



GOVERNOR'S
EMPOWER RURAL IOWA
INITIATIVE

Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative
Connecting Rural Iowa Task Force Meeting
Youth Inn, Iowa State Fairgrounds
Des Moines, Iowa

Monday, August 12, 2019
3:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call:

Present:

Lt. Governor Gregg
Sandy Ehrig
Senator Kinney
Ryan Boone
Hollie McCormick
Dennis Fraise

Billi Hunt
Stacy Stewart
Christopher Ball
Kevin Cabbage
Danna Larson
Patty Manuel

Katie LaBree
Grant Menke
Barb Baker
Tom Petersen

2. Approval of Minutes

Draft minutes from the July 2nd meeting had been previously distributed for review. Rob Denson motioned to approve the minutes and Janae Jenison seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

3. Welcoming remarks from Lt .Gov. Gregg

The Lt. Governor thanked the Iowa Rural Development Council, The Bill Menner Group, Barker Companies, and the Blue Ribbon Foundation for sponsoring today's meetings and reception. Provided an overview of the day which is to include individual meetings for all task forces, a joint lunch and an afternoon reception at Jake's Club in the Jacobson Building at 5:00. The State Fair was chosen as a central location and very representative of rural Iowa. Informed members there will be more time this fall than last year to work on next steps and provided a review of the meeting agenda.

4. Co-Chair Sandy Ehrig remarks

Sandy thanked sponsors and members and the Lt. Governor for the ongoing partnership with the IRDC. Informed members there has been some transition in task force leaders. With the retirement of Sue Cosner, Jim Thompson has taken over the Investing task force and James Hoelscher has taken the leadership role for this task force. Let members know that plans are

well underway for the 2020 Iowa Rural Summit which will be held April 29 – May 1 at the Hotel Kirkwood on the Kirkwood community college campus to showcase value the community college network brings to rural Iowa. Will incorporate field trips to surrounding communities. Also, as Center for Rural Community Revitalization program manager, Liesl has been appointed as an ex-officio member of the IRDC leadership team.

5. “This is Iowa” Briefing - Jacque Matsen, IEDA

Jacque provided an overview of the new “This is Iowa” campaign which uses tourism attributes to draw people and businesses to the state. Campaign was based on research performed on the perceptions and motivation of people to move, and how to reach those who may be thinking of moving. The survey was taken by people primarily outside of Iowa.

6. Rural Innovation Grants Update - Liesl Seabert, IEDA

Each task force has \$100,000 to grant for innovative, scalable, replicable programs. Rules will need to be written and approved, which takes about three months. Hoping to have them written by early October, with a launch at the 2020 Iowa Rural Summit. Content will be broad, looking at big ideas that are creative and non-traditional. May not necessarily be tied to housing, broadband, or leadership. In the process of putting a subcommittee together and to help review rules. A draft of rules will go out to all task force members.

7. Broadband Grant Outreach – Matt Behrens, OCIO

Matt brought members up to date on the current broadband grant program. The first \$1.3M was awarded on April 30th. Received 17 applications representing \$34M investment. They awarded seven projects for a \$13M investment. There was a cap on what could be awarded, but only received requests for 10% to 15% for what could have been requested, so the grant funds went farther. There are different timelines for each project, but they must be completed within five years of award. The priorities they looked at included rural application, number of units served and to what extent (all or just some of the census block).

They also have a new broadband map of Iowa which is open for public comment through August 23. Gives opportunity to report to OCIO if someone thinks what is listed for their address is wrong. They will review feedback, and circle back with providers. Once rules are adopted, they can publish the map. Currently showing that 60% of census blocks are served by 25/5 speeds. New legislation requires the map to be updated before every grant round. They define ‘served’ as to whether a provider is providing 25/5 speeds. Do not look at latency, throughput, etc.

There is a new Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the \$5M appropriation available now for public review and input. They have to wait for the map to be finalized and posted before they can open the grant window.

Can contact Matt for questions at Matt.Behrens@iowa.gov or 515-238-8234.

8. Panel – Broadband in Agriculture

Rand introduced panelists and asked for program descriptions with facilitated questions after.

- Drew Mogler, Iowa Pork Producers Association

Broadband and technology are necessary in the pork industry to connect to all facilities. Provides farmers with more information. Monitors are utilized in hog barns, so pigs are raised in a comfortable environment where temperature and humidity are constant. Also used to

monitor water and feed quality. Producers can review that info before they get to barns. Telemedicine for livestock is another area technology is used. Biosecurity is important and veterinarians have to have time between visits to watch for contaminants. RFID tags on sows provides information for producers. All systems need to be able to talk to each other and all facilities. IPA looking at camera technology to monitor and predict.

- Billi Hunt, Cultivation Corridor

Broadband makes it possible to lift up the ag industry in Iowa and around world and promote innovations in the industry. Startups for ag innovation could happen anywhere in Iowa with connectivity. New technology allows tractors to drive themselves. A tractor can identify a weed in the field, but there must be broadband access for it to be used. Where not available, sales staff are running reports to farmers who have the technology package but don't have access.

- Emily Schmidt, Sukup

Sukup has multiple sides with both ag and manufacturing. They have million-dollar machines in Sheffield that need to be connected to locations overseas. They are in 82 countries and have three international locations. Population of Sheffield hasn't grown, but they are trying to recruit people to town. They were 1,000 ft away from fiber, but it took them a year to get connected as the service area was marked as served. In Iowa, 99% of schools are connected but 30% of rural homes aren't so students need to drive to find access. Lastly, they engineer solutions for farmers. Farming includes a lot of manual labor. Sukup was the first to market with a grain dryer connected to phone so they can check moisture levels with an App and computer hooked up to dryer. Now they get alert if overheating occurs. That is just first of products - automation is where farms are moving to. Can't dig fiber to every farm, so need to figure out other access.

- Michael Ott, Rantizo

Rantizo uses large drones for agriculture applications in Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois and Missouri. They utilized data so they can take a map of field to highlight issue areas to then target and spot apply just where needed. Builds in flexibility as they can apply during wet times. Currently can do 14 acres an hour up to 100 acres per day. Can only fly drone at a time per regulations. The data component is big - with data they can track infestations, use less chemicals more effectively - but it is all dependent on broadband.

Questions:

Q: Geography creates problems for fiber. Does cellular or wireless access work?

Michael: They tend to work as if there isn't access, and when there is, that's great. They take an image in the morning, get data, interpret and then map.

Emily: Fiber can't reach everywhere but there are other options such as TV white space.

Ryan: The challenge is getting the regulatory people in DC to understand that a hog facility needs broadband access. He is working with the Iowa Communications Alliance to get a better definition of location. The fixed locations should be served.

Billi: As we start to see more boutique-type food processors, the need increases. They take blockchain into it and can use it to track where every hog comes from.

9. Public Comment: None

10. Wrap Up and Next Steps:

The Lt. Governor informed the next meeting will be on Sept. 13th in the Iowa City area, with details to come. Hoping to focus on self-driving vehicles. Gave member two challenges: 1) Tweet or post on Facebook one interesting thing you learned today about the importance of technology in ag @empowerruralia; 2) Consider writing an op-ed for your industry on something you learned today, to help build awareness of the importance of broadband. Send to Liesl.

11. Adjourn:

Billi made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Phil. All aye.