Lincoln County Broadband Commission Meeting
6:30 PM, Thursday, February 22, 2024
Room 255/257/260, Lincoln County Service Center
801 N. Sales Street Merrill, WI 54452
Join by Phone: (US) +1 862-283-0266 PIN: 419571710
Meeting Link: meet.google.com/vvz-szuh-ipi

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

2. Introductions

3. Approve January Minutes

4. Status/Updates of Lincoln County Broadband Efforts

   a. LCEDC Summit Update

   b. Central WI Days

   c. Tomahawk Library Survey

   d. BEAD Challenge Process Update

   e. Outreach Opportunities

5. Broadband Plan Final Draft Review

6. Internet Speed Testing Update

7. Next Meeting Time/Date

8. Adjourn

Lincoln County Broadband Commission Meeting
6:30 PM, Thursday, January 25, 2024
Room 255/257/260, Lincoln County Service Center
801 N. Sales Street Merrill, WI 54452
Join by Phone: (US) +1 862-283-0266 PIN: 419571710
Meeting Link: meet.google.com/vvz-szuh-ipi

MINUTES

Attendees: Ken Wickham, Renee Krueger, Bill Bialecki, Pat Voermans, John Heckindorf, Brian Arndorfer, Gary Hartwig, Gordon Sennet, Rich Prange, Jeanette Beederman, John Heckendorf, Paul Strong, Jean Strong
Virtual: Elsa Duranceau, Earl Welker, Sherry Hulett, Julie Allen, Sue Dierksen, Glenn Fishbine, Andrew Faust, Travis Spoehr, Jennifer Bishop, Jerome Ziegelbauer, Katie Hanson, Northwoods Guy, Heidi O'Hare,

1. Call to Order: 6:30PM

3. Introduction of Participants

4. Approve November Minutes

- Pat Voermans motions to approve. Seconded by Elsa Duranceau - Motion Carries

5. Status/Updates of Lincoln County Broadband Efforts

- BEAD Challenge process
    - Most likely the ISPs would do this.
    - If Lincoln Co needs to challenge, the County could challenge or we can work with Grow North EDC to challenge on our behalf.
    - Pat, Ken, and Elsa presented at the Lincoln County Towns Association

6. Rapid Design Study Presentation by Breaking Solutions, LLC

- Helps with finding best options by comparing costs for different expansion projects.
- Identifies the best strategy based on most likely amount our county will be eligible for from the BEAD funds.
- Total project costs = 3.7 mil to 47 mil. Cost is based on how many residents get full fiber.
- C3 Model is likely based on grant funding availability.

- Not everyone will need fiber based on location to tower (line of sight).

- https://expressoptimizer.net/projects/WI%20Lincoln/index.php Access Key: WI Lincoln Access

  o Use project overview to find instructions how to use the website

- A link to a guide on the spreadsheet:

  https://expressoptimizer.net/documents/Sheet%20Guide.pdf

7. Broadband Plan Final Draft Review

- https://www.ncwrpc.org/lincoln-county-broadband-plan/

8. Internet Speed Testing Update

- We're doing great! Keep testing.

- 12.90% participation rate

- Call 715-390-0470 to report addresses that do not have fiber internet.

- Will be taken down end of April

9. LCEDC website update

- www.lincolncountyedc.org

10. Charter RDOF Construction Schedule

- On the LCEDC website

- Must be completed by 2028

- Started in the Southwest area of the County

11. Next Meeting Agenda Date Time Location

- Feb 22, 2024 – 6:30PM Lincoln Co Services Building

- Final Review on Plan with Andrew Faust

12. Adjourn: 7:59PM

LINCOLN COUNTY BROADBAND COMMISSION MEETING

FEBRUARY 22, 2024
6:30PM – 7:30PM
Lincoln County Services Building RM 255

Or join virtually! Sign-up for email updates and meeting links at lincolncountyedc.org

Tomahawk Library February 16,2024

Broadband Use - Interview with Heidi O'Hare, Director

Summary submitted by Pat Voermans

1. **Broadband Service provider** – Technology for Educational Achievement -TEACH. It is provided through DPI. Library hours are 10AM-7PM but Wi-Fi is available 24 hours. Some have been in the parking lot at 2:00 AM to use it.

2. **What main geographical areas do you cover in Lincoln County?** Tomahawk, Bradley, Irma, Harrison, Nakomis

3. **How many computers in the library do you have for public use?**
   Five. Most people bring their own laptops. Wi-Fi use has increased, almost double. Many use the parking lot as well. There were 9,282 uses of it in house in 2023.

4. **What is your estimate of volume of/or time the public uses your computers?** There were 25327 users for the web site in 2023. In 2023 there were 1,227 Tomahawk City users and 2,809 non city users. Usage varies from five minutes to four hours. Usage may increase when the ACP program ends at the end of April.

5. **What do you see as the main reasons the public seeks computer services at the library**
   - Affordability/Equipment –Most people that come here have their own laptops and know how to use them. Interestingly, a number of users come in to download material which saves data on their plans and also to use printers. Printers and ink are costly. Charges are 0.15 cents per one side of sheet, 0.30 cents a page and $1.00 per page for color.
   - Lack of internet access – Out-of-towners use Wi-Fi and computers.
   - Lack of digital skills – If we had a service more people would probably seek it. We have a private room that could be used but not the staff to conduct the service.

6. **Would it be feasible to conduct a survey among the public users?** Yes. No more than 3 questions and at a 3rd to 4th grade level. Could be tabulated at the Library.

7. **What do you see as future broadband technology needs?**
   Develop a hot spot outside the library for better wi-fi and phone chargers. One spot in the parking lot and one out in front where it is open and visible.
   Home computers and reliable community computer hubs. For example, solar powered that could be put in public places. Solar powered bench with built in phone charger and wi-fi. Need workspace and/or rooms for one to six people for rooms with wi-fi to use four to six hours/day (requests in summer).