

## **ATIC Board Agenda for Wednesday, April 10, 2024**

### **1. Administrative**

- 1.1. Self-Introductions
- 1.2. Modifications to and Acceptance of Agenda Draft
- 1.3. Acceptance of Minutes from March 13, 2024, Board Meeting
- 1.4. Treasurer's Report (Ron Schott)
- 1.5. ATIC Board Membership Considerations
  - 1.5.1. ATIC Broadband Providers Working Group Meeting & Next Steps
  - 1.5.2. Annual Election of Officers
- 1.6. Review of Outstanding Action Items as Documented in March 13, 2024, Minutes

### **2. Informational Presentations**

- 2.1. None Scheduled

### **3. Activity Reports**

- 3.1. Arizona Broadband Office Report (Sandip Bhowmick)
  - 3.1.1. Broadband Grants, Rural Community Outreach & Projects
  - 3.1.2. Digital Equity Initiatives & Opportunities
  - 3.1.3. ACA Broadband Strategy & ATIC Role/Support
- 3.2. Arizona Broadband Stakeholder Network (Steve Peters)
  - 3.2.1. AZBSN Digital Access Task Force Updates
  - 3.2.2. AZBSN Leadership Group, Committees & Initiatives
  - 3.2.3. Outreach Activities with Newsletters & Webinars
- 3.3. Technology in Education/eLearning
  - 3.3.1. Arizona Technology in Education Association (AzTEA) (Nan Williams)
  - 3.3.2. Greater Arizona Educational Leadership (GAZEL) (Steve Peters)
  - 3.3.3. Sun Corridor Network (SCN) (Laura Etter)
- 3.4. Arizona State Library (Holly Henley, Mala Muralidharan)
- 3.5. Telehealth (Michael Holcomb)
- 3.6. Government Affairs
  - 3.6.1. Arizona Broadband Policy Update (John Kelly, Mark Goldstein)
  - 3.6.2. Federal Broadband Policy Update (Nicole Umayam/NTIA, Mark Goldstein)

### **4. Information and Action Plans**

- 4.1. ATIC Website & Teleconferencing (All)
  - 4.1.1. AZBSN Communications & Newsletter
- 4.2. ATIC Mailing List & CRM (All)
- 4.3. New Business and Motion Considerations (All)

### **5. Events Attended and Upcoming Meetings**

### **6. Announcements**

### **7. Adjourn**

## **ATIC Board Meeting Minutes**

**April 10, 2024**

### **Attendees:**

#### **ATIC Board Members:**

Mark Goldstein, Henry Goldberg, Oris Friesen, Ron Schott, Kirk Busch, Laura Etter, Rob Gallegos, Ian Hathcock and Mala Muralidharan (proxy for Holly Henley).

#### **ATIC Associates & Guests:**

Pam Waggoner (Executive Director of Community Outreach, Resound Networks), Igor Ilyinsky (Superintelligence Architect, ListenUp), Ada Maduakor (Senior Project Manager, Quintillion), Brian Fickett (General Manager, Tohono O'odham Utility Authority), Kimber Tower (Director of Sustainability, Televeda), Steven Crosby (Community Outreach, Frontier Communications) and Eean Patterson (CEO and Founder, Judefly Technologies and Judy.ai).

**Quorum Met with 9 ATIC Board Members Present (Quorum = 9)**

**A partial replay of the meeting is available at <https://youtu.be/byKDpCgMyGA>.**

**Many thanks to Nan Williams and the Arizona Technology in Education Association (AzTEA, <http://aztea.org/>) for the use of their Zoom Video account for video conferencing and dial-in capabilities and to the Arizona State Library for providing additional support.**

**The next ATIC Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 8, 2024, virtually. The schedule of ATIC Board Meetings for the balance of 2024 can be found towards the end of these minutes.**

## 1. Administrative

### 1.1. Self-Introductions

See the list of attendees above.

### 1.2. Modifications to and Acceptance of Agenda Draft

**MOTION: To accept the Agenda**

**MOVE: Laura Etter**  
**SECOND: Kirk Busch**  
**Passed Unanimously**

### 1.3. Acceptance of Minutes from March 13, 2024, Board Meeting

Oris Friesen writes the draft minutes, after which they are reviewed carefully by Henry Goldberg, and Mark Goldstein does a final edit of the draft minutes before issuing them to the Board as a draft for review, comment, and approval.

