

August 26 2011

BTOP Middle Mile Notes from the Conference Call - 8/26/2011

Welcome and introductions

Report of the NTIA BTOP conference call

- There has not been one in several weeks.

Discussion of Outreach Plans

The BTOP NTIA Cleveland workshop is focused on outreach.

Updates included:

- **Michigan:** At the onsite visit with NTIA, Merit presented their outreach program and it was well received. Some highlights:
 - A signed agreement to put fiber over the Mackinac Bridge that will have an associated outreach event at which the Governor will participate. The event that we will begin planning soon will be at the Mackinaw Bridge. This will be the first build on our round II project and it is significant as the bridge (literally) bridges Michigan's Upper and Lower Peninsula's.
 - 32 press events planned around the state
 - 52 community meetings held to date at CAIs
 - Frequently invitations to present project at different municipality groups
 - Before an event, outreach to all CAIs in the area and also to public officials. This helps with permitting.
 - Including a technical person at these events is useful
 - Messaging is very much public/private partnership; but they still hear some complaints
 - A lot of outreach with the State administration
 - Don Welch, the Merit CEO, participates in many committees, and most recently was asked to serve on the Governor's Cybersecurity Task force with the state CIO.
 - Outreach to elected officials to help them to understand the project, specifically that it is open access, they are encouraging local ISPs to connect, and it brings benefits to the state.
- **North Carolina:** MCNC held ground breaking for BTOP2. It was a four site event with ½ of the NC Federal delegation present. MCNC turned up its first 10GB segment from Rocky Mount to Greenville. The question was asked as to whether MCNC was the 1st awardee to light fiber. MCNC's strategy includes:
 - Involving private partners at events
 - Issuing an RFP for a marketing partner on fiber. It was a completely open competition for a commercial partner
 - **Ohio:** There are three projects in Ohio.
 - OARnet, is a sub-recipient and outreach events are being handled by private subcontractors
 - One Cleveland has spent a lot of time on outreach as indicated by the upcoming NTIA workshop and the agenda:
- Proposed Conference Themes:
- **Marketing to Community Anchor Institutions.** Sessions associated with this theme will focus on the key factors CAIs look for when assessing a provider. Attendees will have the opportunity to hear from and meet with representatives of health, education and government institutions. Sessions will present illustrative examples of specific broadband intensive applications that CAIs are looking to deploy.
- **Developing and Leveraging Cooperative Efforts Among Recipients.** The conference will provide opportunities for awardees to establish and strengthen partnerships.
- **Looking Forward: Approaches to Generating Revenue and Increasing Network Utilization.** Sessions will focus on key tactics and strategies to sustain your project for the future. Topics likely to be discussed in these sessions would include: approaches to funding last mile investments, working with wholesalers and resellers, and servicing data and call centers.
- **Compliance and Grants Management.** Sessions will provide guidance on A-133 Audits, matched funds, and project close-out procedures.
- **Best Practices: Approaches to Overcoming Execution Barriers.** Sessions will provide opportunities to share best practices, tips, guidance, and strategies that have helped awardees overcome project deployment challenges. Topics likely to be discussed in these sessions would include: fiber sourcing, make ready, and sub recipient and vendor monitoring.
- **Stakeholder Outreach Efforts.** Sessions will discuss defining your project's value proposition
- Ohio's other two projects are to commercial organizations who are handling their own outreach
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- **Wisconsin:** University of Wisconsin Madison is the recipient for the MUFN project. Their status update included the following items:
 - About 15 miles of conduit in the ground.
 - They have experienced some issues with permits.
 - Meeting with their NTIA program officer at the end of September.
 - Catching up to the original baseline after completing environmental assessment. Commercial entities are expressing some interest. Things are moving along well.
 - Some problems obtaining fiber. Ultimately they went to Comscope.
 - Talking to NTIA about being under budget (1-1 ¼ M). They are looking at adding locations and backbone pieces. They have asked NTIA about what this means for their metrics for completion. They are 2/3 done on the project this does not mean that they have spent 2/3 of the budget.
- **Puerto Rico:** Puerto Rico has a number of computer centers that they are connecting. They spent a lot of time on the environmental assessment. They have experienced some permitting issues with the process for neighborhoods. There are concerns about microwave transmissions. They feel NTIA has not spent enough time on the education process for new comers.
- ***Rhode Island:** *The northern section of their fiber map is complete in Providence County
 - George Loftus had an op-ed piece published in Sunday paper.
 - They are compiling a newsletter to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the start of the project. It will include a summary of progress to date.
 - They are planning to hold a gathering of city and town IT directors to help them think about how to use fiber, and how to connect.
 - They have found that having mayors on board and communications with townships is very beneficial.

Planning for Workshop in Raleigh on Monday October 3, 2011

- There is a draft agenda based on workgroup input that will be circulated.
- There will be at least two break out sessions where relevant topics can be discussed (a different one in each small group) and then there will be time for a report back to the larger group.
- It was suggested that instead of a panel regarding CAIs, this be treated as another breakout sessions with a representative for each type (if possible) sitting at a different table. Participants could pick the table they want to join and then report out to the larger group at the end of the session.
- The agenda will include an open discussion of addressing legislative threats. It is important to know how to tailor messages to elected officials at the state level.
- Anticipating 25-50 people; it is not clear how many will be lost to the NTIA conference in Cleveland.

Miscellaneous

- There is a BTOP publication on outreach
- There was a discussion of the distinction between the I2 meeting in Raleigh and the NTIA meeting in Cleveland.
- Letha at OARNet will distribute the agenda for the HTIA meeting to the listserv.
- There were questions about public safety issues
- George will follow up with a contact for Frank for the tower project in Florida

Next call. Sept 23 at 2:00 PM EDT.

Agenda

This is a reminder of our Middle-Mile /NTIA BTOP call this Friday at 2pm EDT.

George Loftus of OSHEAN will be our moderator for this call

Our agenda for this call is:

Agenda

- Welcome and introductions
 - Report of the NTIA BTOP conference call
 - Any participant of the call
 - Discussion of Outreach Plans
 - Round robin reports of progress / problems
 - Is fiber acquisition a problem?
 - Planning committee for Workshop in Raleigh on Monday October 3, 2011
 - NTIA meeting in Cleveland on October 5-7
 - Hot topics
 - Adjourn
- To join the call please use:
[1-734-615-7474](tel:1-734-615-7474) (Please use if you do not pay for Long Distance)
 or [1-866-411-0013](tel:1-866-411-0013) (toll free US/Canada Only)

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We look forward to speaking with you on Friday