

Illinois Broadband Deployment Council
Minutes of the February 16, 2006
Capitol Development Board Room 349 C, Stratton Building
Videoconference location: 15th Floor, James R. Thompson Center

Roll Call.

Springfield Attendees. Lt. Governor Pat Quinn, Ray Cagle, Martin Cohen, Katherine Dawkins, Michael Dickson, Doug Dougherty, Tammy Eighmy, Ed Feser, Dan Hamilton, Brad Housewright, Jody Johnson, Rick Johnson, Mark Kinkade, Dori Koenneker, Herb Kuryliw, Janet Lambert, John Miller, Lynn Murphy, Sarah Nelson, Deno Perdiou, Scott Riggs, John Scrivner, Deborah Seal, Lowry Taylor, Alex Villar, Ray Williams, Don Wood, Philip Wood

Chicago Attendees (videoconference). Sara Bianco, Ellen Craig, Annie Collins, Wendy Farley, Manny Flores, Nicole Friedman, John Hester, Tony Hylton, Robert Levin, Joel Mulder, Melvin Patterson, Doug Power, Greg Robertson, Mel Nickerson.

Lt. Governor's Office Attendees. Carolyn Brown Hodge, Steven Simon, Ted Gibbs, Daniel Persky

Call to Order and Opening Remarks. Lt. Governor Quinn called the meeting to order at 2:07 PM.

Minutes.

The Lt. Governor brought the group's attention to the December 2005 minutes. Michael Dickson moved to approve the minutes, and Mark Kinkade seconded. Council voted to approve the minutes.

Council Discussion.

Center for Neighborhood Technology Wireless Community Networks. Lt. Governor Quinn asked Nicole Friedman of CNT to give a synopsis of the West Frankfort Wireless Community Networks project.

Nicole explained that the Wireless Community Networks project has been going on for two years in four separate pilot locations: West Frankfort, Elgin, and two Chicago neighborhoods – Pilsen and North Lawndale. West Frankfort is the only network using 900 mhz instead of 2.4 Ghz technology.

CNT has partnered with the West Frankfort Housing Authority on this project, making wireless Internet available at facilities including senior housing buildings. The network is being used as a “lifeline” for residents of West Frankfort public housing to keep in contact with friends and relatives. The CNT Wireless Community Networks are funded through September 2006. CNT is currently developing sustainability plans for all four networks.

The Lt. Governor asked Nicole if there were any unforeseen obstacles in implementing this project. Nicole replied that CNT did not anticipate that trees and topography would require the use of 900 Mhz equipment in West Frankfort. This equipment is not as readily available off-the-shelf.

Nicole added that there is a fear of technology that CNT has had to help people overcome. Good outreach and strong local partners are key to this effort.

The Lt. Governor asked if the project was adaptable to other cities. Nicole responded that it is, and CNT is interested in helping other communities on similar wireless projects.

The Lt. Governor asked Nicole to recap CNT’s activities in the areas affected by Hurricane Katrina. Nicole explained that CNT volunteers set up wireless connectivity at shelters for those displaced by Katrina. She also noted that the Lt. Governor’s Office arranged for technology firms to donate desktop and laptop computers, as well as other items to be used at the shelters.

Lt. Governor Quinn asked if it would be wise to look into setting up an Illinois Wifi Network for use in emergencies. Nicole said this would be useful. The Lt. Governor said that Illinois needs to explore the uses of Wifi across the state.

John Scrivner added his own synopsis of the Wireless Internet Service Providers Association (WISPA) efforts to aid Katrina refugees. He specifically noted that Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) was a vital connection to the outside world for those in shelters.

John then added that a current FCC proceeding, 04-0186, will have an impact on the ability to deploy wireless broadband services. The FCC’s decision will determine what is done with unused spectrum in the UHF band, which is necessary for rural broadband deployment. John is concerned that it will be auctioned off to just a few players, with little being left unlicensed. This spectrum offers an opportunity to use the low frequency band to provide near - universal broadband access in rural areas.

Tony Daniels of Central Management Services added that CMS sent teams to Louisiana to assist shelters with satellite connectivity. He also made note of an Illinois State Police wireless network, STARCOMM 21, which will be operation soon. He agreed with John that increased spectrum access is important for wireless deployment.

Springfield Wireless. Lt. Governor Quinn asked about the Springfield Wireless project. Carolyn Brown Hodge gave an overview. The project is an extension of the Lt. Governor's Main Street Wireless program. Possible partners for the project include CMS, the library, the Main Street organization, the Chamber of Commerce, the medical community, Horace Mann, and the Springfield Journal Register.

Carolyn asked if Tony Daniels thought Labor Day weekend would be a possible time to announce the project. Tony said that we need to establish a business plan first. He said that CMS is willing to bring \$150,000 to \$200,000 of equipment to the table for the project, but would need a stakeholder agreement covering all the details before making t his commitment.

