



Los Angeles Area
Chamber of Commerce



LOS ANGELES REGIONAL BROADBAND ROUNDTABLE

April 23, 2009

Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

SUMMARY

Introduction

The Los Angeles Regional Broadband Roundtable was convened on April 23, 2009 by the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and the United Way of Greater Los Angeles on behalf of the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF). The Roundtable was co-sponsored by: Community Partners; Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation; Southern California Association of Governments; The Edmund G. "Pat" Brown Institute of Public Affairs; University of Southern California Center for Sustainable Cities, and Valley Industry and Commerce Association. The purpose of the Roundtable was to discuss broadband adoption challenges, identify opportunities for collaboration, and delineate strategies for closing the Digital Divide in the Los Angeles Region. A diverse cross-section of civic leaders participated, representing the public, private and philanthropic sectors. This report summarizes the discussion and sets forth actions that can incorporate the promotion and encouragement of broadband adoption into existing civic programs and community initiatives.

The mission of CETF is to close the Digital Divide and ensure that California is a global leader in the deployment and adoption of broadband (www.cetfund.org). High-speed Internet access is an essential 21st Century infrastructure, vital to commerce economic competitiveness and quality of life. CETF was established in 2006 pursuant to a directive of the California Public Utilities Commission in approving the mergers of SBC-AT&T and Verizon-MCI. Verizon and AT&T are contributing \$60 million seed capital over five years to CETF to help close the Digital Divide. CETF has three priority communities for grantmaking: rural and remote areas, disadvantaged urban neighborhoods, and people with disabilities. CETF pursues promising strategic investments based on identified best practices that leverage partnerships and resources and that employ cost-effective strategies that can be scaled up to achieve the mission of closing the Digital Divide. As part of this process, CETF is working with leaders in several regions to: identify gaps, barriers, opportunities, strategies and initiatives to connect all Californians; inform the CETF grantmaking process; and explore the potential for a collaborative effort to plan and implement a regional broadband strategy. The overarching thrust is to identify strategies and opportunities to incorporate broadband promotion and adoption into existing efforts to leverage the power of civic leadership and to optimize the impact established program and initiatives. This approach framed the discussion for the Greater Los Angeles Regional Roundtable.

Overview of the Region

The greater Los Angeles Region includes Los Angeles County and eighty-eight cities with a population of 10,347,437 residents, the largest population of any county in the nation.¹ Approximately 27% of California's residents live in Los Angeles County, which also is one of the nation's largest counties covering nearly 4,084 square miles. Currently only 48% of residents subscribe to broadband services² compared to 55% statewide. The rate of adoption is lower among lower income and monolingual residents than all other residents in the region. Statewide, only 33% of low-income households and only 34% of Latino families subscribe to broadband service. A recent study by the Edmund G "Pat" Brown Institute of Public Affairs found that in neighborhoods where Latinos constitute more than 75% of the residents, access to technology is limited largely to local phone services and satellite and cable subscriptions.³

***"In the Los Angeles region, the Digital Divide runs along socio-economic lines."
Dr. Ali Modarres, Associate Director of the Edmund G. "Pat" Brown Institute***

Challenges to Broadband Adoption

- The Greater Los Angeles area has the largest population of broadband non-adopters of any region in California, which is why increasing adoption in Los Angeles is a high priority for CETF and partners. CETF has more grant investments in Los Angeles than any other county and will focus a major statewide public awareness program (*Get Connected!*) in Los Angeles when it is launched in June. In addition, CETF is committed to starting in Los Angeles to initiate a program that will bridge both the Digital Divide and achievement gap in low-performing middle schools (School2Home).
- Low-income households that do not have broadband connectivity are further disadvantaged because they cannot access online resources and training they need to improve their quality of life.
- The lack of accessible and relevant training for the target population is a key barrier to adoption.
- Although broadband companies offer various affordable plans, the cost of computing devices to connect to broadband often is a barrier for families of modest means. In addition, many of these low-cost offers are under-publicized and difficult to access.
- CETF grantees currently working on providing access to underserved communities underscored the need for low cost computer equipment and volunteers that can help train participants.
- Non-adopters will access training and services from the trusted agencies in their communities.
- Cable and Internet connectivity is currently available at local schools but is not being fully leveraged.
- Organizations working to provide affordable housing units with connectivity encounter numerous bureaucratic hurdles.
- Counties, municipalities, and other government agencies need to increase the amount of services offered online. This will result in more efficient use of limited resources to deliver services.
- Digital literacy training isn't fully integrated into workforce development programs sponsored by Workforce Investment Boards.