**MOTION: To accept the Minutes**

**MOVE: Kirk Busch**  
**SECOND: Ian Hathcock**  
**Passed Unanimously**

Mark noted that he has restored the 2023 and 2024 minutes to the website after he had inadvertently deleted the five-years' worth of historical minutes from the website during an editing mishap the previous month.

### 1.4. Treasurer's Report

Ron Schott, Treasurer, circulated via email the Desert Financial Credit Union statement with account and transaction details for Board reference, which are included at the back of these Minutes. Ron reported that current funds on hand total \$7982.13. All major bills have been paid including the monthly Century Link bill but the balance does not include a check to Mark Goldstein for \$155.45 for minor payments and the ACC \$10 annual fee.

At the October Board meeting John Kelly had commented that ATIC might wish to consider dropping the Directors & Officers insurance since it may not be necessary for our type of organization. John stated he spoke to an insurance broker about this, and this may be an expense ATIC does need to have. John said there seems to be no risk-associated tasks that ATIC is engaged in, such

as consulting, operational, or financial exposure. Henry Goldberg stated he does not feel comfortable dropping this insurance since the directors/officers are doing this work pro-bono and have no protection against any possible lawsuits, and some officers such as Mark and Henry are doing or may do consulting work in areas that relate to ATIC activities. Mark pointed out that the consulting he does is not for ATIC, and he carries his own professional liability insurance for his consulting firm. Kirk said that if we decide to do some tasks for ACA that may change our risk status so we should probably keep it for now. Mark also noted that we may be involved in some new state broadband and digital equity projects. John explained that the insurance does not protect us against frivolous lawsuits other than if, as officers, we act in ways that are incompatible with our fiduciary responsibilities, and his firm carries liability insurance protection against lawsuits rather than Directors & Officers Insurance. He suggested that we talk to our broker about this. Mark suggested that we take a wait-and-see position, especially since the insurance is paid up through the middle of 2024 and take no action at this time. ATIC continues to consider making a decision on this.

Steve Peters reported at a previous meeting that there are no funds remaining in the Arizona Broadband Stakeholder Network account. The most recent sponsors were Karen Ziegler Consulting Services and Triad Wireless. Steve has launched a sponsorship drive to raise further funding (<https://www.arizonatele.org/funding-request-2020.html>) and needs to become more active in securing some sponsorship renewals and new sponsorships. He is speaking with Sandip Bhowmick (State Broadband Office Director) and others about obtaining funding.

Mark has noted at previous meetings that the ATIC bank balance has been drifting down, but with remote ATIC Board meetings we no longer have to pay for lunches for attendees. Mark has commented in the past that ATIC needs to pursue its own funding, which would include sponsorships. ATIC needs to initiate a financial campaign for sponsors and other sources of funding to support and undertake new projects. Mark noted that in the past ATIC has been paid to host rural broadband workshops and has pursued various projects when it had more funds.

### **1.5. ATIC Board Membership Considerations**

Mark Goldstein reported that he contacted by e-mailed and then removed Bill Bolin and Matt Dostal from the Board at the last meeting due to their inactivity over the past several years. He invited them to still participate if they are interested. This brings our Board membership down to 27. Mike Keeling, past ATIC Lobbyist, notified the Officers that he is now retired and so has resigned from the Board. Our bylaws allow for 30 Board Members plus 5 officers, and so still have the capacity for up to 8 new Board members.

Mark is still waiting to hear from Brent Nelson of the Navajo Nation Department of Diné Education and from Joy Whiting, the Apache County Superintendent of Schools, about joining the ATIC Board. Mark has also asked Ian Hathcock of CellularOne about contacting Sonia Nez, the Navajo Nation Broadband Manager to join the Board. Ian is waiting to hear from Sonia. Mala offered to follow up with Sonia Nez since both of them participate in a weekly meeting. Mark will reach out to Brent Nelson and Joy Whiting again. Mark also plans to talk to Jeff Mirasola of Lumen Technologies about staying on the Board or providing a replacement. Steve commented that he had recently spoken to Mirasola and he did not sound enthusiastic about participating in ATIC or AZBSN.

