

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
BROADBAND AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES

April 4, 2016

Kandiyohi County Health & Human Services Building, Willmar

- Present: Travis Bonnema, Donna Boonstra, Dean Bouta, Scott Froemming, Larry Handlin, Larry Kleindl, Michelle Marotzke, Brian Mort, Les Nelson, David Sisser and Donn Winckler
- Excused: Mark Boesch, Kathy Dillon, Wes Hompe and Linda Kacher
- Absent: Bruce DeBlieck, Mike Malone, Jean Marthaler, Justin Mattern and Paul Smith
- Guest: Joe Buttweiler, Partnership Development Manager, Consolidated Telecommunications Company
- EDC Staff: Connie Schmoll, Business Development Specialist
- Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Dean Bouta called the meeting to order at approximately 12:01 p.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Donn Winckler, SECONDED BY David Sisser, to approve the minutes of the March 7, 2016 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

Consolidated Telecommunications Company. Connie Schmoll welcomed and introduced Joe Buttweiler, Partnership Development Manager of Consolidated Telecommunications Company (CTC). CTC was developed around the Brainerd/Baxter area and is a cooperative similar in structure to Federated Telephone Cooperative (FTC) with approximately 62 employees. Buttweiler's job is to grow CTC's customer base in Minnesota. CTC works almost exclusively with fiber, invests in the communities in which it does work and is very involved politically. Buttweiler showed a couple of videos which can be found at [www.connectctc.com](http://www.connectctc.com) under the business section. CTC recently put in two redundant 100 Gb of bandwidth between Brainerd and Minneapolis. Senators Franken and Klobuchar has asked CTC for input on broadband. CTC received a Smart Rural Community award. Buttweiler provided CTC's customer service results, including overall customer satisfaction at 86% and satisfaction with its technicians at 92.5% and named its partnerships (see CTC Partnership Development booklet). CTC is very flexible in the services it offers to various communities. Buttweiler stated he has had discussions with Kevin Beyer of FTC about the Kandiyohi County project. CTC has connectivity through Kandiyohi County on a network operated by CTC. CTC, along with Region 5 Development Commission, participated in some state grant projects and Blandin Foundation grants. CTC is capable of managing construction. CTC works with an engineer to oversee engineering, uses feasibility study information and hires grant writers to compile statistics for an outstanding grant application. Buttweiler stated if there is hesitation on the scope of Kandiyohi County's project, there

may not be enough time to make the September grant deadline—organizationally, CTC would be ready to go. Bouta stated in conversations with Scott Froemming, it appears Kandiyohi Power Cooperative is not interested in being too involved in Kandiyohi County's project. Buttweiler stated CTC will want to know what needs to be done, what is the envisioned scope of the project, will it cover Willmar and which area will be done first? The Brainerd/Baxter project targeted the business community and is not fiber-to-the-home. Bouta indicated the entire county that is unserved or under served would be included in the project. Realistically, Kandiyohi County's project will be a phased process, however, state grants are limited to one construction season and \$5 million. This committee is hoping whichever company comes in sees this project as an opportunity of growth. This committee is looking for options and ideas on funding and could hopefully come up with public monies. CTC worked with Little Falls and a couple of other communities on bonding. Buttweiler will provide Larry Kleindl with CTC's bond consultants. Kleindl indicated he has had some discussions with bond companies. This year, CTC has a small project between Little Falls and Brainerd. Buttweiler stated the prevailing wage drives up project costs 30-40%. Unless funding discussions have already started, the project could be pushed to 2017. Schmoll stated the priority is on unserved and under served areas, but there is uncertainty as to those definitions and cities would be next. CTC likes to compete for customers. CTC is an owner of Cooperative Network Services (CNS), but does most of its engineering work through Communication Network Engineering, Inc. (CNE). CTC has used other engineering firms. CTC would manage its network coming into Kandiyohi County. Buttweiler stated typically, decisions must be made quickly during construction. CTC can work with CNE and Kandiyohi Power Cooperative to determine the project area to determine costs and how many community institutions and businesses would be involved. Schmoll indicated CNE has already divided the county into quadrants.

Schmoll stated the Lt. Governor has contacted the EDC and wants to visit the county to learn more about its broadband needs.

## REPORTS

Blandin Hack<sub>2</sub>0 grant. Schmoll reported a meeting was held to begin plans for another hackathon and Larry Handlin has agreed to take over its leadership. Blandin Foundation extended the EDC's grant deadline to December 2016. Handlin stated this Thursday the Willmar yellow bike app will be unveiled and another other app is in process. Kleindl stated Houston Engineering is doing the aquatic invasive species app.

Blandin WiFi grant. Schmoll reported Blandin Foundation has given the EDC until the end of April to finalize the WiFi grant. Schmoll is working with Kleindl to put hotspots in four areas of the county. Kleindl stated the county's six libraries already had WiFi so they are working with Blomkest, Pennock, Lake Andrew Township hall and Sunburg on locations. MVTV Wireless is providing free data for the hotspots. Kleindl put the proposed tower locations on a map as a visual aid for the county commissioners.