***"As we work to close the digital divide for our under-served neighborhoods, effective collaboration between government, community and business stakeholders will be necessary to deliver long term, sustainable results. We were happy to host the roundtable and look forward to being part of the process for success."
Fran Inman, 2009 Chair of the Board, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce***

¹ Los Angeles County Demographic Information, www.lacounty.gov

² Public Policy Institute of California Statewide Survey 2008 in partnership with CETF and ZeroDivide.

³ "Technology and the Geography of Inequality in Los Angeles". Edmund G. "Pat" Brown institute of Public Affairs, www.patbrowninstitute.org/publications/documents/CTF_Report.pdf

Opportunities for Collaboration and Accelerating Adoption

- The “Wired for Wireless” report prepared by Community Partners and sponsored by CETF is now available and provides reliable information to policymakers (particularly local government officials), community leaders and industry about: (a) the experience with “government-led” wireless projects; and (b) best practices for Digital Inclusion within these projects.
- United Way of Greater Los Angeles is focusing on providing social services to under-served middle schools as a current community transformation strategy. This United Way effort presents an ideal opportunity to partner on the launch of School2Home.
- CETF is collaborating with The Children’s Partnership and other partners to launch the School2Home program statewide. School2Home will provide low-income middle school students attending under-performing schools and their parents a computing device and an affordable broadband connection. Participating families and school sites will receive the training and support needed to ensure that this access to technology fully supports ongoing academic improvement and community transformation. CETF is planning to launch School2Home in Los Angeles schools in September 2009 and has committed \$1 million as a “challenge opportunity” to be matched by United Way. It is intended that together the two organizations can seek another \$2 million in co-investments. The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce has expressed a willingness to help lead School2Home.
- Several other organizations, such as Salvation Army, ThinkTogether, Computers for Youth, Families in Schools, have existing programs that can complement and advance School2Home.
- Affordable housing projects provide an opportunity to reach a large number of the target population if broadband availability and services are provided as part of the residential complex and services. CETF and One Economy Corporation are currently working on a state “smart housing” policy which could be embraced by local governments and regional agencies.
- The California Telehealth Network (CTN) will be a statewide system to provide increased access and specialty services to medically-underserved rural and urban communities. Healthcare leaders in Los Angeles should seek to ensure all clinics and facilities know about and can participate in CTN.
- Los Angeles has one of the most extensive fiber networks which may present a resource for an innovative and successful Digital Inclusion strategy for disadvantaged neighborhoods.
- CETF will launch the *Get Connected Los Angeles!* public awareness program in June, including hosting Community Connect Fairs throughout the region. The effort will target non-adopters by highlighting the value of connecting to broadband services to “make life easier.” CETF will be working with many community-based and media partners to promote the message.
- CETF is exploring the opportunity to partner with 211 programs to assist *Get Connected!*
- All government agencies—state, regional and local—should consider incorporating broadband deployment (wireline and/or wireless) into all infrastructure construction projects.
- Organizations that make the transition to electronic data management systems benefit by lowering their administrative costs along with their carbon footprint. Broadband is a “green” technology.
- The widespread use of text messaging and web-enabled mobile devices among our target population, particularly youth, needs to be leveraged to accelerate broadband adoption.

Consensus on Priority Strategies and Action for Next Steps

- CETF, United Way, and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce will develop and tailor the School2Home program for Los Angeles to prepare for a launch in September of 2009. All interested community organizations and leaders are invited to become a part of the School2Home partnership.
- CETF will work with Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and Los Angeles City Council to determine how the delivery of human and social services can be integrated as a complement to School2Home program in priority neighborhoods. This discussion will be initiated at the invitation of a representative of Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley Thomas.
- Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) will continue to encourage governments to make more services available online. SCAG will work to leverage five newly opened offices in the region with video conferencing capabilities. SCAG also is interested in supporting computer recycling programs that can assist educational programs in the region. Finally, SCAG can provide tools that raise awareness on how traffic can be reduced by leveraging broadband technology.
- CETF and One Economy Corporation will brief policymakers (city and county officials, housing authorities, state and federal agencies) in Los Angeles about the benefits of smart housing and will encourage the adoption of appropriate strategies. They also will convene workshops with affordable non-profit homebuilders to provide information and technical assistance.
- CETF will brief the Los Angeles County and City Workforce Investment Boards on the ICT Digital Literacy Initiative to determine how best to incorporate digital literacy skills into all workforce training programs.
- CETF will work with the University of California to provide information and convene meetings in Los Angeles about the opportunities to participate in the California Telehealth Network.
- CETF will facilitate appropriate meetings with public agencies to explore the feasibility of accessing existing fiber networks to expand affordable access and increase adoption in disadvantaged neighborhoods.
- University of Southern California's E-Government Lab will assist in the dissemination of broadband mapping data to the public. Making the broadband map available to a larger section of the public will help inform Digital Inclusion policies and practices. Domestic and international Digital Inclusion best practices should be studied for relevance and applicability to the region.
- CETF will launch *Get Connected Los Angeles!* in June 2009. All interested community organizations and public agencies are invited to participate in the Community Connect Fairs and to help in promoting the message. Companies interested in underwriting the public service announcements and co-branding with the *Get Connected!* message should contact CETF for more information.
- CETF will follow up with the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and United Way of Greater Los Angeles to explore the feasibility of establishing a Regional Broadband Collaborative for the area and to chart a course of action that will include all interested partners.