Two people, who have attended AZBSN meetings, have contacted Mark recently about interest in joining the ATIC Board: Tamara Rosenberg of Resound Networks (<https://resoundnetworks.com/>), who attended last month, and Mignonne Hollis of the Arizona Regional Economic Development Foundation (AREDF, <https://www.aredf.org/>) who organized the recent “Arizona Broadband for All” meeting, and is located in Sierra Vista. Mark has encouraged them to engage with ATIC and attend future ATIC Board meetings. They remain interested. He also spoke with Shaun Story of Calix Networks, who is potentially interested in becoming a sponsor of ATIC and/or AZBSN. Mark noted that we are looking for tribal representation on the ATIC Board such as Sonia Nez mentioned above. Regarding tribal representation, at the last meeting Shereka Jackson mentioned a Native American as a possibility, whose coordinates are RJ Huskey, of Hozho Cybersecurity ([www.gohozho.com](http://www.gohozho.com) , [rj@gohozho.com](mailto:rj@gohozho.com) , 602-999-9369). Mark suggested a potential Board membership for Brian Fickett, General Manager of the Tohono O’odham Utility Authority, should he be interested. Brian said he looks forward to discussing it. Mala also suggested Mikhail Sundust of the Gila River Indian Community as a potential tribal board member.

### **1.5.1. ATIC Broadband Provider Working Group Meeting and Next Steps**

Mark had some recent discussions with Sandip Bhowmick, State Broadband Director at ACA, but there is nothing new to report. As reported previously, an outcome of the January 2022 ATIC Board meeting was to create an ATIC Broadband Provider Working Group whose function would be to provide a platform for providers to share information, meet & network, and engage on policy issues since there is no telecom service provider trade association in Arizona. The goal of this working group is to focus on addressing common issues and opportunities for the broadband service providers in Arizona. The group was launched on April 6, 2022, with a hybrid gathering hosted at Big Data Southwest’s DataCenter & SmartCity IoT Infrastructure Summit

Mark had started a Slack channel populated with a list of about 160 provider

representatives across about 80 companies from his spreadsheet. Mark circulated this spreadsheet to Sandip Bhowmick and Nicole Umayam for their reference and any additions/changes.

Mark convened a second meeting of the ATIC Broadband Provider Working Group, as a part of the Big Data Southwest's DataCenter & SmartCity IoT Infrastructure Summit (#USDC23, <https://www.bigdatasw.org/>) on January 26, 2023, at the Desert Willow Conference Center in Phoenix. He has activated the Slack channel and about fifteen people have joined it, but it is not very active yet.

At a previous ATIC board meeting Mark suggested we might create parallel Slack channels for two working groups with the Broadband Providers Working Group focusing on concerns of the communications providers, as initially planned. The second group would deal with topics and issues of economic development that include localized concerns as well as those that transcend county boundaries.

Mark noted that the Slack Channel has not taken off as he had hoped and is open to taking comments on this and/or suggestions for alternate broadband provider engagement strategies/initiatives.

### **1.5.2. Annual Election of Officers**

Mark noted that we need to do our annual election of officers. Five positions are up for election. The current ATIC officers on the executive committee are:

Chair: Mark Goldstein (incumbent)  
Vice Chair: Henry Goldberg (incumbent)  
Secretary: Oris Friesen (incumbent)  
Treasurer: Ron Schott (Incumbent)  
Lobbyist: John Kelly (Incumbent).

All five incumbents agreed to run again. There were no nominations of others to run for the ATIC officer positions.

**MOTION: To re-elect Mark Goldstein, Henry Goldberg, Oris Friesen, Ron Schott, and John Kelly to their respective positions**

- . **MOVE: Kirk Busch**
- . **SECOND: Rob Gallegos**
- . **Passed Unanimously**



## **1.6. Review of Outstanding Action Items as Documented in the March 13, 2024, Minutes**

Nothing to report

## **2. Informational Presentations**

2.1. None were scheduled.

## **3. Activity Reports**

### **Arizona Broadband Office Report (Sandip Bhowmick)**

Sandip Bhowmick, State Broadband Director at the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA) State Broadband Office, was unable to be present. Mark provided a brief update.

The process to challenge the accuracy of the served, underserved and unserved locations on the State Broadband Office broadband map has begun.

The state map classifies the household locations to be unserved (under 25/3 Mbps), underserved (under 100/20 Mbps) or served. The state map classifies Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs) as served if they have at least 1 Gbps symmetrical service.

Challenges are what people believe to be false positives or false negatives. False positives are where a service provider declares they are serving locations that are currently showing as unserved/underserved or they have a funded grant or enforceable commitment to service a location. False negatives are where the map shows a location is served but an entity (e.g., a community) declares that the service provider has not delivered the service or provided the appropriate speed (as measured by speed tests).

The Arizona Challenge Process Portal is now open at <https://az.broadbandnavigator.com/map?zoom=7&center=-12460707%2C4061995> with challenge submissions due by May 14, 2024. The ISP rebuttal window is open for 15 days following each challenge. The Arizona Broadband office is also hosting open office hours on Tuesday afternoons for the challenge process one-off meetings with permissible challengers and members of the public to answer questions on the BEAD Challenge Process.

After the challenge process is completed, the State Broadband Office will group the unserved/underserved locations geographically into project areas to be bid

on for BEAD grant funding, and these responses will be scored according to the criteria in the BEAD Volume II Initial Proposal.. This bidding process will likely begin in fall 2024, and Arizona has been allocated \$993 million by NTIA for BEAD grants.

The State Broadband Office submitted the State Digital Equity Plan to NTIA and it has been approved. Arizona has been allocated \$16.1 million in the initial digital equity funding allocations to states by NTIA. The State Broadband Office is now working on the Capacity Grants application to NTIA on how the digital equity funding will be awarded to sub-grantees. ATIC should discuss potential projects under this umbrella. Mark stated that ATIC and AZBSN could launch initiatives to be submitted to the State Broadband Office for funding under the Digital Equity Capacity Grants program, and this will be discussed at a future meeting.

The ACA has opened RFQ #2024-46: Broadband and Digital Equity Consulting and Management Services to develop a list of qualified vendors to provide advisory support for tasks such as GIS work, grant application evaluation, report writing, etc. for the implementation of their BEAD and Digital Equity Programs. Applications were due by April 1, 2024 and will then be evaluated and qualified vendors selected.

At the March Board Meeting, Maggie Farry, Governor Hobbs' Strategic Initiative Director for Broadband and Digital Equity, reported on the Governor's Interagency and Community Broadband Advisory Council (ICBAC), consisting of about 30 members, representing industries, community organizations, local government, and state government, which meets quarterly. The Council has formed four working groups: 1) infrastructure, permitting and mapping, 2) digital inclusion, 3) workforce and 4) tribal communities, that are meeting monthly. If you are interested in participating (or in getting on the distribution list for recordings of the meetings) in any of the working groups, contact Maggie Farry, at [mfarry@az.gov](mailto:mfarry@az.gov) or (602) 290-5726.

Rob Gallegos asked about the current state of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Mark provided a brief summary noting that the FCC has announced that the ACP will end at the end of April 2024 and the recent Congressional budget does not yet include funding for extending ACP though there are many supporters for this. The Affordable Connectivity Program Extension Act (H.R. 6929) now has 191 co-sponsors. More than 520,000 households in Arizona and about 23 million people nation-wide that are enrolled in ACP will be affected. He noted that at the recent "Arizona Broadband for All" panel, Gigi Sohn, who withdrew her nomination for FCC Chair under pressure, has said that the FCC has the power to re-activate the ACP functions if they have the political will to do so. They have not demonstrated that they do.



Reforming the Universal Service Fund is another option but would take about a year to implement.

Several carriers (AT&T, Triad Wireless, likely others) are honoring the ACP subsidy for their existing ACP customers. Rory Conaway of Triad Wireless will be presenting on that topic at the April 11 AZBSN meeting. Rob Gallegos would be interested in knowing which ISPs in northern Arizona will continue to offer the ACP subsidy on their own.

