

MINUTES
Oregon WIN Board Meeting
October 24, 2003, 1:30 – 3:30 PM
Linn-Benton Community College, Albany

Members: Rick Brand, John Greydanus, Michael Lancaster, Mark Kramer, Cynde Leathers, Tom Matney, and Paul Snyder. **Participating Members:** Donna Carver, John Sneed, Susan Waddell. **Guests:** Kate Johnson

I. Pending FCC Rule-making

John Greydanus reported the FCC is collecting testimony and information for a pending rule-making change relating to the ITFS spectrum. The National ITFS Association (NIA) provided comments (referred to as the Band Plan) in support of ITFS licensees to the FCC. The Band Plan seeks to retain the ITFS spectrum for educational licensees, retain video applications as well as introduce new data applications, and continue to allow public/private partnerships to operate within the frequencies. Oregon WIN contributed funds to the drafting of the NIA Band Plan and supplied written comments in support of the NIA plan.

In addition to NIA's comments, many other organizations filed comments asking the FCC to withdraw the spectrum from educational use, move it into the unlicensed spectrum area or allow commercial entities to hold licenses. Other proposals would make it difficult to maintain broadcast video applications within the ITFS spectrum or require licensees to undertake immediate and costly transition plans to move from analog to digital services. The FCC is expected to announce its rule making change in the first quarter of 2004.

A. Implications for Oregon Licensees

The impact of FCC changes on licensees will have to await the final rulemaking and interpretations of the changes by legal council. Possible changes include shifting spectrum to other users, allowing ITFS licensees to sell licenses, requiring licensees to digitize services and/or the loss of "broadcast television" services. The final rulemaking by the FCC will also impact Sprint's expectations for the spectrum and the company's response to the 5-year "out" clause in the lease agreement. John reported he was working with Sprint engineers to build an operations budget for each ITFS transmit site as a first step in planning for ongoing operations if Sprint opts out in 2006. Any additional steps will have to wait for the final FCC ruling.

II. Sprint Reorganization

Staffing changes – John reported Daryl Coffey, Sprint's former representative for WIN, left Sprint to pursue consulting work. Our new representative is Dave Anderson.

Termination of Video Services – John reported that Sprint terminated all wireless cable customers in Oregon and has shut down all fixed wireless services in Portland, Medford and Bend. With the termination of video services Sprint has also laid off technicians in all three cities. Tony Ardueser remains in Eugene but response times to technical difficulties may become a problem.

III. Programming Discussions

A. OPAN

John reported OPAN reaches over 500,000 homes in the Willamette Valley and Central Oregon. New program partners include the City Clubs of Portland and Salem and a growing number of centers and organizations within universities that are videotaping lectures and conferences to air on OPAN. OPAN hopes to expand services into southern Oregon in January 2004.

B. Higher Education Channel

The concept of creating an “Education Channel” was introduced for discussion. It was noted that the expansion of OPAN toward a statewide network offers the opportunity for education organizations to reach a statewide audience as well. It was suggested that an Education Channel could benefit education institutions and the public by provide Oregonians insights into valuable activities and resources provided by educators in Oregon. Program ideas included the Research Channel, selected telecourses, lecture series and seminars, adult basic education offerings and public health programming. John Sneed noted that PSU and Portland area community colleges are attempting to build such a resource in Portland and working with other institutions to provide a statewide network was worth investigating.

C. Distance Education Updates

John reported that HB 3574 (2003) requires the ORTCC (The Oregon Rural Telecommunication Coordinating Council) to make recommendations to the Legislature on how to build a shared Health/Education network that would provide nursing education and other critical health care programs to a statewide audience. ORTCC has formed a subcommittee to begin this process.

It was also announced that the Oregon Department of Education is planning a Statewide Distance Education Summit to be held on January 26, 2004. ODE will post information on the Summit at their eLearning website: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/elearning/>. Additional information will be provided to the Board on the Health/Education Network and the Summit as it becomes available.

IV. Demonstration of Scheduling Application

Kate Johnson, LBCC Web Designer, demonstrated the prototype of the Oregon WIN Scheduling Application. The Board reviewed the general layout, the administrative pages and the user interface. The application provides a central database for programs and telecourses that campuses can contribute to or draw from as they build schedules for specific WIN or cable TV channels. The Board agreed the application meets a critical need to market, display and share programs, and recommended the project continue. Paul Snyder agreed to form a Rules and Standard Committee to address standards for the entry and the display of data, and a Contract Committee to develop a workable agreement with WIN and other potential customers for access and use of the application.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm