Stevens County and Spokane Tribe

Broadband
ACTION TEAM

Work to Date (since Jan., 2016)

Our Broadband Action Team (BAT) focuses on many aspects and projects to solve our issues.
Photo above highlights our team meeting with Governor Inslee in June, 2018. Below is a synopsis of our activities.

General Team Activities

1. Received a $15,000 internal WSU grant; hired our coordinator.
2. WSU Extension developed and continue to support a website with resources: extension.wsu.edu/stevens/broadband-action-team that includes a free WIFI Hotspot inventory
3. Deployed a paper and online Community Survey to determine broadband speeds and desired services. Data has been analyzed and we have shared it with the BAT, ISPs and the Governor's Office.
4. In 2017 BAT was one of fifteen teams selected to serve as co-designers and beta testers of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) BroadbandUSA Connectivity Assessment Tool (BCAT). The beta test was completed in Fall 2017 and has resulted in the following:
   o Highlighted the inaccuracies of federal broadband maps used to determine broadband availability as well as for public and private sector investments decisions.
   o New information and resources identified to accelerate broadband deployment, deepen broadband adoption, strengthen local policies, and use broadband to advance local priorities.

Access Projects (Goal: increase more/better service options to residents and businesses)

1. Held our first Internet Service Provider (ISP) meeting with 14 providers attending. Purpose of the meeting was to share project ideas and discuss their plans. Now inviting all providers to meetings.
2. Stevens County's IT Department and the Spokane Tribe collaborated for connectivity at the Fruitland area; and successfully negotiated with Spokane County Commissioners to complete a wireless connection across jurisdictions and mountaintops.
3. The Spokane Tribe Broadband Community Plan was chosen as the first broadband infrastructure project to present at a Tech Team funders session at the Washington State Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council (IACC) Infrastructure Conference in October 2017.
4. Chewelah Mayor Knauss held a meeting with members of an unserved neighborhood and potential service providers. **RESULT: Charter/Spectrum build out to over 1500 homes and businesses!**
5. Developed a spreadsheet of county-wide broadband issues and priority projects for use in planning and with providers, funders, etc.
6. Stevens County Information Services Dept., WA Office of the Chief Information Officer, and Open Technology Institute developed an open data broadband mapping project as a step to help verify publicly available broadband data.
7. Established the Boots on the Ground Committee to look at grassroots efforts to solve specific community problems.
   o Wrote letter of support for a potential build-out on WA Department of Fish and Wildlife property (Oct. 2018)
8. **RESULT: Candid conversations between residents and a local ISP who is interested in building out**

Access Projects (continued)

9. Established the Prepositioned Fire Camp Committee; Included in the Washington Department of Natural Resources Rural Community Project Initiative (RCPI) proposal submitted by Tri County Economic Development District (TEDD) and WSU Stevens County Extension. Identified four possible pilot sites as well as potential funding sources.
   - PPFC 1: Little Pend Oreille Lakes Complex in the north east portion of Stevens County
     - Chosen as a Tech Team broadband infrastructure project for the Washington State Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council (IACC) Conference (Oct. 2018).
   - PPFC 2: Two Rivers Resort on the southwest corner of the Spokane Tribe of Indians Reservation
     - **NEW PARTNERS:** As a result of RCPI, DNR is actively involved in the project planning and development.
     - **FUNDING:** Received a $24,900 grant from Partners for Rural Washington and completed a feasibility study to determine the engineering and technical assets necessary to build out this project.

Adoption Projects (Goal: find ways to help people use the internet better)

1. Libraries of Stevens County and BAT applied for a $50,000 Spectrum grant to link Workforce Development training and digital skills building at four rural libraries (not funded.)
2. Libraries of Stevens County offering coding and robotics classes at all libraries.
3. Hosted the 2016 Tech Expo for the public to meet with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and technical vendors, learn about cybersecurity and social media.
4. Developed Gadget Garage, a collection of internet-enabled devices made available for people to test drive.
5. WSU Stevens County Extension partnered with the Tri County Economic Development district on the development and delivery of Digital Day Camp in Colville, internet-related business classes.

Policy Efforts (Goal: change legislation and rules that block our ability to increase broadband.)