Mt. Vernon Main Street Wireless. The Lt. Governor asked John Scrivner about progress on the Main Street Wireless project in Mt. Vernon. John said that the agreement with Ameren to use Ameren light poles took a lot of time to establish, because Ameren has never made such an agreement before. The agreement is now being considered by the City Council. Once this is approved, the project will be launched right away, as the equipment is already purchased.

SI Connect. The Lt. Governor asked for an update on Southern Illinois (SI) Connect. Jody Johnson explained that SI Connect is an eighteen month initiative to improve the southern Illinois economy with improved telecommunications infrastructure. SI Connect is a collaboration between health care providers, economic developers, ISPs, cable companies, and others. They are striving to create a new business model to spur deployment of broadband. A public meeting for this effort is scheduled.

Deborah Seale added that the health care industry's interest in this project is for telemedicine. Health care is a high-bandwidth industry. Doctors need access for different applications including evaluating medical records.

Brad Housewright of Heartland Communications said the major question is how to deploy in areas with no infrastructure. For example, it is useful for the telecom companies to all work together, including wireless providers, to use a network to bring service to the area. This is not traditionally how the industry works. The Lt. Governor acknowledged that thinking outside of the box is a major challenge for members of the Council. He asked when the public meeting was to be held. Jody Johnson responded that the meeting is Wednesday, February 22 at John A. Logan Community College.

CMS Rural Broadband Study. Lt Governor Quinn asked Tony Daniels to give a summary of the CMS Rural Broadband Study. Tony said that CMS paid for Level 3

Communications to do a feasibility study about bringing wireless access to rural Illinois. The study was just completed, and Tony said he would give a more thorough explanation at the next meeting. He said the major question is how the state could participate in broadband deployment without being considered anti-competitive.

The solution to this question proposed by the study is to create a three tiered network consisting of the following players:

?? Wireless Network Owner. *The state or other entity.*

?? Wireless Network Operator. *Third party who activates and runs the network, offering wholesale access.*

?? Internet Service Providers. *Any number of companies offering service to the end-user. ISPs would handle customer service, billing, etc.*

Using this model allows the state to help without “getting into the business” of providing telecommunications service. He added that potential funding options include Homeland Security funding, the State Lottery, and Rural Utilities Service funding. StarComm 21 may also have extra capacity for commercial development. Tony concluded his summary by saying that the study shows there is money to be made in rural Illinois in broadband service, and that the state’s flat terrain is ideal for wireless service.

Broadband Mapping. Doug Dougherty of the Illinois Telecommunications Association explained a mapping proposal that the ITA and Illinois State University developed. Doug’s members in the ITA would not commit funding to the study. He expressed interest in resurrecting the effort, and thought the 2007 Telecommunications Act rewrite would be an opportunity for this.

Ray Williams of DCEO suggested that Jack Lavin would be interested in committing DCEO funds to the \$50,000 project. Mark Kinkade of IDOT added that IDOT has a contract with NavTech which allows them to share data and maps provided by the company with all state agencies, municipalities, and colleges. Steven Simon suggested that he, Doug Dougherty, Dave Loomis of ISU, Ed Feser of U of I, Ray Williams, and Mark Kinkade would be a “working group” that carries out this project.

Doug Power of Northern Illinois University asked how similar this effort would be to the E-NC mapping project carried out in North Carolina. Ed Feser said that the E-NC maps had two layers of data – one public and one private. The effort should not be a “one-time” deal, he said, and should be an updated map that is one piece of a larger broadband deployment plan.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Broadband Needs. John Miller of the Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission gave an overview of how broadband access is important to the deaf and hard of hearing. Broadband is necessary for “videophone” (VP) and video relay service (VRS). These applications allow communication between hard of hearing and non-hard of hearing people without delay (traditional phone relay services have involved delays while audible communications were translated back and forth). The use of VRS has gone up 2000% in the last two years, according to the FCC. Sprint and other

companies have facilitated access to this application by providing free videophones and web cams.

John then noted page 7 of the November minutes, where 200 kbps was discussed as a low-end “broadband” service eligible for public funding through the Council’s Illinois Finance Authority funding bill (HB 5361). VRS and VP services require at least 512 kbps speeds.

Tony Hylton of Aurora said that 200 kbps is not broadband and that we need to define a minimum requirement for a service to be considered “broadband.”

Legislative Update. Lt. Governor Quinn moved on to an update on legislative proposals. He gave a summary of his I-Connect initiative, HB 5244, which is being sponsored by Rep. Robin Kelley. The original proposal was to provide all Illinois students, beginning in seventh grade, with laptop computers. The proposal has been amended to be a \$5 million pilot project providing laptops to seventh graders in select schools – 30 in Cook County, 30 in Chicago, and 2 in every other Regional Office of Education area. The bill unanimously passed in committee. The Governor is favorable and other states have done similar initiatives. The Lt. Governor also thanked Doug Dougherty for the ITA’s support of the bill, and Philip Wood of Verizon for his advice on the need to keep broadband demand increasing.