Feasibility study. Kleindl reported the county board will sign the CNE contract tomorrow and will do it as an event to announce residents may receive a call asking about their broadband service. The county will try do to a web stream of the signing and will do a taping after the board meeting. Schmoll stated CNC will provide monthly updates on the study. The EDC met with Empower MediaMarketing, Kiesling Associates that is handling the financials and CNE representatives. Empower MediaMarketing

will provide a written public service announcement for us to use to promote the study locally. CNE is already working on the study. The committee's assignment is to help find someone to figure out who is living in homes. The county's GIS people are giving CNE data.

Legislative subcommittee. Chairperson Bouta reported Donna Boonstra, Travis Bonnema, Schmoll, Butch Haug and Sam Romain testified before a house hearing. Boonstra noted it was an initial take on a presentation of the bill before it comes to committee. It was noted Rep. Dave Baker changed the bill about first right of refusal to incumbents. A written rebuttal was presented to Rep. Baker saying this committee does not support his position. Bouta noted two points in the right of refusal language changed from shall to may and the other issue took out some of the speed focus on awarding a grant to enable wireless providers to receive grants. They made a point about allowing multi-year construction and were told funding cannot go from one legislative session to another. Rep. Baker indicated he would remove the wireless from the bill. Travis Bonnema stated the perception was Rep. Baker received everything he was given. Bouta noted the Senate is proposing \$100 million for broadband and is working on terminology for speed requirements to get a grant and definition of served and under served. This committee wants to keep the current unserved and under served definitions so the focus remains on rural. Bouta testified and pointed out not to forget about the ag industry and gave examples. Senate is a completely different approach.

[Larry Kleindl was excused from the meeting.]

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Marketing/Community awareness. Chairperson Bouta stated need to keep the committee's goals and wishes in front of the public. Michelle Marotzke and Les Nelson volunteered to work on a marketing subcommittee. It was noted it may be worth speaking with the West Central Tribune to do stories rather than press releases. A recent article on broadband in the West Central Tribune was school based.

#### NEW BUSINESS

Broadband goals and funding. Marotzke and Nelson volunteered to work with Schmoll on committee goals. Schmoll has started an outline that needs to be refined (see attached). Bouta indicated funding discussions will be ongoing.

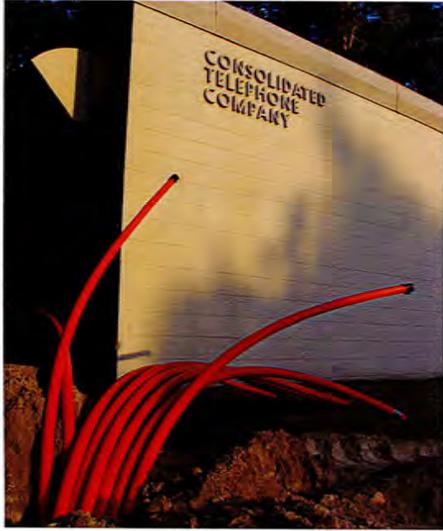
NEXT MEETING—The next meeting is 12 noon, Monday, May 2, 2016, in Room 2057, Kandiyohi County Health & Human Services Building, Willmar.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:19 p.m.

# CTC Partnership Development



## About CTC

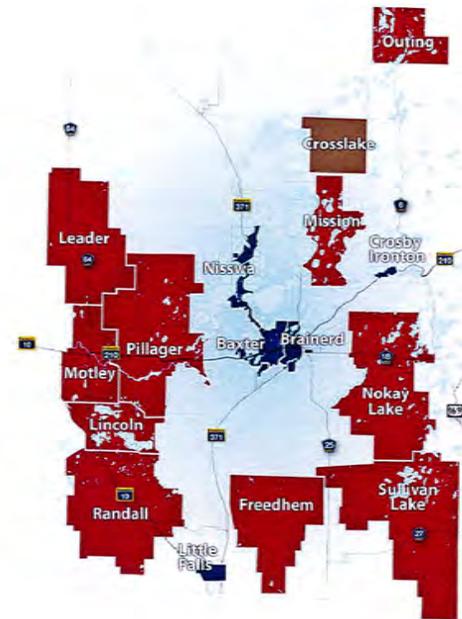


CTC is a full service technology company offering Digital TV, High Speed Internet, and Phone Service over our fiber-to-the-home network. CTC also offers business class TV, Internet, and Phone Service, including Hosted PBX Phone Systems and IT support services. Just recently, CTC began offering TV Everywhere and Smart Home Technology.

Based in Brainerd, Minnesota, CTC has a history of delivering telecommunication services to under and unserved areas. Today, CTC has partnered in many different ways with organizations and communities to bring much needed services to homes and businesses. CTC has the network infrastructure and relationships to connect the most rural communities to a state-of-the-art fiber network.



## Partnerships



As a local Cooperative, it is critical to establish strong partnerships to achieve your community's technology goals. CTC first partnered with ISD 181 in Brainerd, the cities of Brainerd and Baxter, Essentia Health, and Crow Wing County to bring the community their first 10Gb fiber ring. This partnership was the foundation for the continued growth of fiber optics in the Brainerd Lakes Area.