“Technology is a powerful tool to improve student achievement and the general well-being of low-income communities. We’re excited about working with CETF and engaging leaders across all sectors to use the School2Home initiative as an opportunity to work with students and their families.”
Elise Buik, President and CEO, United Way of Greater Los Angeles



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Roundtable Leadership Participants

Olga Ayala, Field Deputy, Office of Los Angeles City Councilman Tony Cardenas
Bert Ball, Executive Director, L.A. Shares
Randy Barth, Chief Executive Officer, THINK Together
Alan Breslauer, Information Technology Deputy, Office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Debbie Brooks, Executive Director, The Acme Network
Elise Buik, President and CEO, United Way of Greater Los Angeles
David Burtch, Vice President, Ameritel, Inc
Patricia Celidon, Director, Technology & Training, Community Development Technology Center
Catherine Chavez, Information Technology Manager, Southern California Association of Governments
Raquel Cinat, Associate Vice President, California Emerging Technology Fund
Rosa Cobos, Board Member, Southeast Community Development Corporation
Julia Cooksey, Director, Verizon
Greg Curtin, Director, E-Gov Lab USC School of Policy Planning and Development
Park Davis, Community Technology Director, Little Tokyo Service Center
Flor Delgado, Program Manager, Youth Policy Institute
Denise Fairchild, President/Chief Executive Officer, Community Development Technology Center
Linda Fowells, Executive Vice President, Community Partners
Rossina Gallegos, Vice President, Union Bank
Jon Gary, Teacher, Los Angeles Unified School District
Curt Gibbs, Senior Resource Development Officer, Community Redevelopment Agency Los Angeles
Pria Hidisyan, Senior Planner, Southern California Association of Governments
Lee Huey, Chief Financial Officer, Queenscare
Fran Inman, Chair, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
Cecily Jackson, Program Manager, California Resources and Training
Liz Koravos, Development, Venice Arts

Alicia Lara, Vice President, United Way of Greater Los Angeles
Deane Leavenworth, Regional Vice President, Time Warner Cable
Irene Lewis, Executive Director, Los Angeles Salvation Army
Maribel Marin, Executive Director, 211 Los Angeles County
Dana Martin, Director, ITT Technical Institute
Al Martinez, Supervising Engineer, Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority
Marvin Martinez, Vice Chancellor, Los Angeles Community College District
John Matich, Director, Urban Education Partners
Sunne Wright McPeak, President and CEO, California Emerging Technology Fund
Ali Modarres, Associate Director, Edmund G. "Pat" Brown Institute of Public Affairs, CSULA
Dennis Needer, Chair, Los Angeles County Workforce Investment Board, CEO, Full Spectrum
Oscar Cruz, Director of Advocacy, Families in Schools
Les Peters, Youth Institute Director, YMCA Youth Institute
Neri Rivas, Vice President, Community Union Inc.
Ana Maria Ruiz, Literacy Campaign Director, Centro Latino for Literacy
Brandon Stephenson, Senior Account Executive, Cerrell Associates
Gene Straub, CFO/COO, Youth Policy Institute
Cooke Sunoo, Director, Asian Pacific Small Business Program
Martin Sweeney, Director, Alliance for Technology Access
Audrey Thompsan, Director, Connect Los Angeles
Agustin Urgiles, Education Programs Director, California Emerging Technology Fund
Susan Walters, Vice President, California Emerging Technology Fund
Kristine Williams, Vice President, Community Development Technology Center
Denita Willoughby, Vice President, AT&T