Tony Hylton asked how the schools were to be selected. The Lt. Governor responded that any school could apply to the I-Connect Board set up in the bill, and the board would select the participating schools from this pool of applicants.

Steven Simon began to discuss HB 5361, which is the Illinois Finance Authority funding bill developed by the Broadband Deployment Council. The bill is in Executive Committee and has not moved. Lt. Governor Quinn added that Reps. George Scully and Connie Howard are sponsoring the bill, and that Rep. Scully has chosen 5361 as one of his three main bills this session. He added that “we are running in place” in Illinois and we need to see access to capital if we are going to be a leader in broadband. He urged all members to contact leadership and ask them to move the bill.

Steven Simon then brought up HB 5292, sponsored by Rep. Julie Hamos. The first draft of HB 5292 increase access to public telecommunications infrastructure, including state-owned dark fiber and the Illinois Century Network. During a committee hearing just before the Broadband Deployment Council meeting started, a Broadband Subcommittee was created in the House Telecommunications Committee. HB 5292 will be a discussion piece outlining policy issues that the Broadband Subcommittee will deal with. Steven asked Doug Dougherty of the ITA to explain further, as he attended the committee hearing. Doug explained that the first hearing of the Broadband Subcommittee is likely to be in May. Lt. Governor Quinn urged everyone to participate in the subcommittee and said that HB 5292 is a work in progress.

Carolyn Brown Hodge explained that a telemedicine bill supported by the Lt.

Governor's Office and several members of the Broadband Deployment Council did not pass. She expressed her disappointment that supporters were unable to find a sponsor willing to carry the bill. The bill would have changed laws governing the practice of telemedicine. Currently, doctors outside of Illinois cannot conduct practice in Illinois via the Internet. Nine other states allow doctors licensed in other states to practice telemedicine, and Missouri has draft legislation that is being considered.

Tony Hylton brought up some concern related to HB 5292, specifically that it might require municipalities to make their telecommunications facilities available to the state if they want to be eligible for state telecommunications funding. The Lt. Governor took note of these concerns and repeated that 5292 is a work in progress. He added that he is not happy with the fate of the telemedicine bill, and that state-based licensure is not good. He thought perhaps a pilot bill with Barnes Hospital in St. Louis might be able to pass. He asked Deborah Seale her thoughts on the issue. She said most opposition was concerned about the use of Medicaid funds and the liability if something happens to a patient who utilized a doctor in another state via the Internet. The Lt. Governor added that the bottom line is that the Medical Society opposed the bill.

Other Business. The Lt. Governor then asked if there was another legislation that needed to be discussed. No Council attendees had further bills to discuss. Lt. Governor Quinn asked Mike Dickson about the article on the digital divide that appeared in the Macomb newspaper. Mike hadn't seen the article until the Council meeting, but said the article speaks for itself about the need for better telecommunications access, and that he was accurately quoted in the article.

The Lt. Governor asked Mike to talk about the Center for the Application of Information Technologies (CAIT) at Western Illinois University. Mike is the Executive Director of CAIT. CAIT is a self sustaining organization that doesn't use any tax dollars. Currently CAIT has a staff of 45 employees. They are working to develop online technology for the Department of Children and Family Services, and are also the sole provider of online training programs for McDonald's. CAIT is also working with the Department of Defense on current projects. The organization is now looking at how to improve the availability of broadband in western Illinois.

Mike then brought up his goals for the Broadband Deployment Council, which include figuring out future steps for the Illinois Century Network. The original goal of the ICN was to have no schools on dial-up. Now, schools need more bandwidth. "ISP status" is no longer enough for the ICN, because its future will depend on content and applications. There needs to be a plan for a "Next Century Network." The Lt. Governor agreed that this is an important project.

The Lt. Governor brought attention to the Rock Falls handout. Carolyn Brown Hodge said she didn't think it needed discussion but thought it was worth sharing. She asked Mark Kinkade about the IDOT plans for broadband hotspots at rest areas. Mark said that the pilot has hit a "speed bump," and the agency is currently looking at other state models, where states get nearly 100% of the revenue. An RFP is being drafted and

Mark is confident there will be bidders. The VSAT pilot with CMS was successful, but there are not sufficient resources at IDOT to sustain such a program.

Adjournment. The Lt. Governor asked if anyone had anything further to add. Hearing nothing more, he set the next meeting of the Council for May 10, 2006 at 10:00 AM in Chicago and Springfield.

Lt. Governor Quinn thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting.