**Governor’s Task Force on Broadband**

**Monday, August 29, 2022**

**10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**Virtual Meeting via Teams**

**Task Force Members Present:** Teddy Bekele, Yvonne Cariveau, Nolan Cauthen, Steve Fenske, Steve Giorgi, Jason Hollinday, Marc Johnson, Brian Krambeer, Micah Myers, Phil Stalboerger, Theresa Sunde, Dave Wolf

**Task Force Members Absent:** Jim Weikum, Paul Weirtz

**Others in Attendance:** Jessica Barthel,John Bassing, Carol Bossuyt, Hannah Buckland, Scott Cole, Angie Dickison, Jennifer Frost, Karrie Jansen, Bernadine Joselyn, Scott Marquardt, Ron Mitchell Jr, Ann Treacy, Dan Weber, Diane Wells, Katie Wojchik, Nathan Zacharias

1. **Welcome, Task Force Introductions, Attendee Introductions**

Chair Bekele called the meeting to order and roll call was taken. Chair Bekele provided an overview of the agenda.

1. **Economic Development and Broadband Deployment in Greater MN**

Scott Marquardt from the Southwest Initiative Foundation provided information about work with rural economic vitality in his region. The three biggest issues in his large area are childcare, housing and broadband. He has a lot of 3-digit communities and his largest is Willmar with a population of 21,000 people. Loan activity is at an all-time high so there is a lot of interest in businesses wanting to expand in rural Minnesota. There are a variety of business loans right now, ranging from retail to service to manufacturing. There are a number of social enterprises being created, too.

Scott shared information from a report from the IEDC (International Economic Development Council) called Getting Connected. Here is a link to the report: [Getting Connected: How Economic Developers Are Expanding Broadband Access - International Economic Development Council (iedconline.org)](https://www.iedconline.org/edrp-reports/archive/getting-connected-how-economic-developers-are-expanding-broadband-access/)

Scott discussed site selection, business transition, reinvention and succession and the need for reliable and affordable broadband to succeed. Many new businesses collaborate with multiple banks and credit unions to get started. To engage with people to promote digital equity, Scott has seen that in urban areas, faith communities are very important because they may have a safe gathering spot, like a church basement, where voices can be heard.

1. **Outgoing Task Force member, Bernadine Joselyn**

Bernadine Joselyn has been a task force member from the beginning and has now resigned after the Blandin Foundation sunset the broadband program and her position was eliminated. She encouraged task force members to continue to maximize the public investment with the maximum number of people that can benefit from broadband resources. Thank you for your service, Bernadine!

1. **Update from the Office of Broadband Development**

Diane Wells, Deputy Director of the Office of Broadband Development, provided an update on the status of applications for federal funding for digital equity and broadband infrastructure (both applications have been submitted and are curing), the open Border to Border grant round ($95 million in grants with 135 applications from 45 providers), and the hiring status for the Digital Equity Lead (Hannah Buckland started last Wednesday) and Executive Director (hope that the Governor’s Office will announce hiring by end of September). Each state will receive at least $100 million for broadband infrastructure through the BEAD program and Minnesota has been advised it will receive around $650 million total. Minnesota will still be short if we want to connect all of Minnesota, but we will be closer. For Capital Project Funding from the American Rescue Plan Act, that funding will be used for the Low Density Pilot Program and for the Line Extension Program which will be on our website by November 1 for people to notify us of their lack of broadband coverage. As federal funding is available from Treasury, we will roll out grant rounds as soon as we can.

1. **Minnesota Broadband Map**

Jennifer Frost, Grant Administrator for the Office of Broadband Development, demonstrated how the Minnesota map on the OBD webpage works. Here is the link to the map: [Minnesota Broadband Mapping Application (connectednation.org)](https://gis.connectednation.org/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=a2d243ccf7e547eba2ec0d5c80c80917&extent=-11076647.9697%2C5219846.1843%2C-9722795.3247%2C6565137.8822%2C102100&showLayers=Approx_OntarioPartofQuebecCanada_Provinces_5993%3BUSA_States_wTerritories_Boundary_9576%3BMN_2022Applications_Border_to_BorderGrant_PUBLIC_8193%3BMinnesota_FederalLayers__7566_6%3BMN_map_860%3BMinnesota_BoundaryLayers_2263%3BMinnesota_AvailabilityLayers_4812%3BMinnesota_BroadbandAdoptionLayers_7370) The map can be used to see where the 2022 grant applicants have applied for funding. It can also be used for looking up a location to see what broadband coverage that household can receive from a provider. It has many other functions and layers, too.

1. **Affordability and Adoption Sub-Group**

Marc Johnson provided an update on the Affordability and Adoption Sub-Group. Regular meetings have been set up for the third Tuesdays of the month. They will hear from Hannah Buckland, the new Digital Equity Program Lead once she is settled. They are promoting awareness of the ACP (Affordable Connectivity Program).

1. **Funding, Mapping and Usage Subgroup**

Steve Fenske provided an update from the Funding, Mapping and Usage Sub-Group. They have not met recently, but will meet again soon.

1. **Annual Report Update**

Scott Cole from Collectivity said he will provide a template to pull key challenges and recommendations for the annual report, due at the end of 2022.

1. **Update from Teddy Bekele, Chair of the Minnesota Governor’s Task Force on Broadband**

Teddy Bekele, SVP & Chief Technology Officer at Land O’Lakes Technology, discussed future meetings – at least one meeting in person by end of year.

1. **Public Comment, Other Business, September 29 Meeting Plans, Wrap-Up**

The chair asked if any Task Force members had items to bring forward. Steve Giorgi raised the issue of talking to legislatures so Minnesota can change or remove the cap of $5 million on grants awarded, something many other states do not have a cap on.

The meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.