

UT-070986  
Broadband Technologies Workshop  
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Subject: Comments Post Broadband Workshop  
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Toppenish, Wapato, Zillah and Granger  
(Comments Submitted are personal opinions and may not reflect the opinions of all  
Cities mentioned)

Goal:  
Discuss ways to present factual and statistical information to the Governors' Office  
regarding High Speed Internet networks and connections in the state of Washington  
through a study, SB5120.

Discussion of types of study:

- Mapping
- Case Study
- Telephone
- Door to Door
- Internet

Questions:

- Availability
  - If so, why or why not connected
- Price
- Speed
- Equipment/Technology

Providers Present

- Embarq
- Qwest
- Cablecast
- K-20 Network
- Click
- Century Tel
- Department of Agriculture
- Independent Phone Company
- Fiber to the Home
- City of Seattle

Providers not Present  
Satellite/Dish  
Charter Cable  
Wireless Providers  
Hot Spot Providers

Comments: The meeting was very productive in that all in attendance had a focus of the consumer having access to the World Wide Web, the Internet with speed at least 3 Meg symmetrical up and download.

Most providers are working to provide Internet services to communities and want to compete. It was agreed that the cost of providing services through fiber, wireless, switches, and technology in rural areas is difficult in a business model. It was agreed that more public/private partnerships need to be encouraged.

In addition, it was agreed that a “sample” case study may not be reflective of the demographics and needs of isolated communities, rural areas, and urban areas that are currently not receiving speeds to meet their demands for residential, business or economic growth.

The speed in my personal area, Zillah, Yakima County through Embarq telephone, using a dial up provider is 45.2 kps.

Just this weekend I was listening to a program on the Dish Network satellite service that I purchase (no local channels by rabbit ears in my rural setting) and discovered I could purchase High Speed Internet through Satellite for \$69.95 with an 18 month commitment and \$199.00 up front cost for a cable modem and installation. This will provide 1 mgb. A huge improvement and I won't have to tie up my telephone line.

I also know that Charter and Embarq are working to bundle phone, Internet, and Television for very reasonable prices. Most beginning at \$100.00 and including long distance. This is not available to my area at this time.

I have an install date for the Satellite provider on September 21<sup>st</sup>. I am somewhat skeptical that the service will actually be provided. I have had others out to my area to install and found no signal. Such as a wireless provider in our area, Clear Wire and Pacific Northwest Info Net. They are offering DSL at \$19.99 per month.

If I am able to receive high speed Internet at my location through satellite, why were they not at the discussion? I also have noticed they have a dedicated channel asking Congress not to tax Satellite television. I have a different take on this. I believe satellite companies should be taxed. They are using public airwaves to conduct their business. They do not have to support PEG access in any way. If the cable companies are taxed, then so should satellite companies. .50 cents per subscriber is collected by our local cable company and passed to the cities to operate the PEG Access Channels I Manage.

Our community feels .50 cents is an excellent bargain for what PEG provides. Many ask why it is not available by their Dish provider. They would subscribe to Cable if it were available to them.

I know I may be looking at this too simply, but why couldn't Congress and the FCC agree to collect taxes and franchise fees fairly for the Telco's, cable, wireless and satellite companies. They all will be providing, Video, Telephone, Long Distance, and Internet Services in the very near future. Taxes are needed for the oversight and public safety of these companies by local Municipalities. The tax collected could also work to build an Internet for All Program. To fill the gaps where providers leave off from their build out. Not to provide the program to the public for free, but to pay for the expensive infrastructure to provide the access and connections to current providers.

In my search for High Speed Internet, I beg for the competition prices of Embarq and Charter in my area. They will not arrive for years. I am signing up with Dish Network (Direct Dish was not available). I am paying around \$30.00 more a month than I would if I had Embarq or Charter available, but I am just happy it may be available and without tying up my telephone line. I choose to live in a rural area. Just as I know I have to pay for my own water (well), sewer(septic tank) and garbage service, extra cost on my telephone access line (\$6.20 surcharge), I have to pay for High Speed Internet as well. Again, my choice. I could stay with dial up. It is slow, but it is available.

In our cities, we do have public libraries with Internet Access. I choose the convenience of installing it at my home. If my finances changed, I would probably use the library.

Of course I would like lower prices, everyone does. I would like lower gas prices, heating prices, and grocery prices. High Speed Internet is a business. It takes a lot of money to keep it working. I know. Our city has a fiber lease to host our cities websites and email. Every year there are upgrades to equipment, new licenses to purchase for operation, and intensive staff time and outside maintenance to keep our small operation working. Then there are Hackers, Spoofers, and Spam.

My question is, should our state government play an active role in providing High Speed Internet infrastructure, or should our state government oversee the regulations that competitors provide High Speed Internet?

Taxes and Franchise fees must remain in place.

My opinion is that our State government could provide incentives for connection programs to competitors, such as technology research grants, connectivity gap provisions, and for low poverty areas access to subscription benefits and/or public access sites.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me. Please keep me informed of decisions and steps the UTC will take concerning High Speed Internet services.

Thank you.

