**Stevens County Broadband Action Team
Summary of the Day: November 10, 2015**

**Attendees (alpha by last name):**

Andrea Alexander, WSU Extension FirstNet/WON (on phone)

Monica Babine, WSU Extension Digital Initiatives, FirstNet/WON (on phone)

John Berry, Senator Cantwell, Washington DC staff (on phone)

Mark Curtis, Stevens County IS Director

Theron DePaulo, Providence Health Care IT Director

Nancy Foll, Colville City Councilwoman

Debra Hansen, WSU Stevens County Extension Director

Robin Kennedy, Spokane Tribes Technical Advancement Officer

Dorothy Knauss, Chewelah Mayor

Jeff Koffel, Tri County Economic Development District

Mark Lafoon, Colville School Technology Director

Pete Lewis, Colville School Superintendent

Bryan Raines, Senator Cantwell, Spokane staff, John Berry

Amanda Six, Libraries of Stevens County Director

Nate Strege, Senator Cantwell, Spokane staff, John Berry

Jeff Tamietti, Ecliptixnet Internet Service Provider

Jessica Varang, Libraries of Stevens County IT Director

**Notes from the meeting:**

The issues and possible solutions that emerge by working together gives us a purpose to continue meeting. Here are a few group decisions:

* There is a renewed attention from government and we want to be knowledgeable about our needs so we can match them up with funding opportunities as they arise.
* We will continue to keep this group small, and comprised of agencies, government reps and anchor institutions.
* We will decide how and when to engage the businesses, community members and ISP vendors.
* Each person, agency or business much determine their own idea of what “high-speed” broadband is, which is defined by their use and capacity

**The next meeting is:**

**Wednesday, December 16 from 10-12 noon at the Stevens County IT conference room**

**Starting in January we will meet twice a week on the first and third Thursdays from 10-12**

Save the same date and time for a Regional FirstNet/WON meeting for public safety personnel and first responders at the WSU Extension Office in the afternoon. More information to come.

**A few goals and ideas to consider:**

* Create a comprehensive map of all fiber, providers, and gaps of service.
* Organize another Tech Expo to highlight the ISP options
* Provide letters of support to the legislators for broadband policy changes as they are
identified by our partners
* Consider proposing a “Dig Once” policy (see also Federal update notes) to ensure that any build-outs include broadband options
* Invite the state legislative reps to the meeting.

**Local projects, updates, issues and questions:**

**Spokane Tribes** (Robin Kennedy, Technical Advancement Officer)

Are exploring options with public safety with WA OneNet/FirstNet, fiber optics projects, a microwave system, VOIP, and involving the Chief of Police who has an interest in a state-of-the-art microwave system for emergency communications.

**Chewelah** (Mayor Dorothy Knauss)

**Residents** at the Chewelah Golf Course (175 homes) are mobilizing to increase their access to high-speed broadband. They have been told by CenturyLInk they are in a “broadband exhaust area” – it was built out for a smaller number of homes than exist there now. They held a community meeting and had providers there to report how they might help: Ecliptixnet, CenturyLink, Desert Wind, and Charter Communications.

**Businesses:** are also needing access to more broadband. According to housing permits, Chewelah is growing five times faster than Colville – they see a need for increased access to attract more businesses, namely a hotel. The Chamber of Commerce has recently conducted a business needs assessment and around broadband issues. We look forward to hearing about the data gathered when the survey is complete.

**Stevens County** (Mark Curtis, IS Director)

CenturyLink fiber is “in the ground” as they claim, yet we had to bring in a Verizon wireless hub for fire disaster response.

NoaNet fiber has been dropped and provides redundant fiber for the county. It is retailed through the Stevens County PUD, who provided cash match

Mark would like to see us maximize the OneNet/FirstNet build out designed for public safety and look for creative ways to piggyback for economic development. For example, if they pop out of a splice point in a rural area, allow ISP’s to use to deliver to local businesses and residents.

**Colville** (Nancy Foll, Councilwoman)

Looking to increase the broadband footprint and have an RFP out right now. She also sees a need for a regional technical support team that can provide mutual aid to each other.

**Colville School District** (Pete Lewis, Superintendent and Mark Lafoon, Technology Director)

Currently accessing K20 network at 100mg and feels it’s adequate at this time. They are waiting for approval of e-rate (reimbursement to schools and libraries based on the poverty rate of the community or school) to expand their network. The also mentioned the need for additional radio frequency coverage for busses – to protect medically fragile kids on the bus. Mark Curtis will look into letting them access the County system. IDEA: could this also be a need for other school districts?

**Libraries** (Amanda Six, Director and Jessica Varang, IT Director)

Eight locations, some have high-speed access. Hunters specifically was mentioned as hitting the ceiling.

**Providence Health Care** (Theron DePaulo, IT Director)

They have extensive needs for high-speed broadband with two hospitals (Mount Carmel and St. Joseph’s) and seven clinics in the region. Having last-mile access to area resident will bolster the community increase health options for all clients. Rural hospitals have difficulty staffing physicians who have a lot of requirements to access the hospital system.

**State and Federal Updates:**

**Andrea Alexander**

Working in collaboration is good so we can advocate for broadband access to all, across jurisdictions and throughout rural communities. We can have a consistent message to our legislators. We can share solutions and ideas that work.

**Monica Babine** (WSU Extension Digital Initiatives)

FirstNet/OneNet is gathering information from public safety professionals in three ways, an online survey, regional meetings and an online mapping tool. Omak will be holding a meeting on November 24. We will organize one for the tri-county area in December. Monica will send out the email message with the survey to us for a renewed distribution. Mark Curtis noted that the meetings to date have been overwhelmingly represented by the urban communities. Monica agreed and hopes these efforts will bring our voice to the table.

Announced that there will be a Statewide Broadband Meeting in mid-February organized by Senator Murray’s team. She will share more information as it becomes available.

Senator Cantwell’s office is making inquiries to CenturyLink to find out how and where they will be investing the Connect America Funds (CAF) that is designated for rural communities. She has also written a bipartisan letter signed by all delegates asking the FCC to change how this money is determined (See attached copy of the letter.)

Information about Dig Once – Supported by the [White House BOC](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/broadband_opportunity_council_report_final.pdf) and is gaining traction. The [Broadband Conduit Deployment Act of 2015](1.%09http%3A/eshoo.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/10.22.15-Dig-Once-Bill-Text.pdf) was introduced this month. US Representative Suzan DelBene (D-WA), and US Representative Greg Walden (R-OR) are co-sponsors. I participated in the annual [IACC Conference](http://www.infrafunding.wa.gov/conference.html) in Wenatchee and am following up with CERB, the WA Public Works Board and others to see how we can further explore this in our state.