like it's pretty popular.

Anne Byers: Yes. You know a lot of people travel for healthcare, especially in Omaha. You know we've got two teaching hospitals and so a lot of people from the region will travel to Omaha. But you know we also have other borders and people travel for healthcare.

Brian Gibbons: All right. Well again, thanks both Kathy Johnson with the State of Alabama, and Anne Byers with the State of Nebraska for presenting today on our BroadbandUSA's Monthly Webinar.

A reminder that these Webinars have been every month and they'll be the third Wednesday of each month, 2:00 pm Eastern is the time. The Webinars will be announced on the BroadbandUSA Web site. You have the link in front of you.

Again you can put in your search engine, BBUSA NITA and typically the first selection coming up will be our Web site, BroadbandUSA.

The series remains under development, so we're interested to hear from you with regards to suggestions for future Webinars. You can send those comments to Lynn Chadwick here at NTIA and there's her email address there.

We want to thank the folks who helped put together this Webinar including Katherine Bates, Lynn Chadwick, and I guess I'll pass one along to myself too.

Katherine Bates: I'll thank Brian.

Brian Gibbons: Thank you very much Katherine. And we hope to see you again next week -- excuse me, next month. Tune in again, again April 19, 2:00 pm Eastern Time for the next BroadbandUSA Webinar on topics of interest to policymakers, decision makers, individuals, and communities. Thank you very much.

END