



GOVERNOR'S
EMPOWER RURAL IOWA
INITIATIVE

Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative
Connecting Rural Iowa Task Force Meeting Minutes
RVP 1875
115 S Wilson Ave
Jefferson, IA 50129
Wednesday, March 2
12-1PM

1. Roll Call:

Lt. Gov. Gregg	Sandy Ehrig	Ryan Boone	Dave Duncan
Rachael Kinnick	Latie LaBree	Deb Lucht	Brittany Morales
Michael Ott	Tom Petersen	Justin Wagner	
Virtual Attendees:	Billi Hunt	Dennis Fraise	Kevin Cabbage
	Steve Simmons		

2. Approval of Minutes from November 18, 2021 meeting:

Minutes from the November 18 meeting had been distributed for review. Justin Wagner motioned to approve with Deb Lucht seconding. Passed unanimously.

3. Welcoming Remarks from Lt. Governor Gregg:

The Lt. Governor thanked members and sponsors, reviewed meeting agenda and discussed revised meeting schedule for the year including alignment with the IRDC.

4. Remarks by Co-Chair Sandy Ehrig:

Thanked members and provided an overview of the upcoming IRDC Rural Summit to be held in April.

5. Panel of Rural Innovation Grantees: Adam Thompson, Vince Tyson, Jamie Daubendiek:

Talk about leveraging state and other resources and any gaps:

Vince: Active in applying in grants. On federal side, there has been funds available for years. Local seems to upgrade network more often. They applied for NOFA 2 that helped build out in incumbent area. Now looking at neighboring areas that don't have good coverage. Got a NOFA 5 and Reconnect 2. Also, NOFA 6 and working on NOFA 7. Wapello County wasn't well served, having been providing funding out of county budget. With NOFA 7, they will get to about 80% of the county having fiber with the goal to reach 100%. Need to make sure we make a targeted approach to those underserved.

Jamie: Goal is to try to be visionary. They provided Fiber to nodes in the 1990's, and 100% FTTH in their community. Now looking at economic development, such as bringing Pillar, Career academy, others that would not have happened without fiber (7-mile service area). Now looking to grow geographically. NOFA 7 provided some funds which he is hoping is spurs development.

Vince: Working with city of Bloomfield and Davis County – can be a challenge to attract industry for logistical reasons. Focusing on remote workers working on attraction. Working with a national business for marketing. Must have great broadband to allow for this. City has progressive incentives for relocation. Also, very ag based, need to support ag industry.

Brian: They have been the recipient of a rural innovation grant. Looking at using GIS to communicate with residents (capital improvement, feedback from residents, etc.). Inventorying assets, utilities and infrastructure. Many communities have only one person who knows where everything is. Wants this to be interactive so staff can turn off valves remotely. With Derecho, FEMA wanted a track record of what had been there before so also want to be able to track and document. Important for a rural, small community to find ways to use technology to leverage staff. Also looking at economic development. They are looking at adding infrastructure to sites to encourage development and they can map that.

Questions:

To Adam– What is the name of the platform? GIS through ESRI – contracted with Bolton & Menke. Have a young staff and young community – they want the technology. Timeline? Fall 2022 hopeful launch of platform.

Lt. Governor: These projects demonstrate successes. What are next challenges you see? How can we be helpful?

Vince: Iowa is doing a great job in broadband deployment. Improvements – 1) Have to get a better mapping system. We need to get to location-based mapping. Federal mapping based on census blocks which, as long as 10% of area is covered it is marked as served so some will miss out. 2) Local operators invest in communities, care about what goes on. The challenge with expanding into other areas is that the counties have to tap into reserves. Is the state willing to do a loan program – would rather work through

state then federal. Find some way to help them cashflow without having to get a commercial loan.

6. Public Comment:

Mark Reinig: Provided details on the upcoming IRDC Rural Summit. This year's Summit April 11 – 15 at the Gateway Hotel in Ames. Preconference workshop that ISU Ext. will be hosting. Will be bringing 5 communities that have seen success. Will also have a panel of communities. Will discuss zoning, rental inspection, etc. Free lunch – 12:00 – 5:00 held at Reiman Gardens and after there is an opening reception. Also the digital manufacturing lab will be open in the afternoon for tours. A few other things in surrounding communities as well. Registration for the two campus activities will be opening soon. Encouraging teams of three.

7. Wrap up & Next Steps – Liesl:

Sacha Wise and Jessi Carver, who manage the Americorp program at IEDA, are helping Liesl with more rural projects. Child Care market study grant opened second round yesterday. Deadline is May 3.

8. Adjourn