In 2015 CTC became the managing company of Crosslake Communications, offering direction, leadership and technical experience to the city and staff. In 2013 CTC partnered with the city and local organizations in Little Falls, MN to deliver fiber to their main business corridor to help sustain and attract new businesses to their community. In 2011 CTC partnered with Arrowhead Electric in Lutsen, MN. Arrowhead Electric and CTC worked together on all aspects of their fiber deployment and today backhauls Arrowhead switching and Internet services back to their Brainerd location. CTC also offers operational and technical support to Arrowhead Electric on an ongoing basis.



## Experience Matters

All the capabilities for full fiber deployment at your fingertips.

CTC partnerships on fiber deployment will help with:

- Lowering your overall project costs
- Developing operational processes
- New product roll-outs and revenue generating opportunities
- Regulatory assistance
- Community interest

### Full telecommunication resources available.

- Engineering
- Central Office Technicians
- Network Analysts
- Combination Technicians
- Accounting
- Regulatory
- Sales
- Marketing
- Customer Service
- Tech Support
- Business IT Solutions
- Product Development
- Provisioning

### NTCA - The Rural Broadband Association Certifications



CTC service areas have been certified Smart Rural Communities and are Gig-Certified by the NTCA - The Rural Broadband Assoc.

## Experience Matters

### Connectivity

Creating a reliable, redundant and fast network will better connect you to the world. CTC is a member-owner of CNS (Cooperative Network Services). CNS companies work together to create a vast transport network throughout the state. Access to this network creates new opportunities to connect with other communities, while building reliability and redundancy into your community's network. If CNS doesn't have a presence in your community, CTC has many partnerships to connect anywhere in the state or even the world!



## Economic Development

What a fiber network can do for your community.

### **Sheila Haverkamp, Executive Director for Brainerd Lakes Area Economic Development Corporation states:**

“Not only is fiber important to driving new businesses to our community, but it offers those employees who are relocating an opportunity to have fiber optic services to their homes. We have been able to add 125 jobs with Minnesota Care Processing, and we had a large call center located in Nisswa that required state-of-the-art technology to conduct their business. They offer online educational opportunities and curriculum, so bandwidth was essential when they looked to open their call center.”

### **Nate Grotzke, Leasing Agent for Close~Converse Commercial Properties states:**

“In commercial real estate, the demand or requirement for fiber is growing. I recently worked with a growing tech company that relocated in order to have their Internet service be provided by CTC. They stated that they were moving to the new location due to CTC providing the fastest fiber connection north of Kansas City. While the old saying ‘location, location, location’ still holds true, I think the saying is quickly changing from ‘location, location, location’ to ‘fiber.’”



In 2015, CTC partnered with the Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce and the Brainerd Lakes Area Economic and Development Corporation (BLAEDC) to offer the CTC Room. The CTC Room is a high tech training room with a 1 Gig Internet connection at the Chamber and BLAEDC office. It

is available to Chamber Members and Community organizations to use for meetings and training. The CTC Room is also a great resource for BLAEDC and the Chamber to showcase to potential new businesses and show them the technology available in the Brainerd Lakes Area.

## How to Get Started

### **How to Get Started**

1. Identify Community Champions and Partners
2. Engage Anchor Businesses
3. Meet with City Officials
4. Explore Funding Mechanisms
5. Find a Technology Partner – Leverage their Knowledge and Experience



For more information on CTC Partnerships contact:

Joe Buttweiler  
Partnership Development Manager  
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joe@ConnectCTC.com

## Co·op·er·a·tive

*adjective*

1. Done in cooperation with others: a cooperative effort
2. Marked by willingness to cooperate;

# GO BIG

## Go Gig!

1,000Mb per second on fiber Internet



consolidated telecommunications company

*Connecting The Community.*

14385 Edgewood Drive  
Baxter, MN 56425

1. The EDC, in cooperation with Kandiyohi County, Willmar Lakes Area Vision 2040 and private partners, goal is to expand a robust high-speed broadband network, utilizing fiber to the premise (FTTP) networks wherever possible to attain broadband access to every premise in the county.
2. The initiative may need to utilize a mixed use of technologies to overcome the county's challenges of many lakes, topography issues, areas of low population density and funding constraints.
3. Continue to push for legislative action to provide funding of the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program.
4. Seek out other sources for grant funds needed to proceed with implementation of broadband in Kandiyohi County.
5. Have discussions and conduct planning with private providers to share goals and initiate plans to move forward with FTTP broadband network deployment.
6. Secure one or more broadband providers that are willing and able to install an FTTP broadband system to the entire county. This will assist our businesses and residents in bringing a digitally connected community through a world class, next generation broadband network.
7. Using informational maps from "Connect Minnesota," and the County's GIS department, we have determined there are 7,653 buildings (housing units and businesses) that are currently under and unserved by the state's definition of high speed broadband. The map data shows there is an additional 13,393 buildings in what is considered served areas; however, we feel there are some areas of the map that could be contested.
8. Secure as many grants/public subsidy as possible to allow private providers to meet their cash flow needs and move forward on phased in implementation.
9. Secure an implementation plan that the Kandiyohi County Board of Commissioners will approve and invest in with financial support.