

FCC Broadband Workshop

“State and Local Government Toolkits and
Best Practices”

September 1, 2009

Commissioner Ray Baum

Oregon Public Utility Commission

Chair of the NARUC Committee on Telecommunications

State Chair of the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service

Former Chair of the NARUC Task Force on Intercarrier Compensation
Reform

State and Local Government Toolkits and Best Practices

Introduction

Those areas of the country which do not have access to high-speed broadband of at least 10mbps in the next 5 to 7 years will be as economically disadvantaged as those areas of the country which did not have access to electricity and paved highways during the first half of the 20th Century.

If not provided such broadband access soon, those areas of the country may resemble the ghost towns of the west.

State and Local Government Toolkits and Best Practices

- *Starting from zero, where should a city or state begin when formulating broadband policy?*

Identify:

1. Consequences of no or limited access to broadband
 2. Roadblocks to further deployment (the cost of serving unserved/underserved areas)
 3. Elements that limit adoption and use
- *Are there certain policy elements that should be included in any comprehensive local broadband policy?*
 1. Policies should be technology neutral
 2. Policies should encourage private or public/private partnerships over public options except in unique circumstances
 3. Policies should focus on sustainable/durable solutions
 - *How to identify and address community-specific broadband needs*
 1. Surveys – Identify specific needs
 2. Provider inquiry lists – Identify consumers/businesses where service not available or speed is inadequate
 3. Community institutions, local officials and businesses address identified needs with possible providers, formulate plans to address adoption/demand aggregation

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- *What are the hardest issues? What aspects were easier than expected?*

Hardest:

1. Access to accurate broadband service availability data
2. USF/ICC reform – making a business case for deployment in unserved rural areas and supporting both POTS and Broadband
3. Impacts of the changing landscape of federal policy/regulation (open network issues, etc.)
4. Achieving cooperation and collaboration between the private and public sectors to ensure that broadband is deployed and available.
5. Ensuring that broadband is deployed and available in all socio-economic areas of urban communities

Easier:

1. Current financial support programs for educational institutions
 2. Engagement of cities and counties with direction and policies
 3. Leverage of ILECs to encourage broadband deployment
- *How much of the local approach is policy vs. legislation vs. execution?*
 1. Lacking direct oversight of broadband, the state operates mainly through policy directives
 2. Legislation is also limited to removing or minimizing obstacles to broadband deployment in support of the state's policy to promote broadband
 3. Local efforts have taken advantage of federal financial support programs
 4. Execution must result in a viable sustainable business case

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- *Balancing divergent interests among community stakeholders*
 1. Broadband quality and speed are vital to some institutions and access to a baseline service may be adequate for many consumers
 2. Multiple providers can best meet divergent interests – landline, fixed and mobile wireless
 3. Public sector becomes service provider of last resort when the private sector fails to be responsive to community needs
- *What types of alternative broadband network structures/mechanisms have been proven to work and in what context?*
 1. Public/private partnerships that provide sustainable community broadband services.
 2. New provider entrants/independent entrepreneurs that offer solutions to small areas not previously served by cable or ILEC
 3. Local government consortium when private sector cannot get it done
- *How can programs be measured over-time?*
 1. Broadband service availability
 2. Broadband service affordability
 3. Broadband service market penetration
 4. Broadband service utilization for the key applications of e-commerce, e-government, telehealth, telework, and distance education.

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- *Given the speed with which technology changes, how can policies be structured to ensure that they evolve in response to changes in community needs?*

Although not completely static, community needs for broadband are fairly basic. Policies which are state-wide, technology neutral and concentrate on end results will meet community needs such as 1) affordable access to the internet, 2) real-time video applications for medical/educational institutions, and 3) real-time data for first-line public safety organizations.

- *What can the FCC do to foster cooperation and sharing of information or best practices among state and local governments?*
 1. Either supply states or require broadband providers to supply states with data on their broadband services. (release form 477 data).
 2. Keep both state and local governments apprised on pending and new federal policy, regulation or supporting rules that will or may affect the deployment, speed, price or oversight of broadband services.
 3. Utilize the 706 Joint Conference on Broadband Deployment, the Federal-State Joint Boards on Universal Service and Separations to formulate policy options and recommendations.