1. Submitted comments or letters of support (LOS) on the following legislation and rule making:
   - 2019 Congresswoman Cathy McMorris-Rodgers for the Broadband Data Improvement Act (LOS)
   - 2018 FCC: Accelerating Wireline Broadband Deployment by Removing Barriers to Infrastructure Investment (2-page response)
   - 2018 USDA –RUS: implementation of the USDA e-Connectivity Pilot Program (6-page response)
   - 2018 NTIA mapping/data collection (4-page response)
   - 2018 Senator Murray DRAFT digital equity legislation (submitted comments and BAT documents)
2. Discussions and comment inspired Senators Murray and Cantwell to submit a 2018 amendment to the Farm Bill to provide an opportunity for communities to appeal previous funding issues.
3. The Stevens County / Spokane Tribe Broadband Access Teams has been replicated in Ferry County.
4. Stevens County Commissioner Wes McCart addressed on mapping issues with the National Association of Counties (NACo), agencies and legislators in Washington D.C. in 2018
5. Mark Curtis, Stevens County Information Services Director addressed mapping issues at the NACo Technology Summit.
6. Eight BAT members attended Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers Rural Broadband Roundtable in Spokane
7. Provided input to the Washington State FirstNet Plan development and continue active engagement with FirstNet staff.
8. Six BAT members attended the NTIA Broadband Summit in Seattle.

Stevens County / Spokane Tribe Broadband Action Team, Work to Date

Policy Efforts (continued)

9. WSU Extension, Debra Hansen and Monica Babine invited to the 2017 US Senate Rural Summit in Washington DC and individually met to discuss rural broadband issues with:
   - Seven legislative staff members engaged in Rural Broadband discussions
   - 50-min session with Brent Elrod, USDA-NIFA National Program Leader – Community Development
   - 60-min session with 13 USDA Rural Development mid-level managers
   - 45-min session with four National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) reps
   - 60-minute session with two representative with NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association

Publicity and Replication

1. *"The BAT's success has led it to emerge as a nationally-recognized model for community collaboration and as a key influencer of federal broadband policy. It has directly influenced major legislation recently introduced by Senator Murray—the Digital Equity Act of 2019—that would look to provide over $1 billion in grants over five years to stand-up and support BAT-like organizations across the country."* Benjamin Merkel, Senator Patty Murray's Legislative Director.

2. Governor Inslee chose to meet our BAT on his 2018 statewide broadband tour. This visit, additional communications with his staff, and input received from other communities during the tour led to the passage of legislation during 2019, resulting in a new broadband office and $21 million in broadband infrastructure funding. Language included in the Washington State Broadband Plan: *"WSUE BAT efforts are being recognized and replicated across Washington and other states."* 11 BAT members presented (and others attended) on their specific concerns.

3. Debra Hansen and Monica Babine conducted a 1-day follow up workshop for the BAT Model at the North Olympic Broadband Symposium in Sequim, WA. Several communities have started their own BAT, and NTIA and USDA are replicating that workshop in Oregon and Washington.

4. The BAT model was highlighted in the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities report: *e-Connectivity in Rural America: Public Research Universities Advancing Digital Inclusion.*

5. Met with Kirk Pearson, USDA Washington State Director to discuss our projects and concerns.

6. The Stevens County BAT, Ferry County BAT and Partners for Rural Washington were accepted to present a workshop on how to create and support a Broadband Action Team the IACC Infrastructure Conference in October 2018.

7. Library Director, Amanda Six, invited to speak at Washington Public Utilities District Annual meeting.

8. Featured as a best practice on NTIA Broadband USA webinar: Infrastructure Week Special: Successful Models and Best Practices for Rural Broadband Deployment for our provider meeting success (May 2018)

9. Featured story in the Association of Washington Cities CityVision Magazine November/December 2017

10. Presentation at the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) Conference.

11. Stevens County / Spokane Tribe BAT along with Lincoln and King Counties, delivered the first-ever broadband presentation at IACC Infrastructure Conference.

12. Featured as a best practice on NTIA Broadband USA webinar: Digital Training and Workforce Development for Pathways to Prosperity Conference Model.

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