Mark noted that Steve Peters had discussed at the last ATIC Board meeting about potential options for creating Arizona alternatives to ACP - see Section 3.2.1. Ian Hathcock said that his firm, Cellular One, has about 40,000 ACP subscribers and is in the process of investigating alternative solutions.

### **3.1.1. Broadband Grants, Rural Community Outreach & Projects**

The content for this section is included above in Section 3.1.

### **3.1.2. Digital Equity Initiatives & Opportunities**

The content for this section is included above in Section 3.1.

### **3.1.3. ACA Broadband Strategy & ATIC Role/Support**

The content for this section is included above in Section 3.1.

## **3.2. Arizona Broadband Stakeholder Network (Steve Peters)**

### **3.2.1. AZBSN Digital Access Task Force Updates**

Steve Peters, Coordinator of the AZBSN Digital Access Task Force, was unable to attend. At the March meeting he reported that the Task Force continues to meet every Thursday morning at 8 am. In addition to presentations at meetings, the AZBSN Task Force regularly receives briefings from the Arizona State Broadband Office, the State Library, Arizona Department of Education, and others involved in broadband and digital equity work in the state. Steve sends out a newsletter after every meeting that recaps the most recent meeting and conveys information about upcoming events, policy reports, and other relevant information and links to recordings and transcripts of the weekly Task Force meetings.

At the March meeting Steve said he would like to see an Arizona replacement for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) which apparently is not going to be receiving extended Congressional funding and

so will terminate at the end of April affecting many low-income households in Arizona. He has done some preliminary thinking about potential options including possible partnerships and funding opportunities. One option might be to expand the Arizona Universal Service Fund (AUSF) along the lines that Lea Marquez Peterson at the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) has described in the past; and the AUSF had been used to provide E-rate Modernization Program matching funds in the past. She opened an ACC docket on this and Steve suggested that we should find out if it is still open. A second option might involve the Local First Arizona Economic Recovery Center as a conduit for accessing available grants from foundations etc. as funding sources. The City of Tucson has been in contact with the Industrial Development Authority in Tucson for possible broadband-related funding, so this is a potential third option. A fourth option might be to extend already-built E-rate-funded networks at schools and libraries to serve their local communities. As Steve understands it, these networks can be extended if local governments or others (e.g. foundations) pay to extend them but there must be a cost-allocation process which schools/libraries may not be able to afford. The Sun Corridor Network, Final Mile Project, state government, local governments, foundations, schools and libraries could be part of an overall process to discuss such options for an Arizona ACP initiative. Steve will follow up with Maggie Farry about some of these options. He expressed the need to identify a lead entity going forward.

#### **3.2.1.1. Updates to AZBSN Task Force Report**

Steve said at a previous meeting that Karen Ziegler and John Kelly had been unable to get traction on the proposed project. So, there has been no progress on working on an update to the November 2020 AZBSN Digital Access Strategy Report and there is nothing new to report.

#### **3.2.2. AZBSN Leadership Group & New Initiatives**

Steve said at a previous meeting he will report on these topics after an updated plan has been issued.

Mark Goldstein urged Steve to initiate some action on re-constituting the AZBSN Leadership Team and involve some additional people to generate strategic and operational plans as well as assist in making this happen so the full load is not carried only by Steve. Steve agreed.

#### **3.2.3. Return to Outreach Activities with Newsletters & Webinars**

No new action to report in this area.

### 3.3. Technology in Education/eLearning

#### 3.3.1. Arizona Technology in Education Association (AzTEA) (Nan Williams)

Nan Williams serves as Executive Director of AzTEA (<https://aztea.org/>) and sits on the EDTechCommittee for the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) which is rewriting the Educational Technology standards this year. She is also participating in the ADE Technology Task Force on the Digital Learning Subcommittee and she is part of the ISTE policy group on digital equity access. She has also been working with the Arizona Rural Schools Association and their Final Mile Project (<https://www.finalmileproject.com/>). Since AzTEA is now a Consortium for School Networking (CoSN, <https://www.cosn.org/>) affiliate, AzTEA is holding monthly chats with CIOs and CTOs of school districts to assist them in becoming certified educational technology leaders.

Nan was absent, but she shared a flyer announcing the C&I and IT Leadership Symposium 2024~AI: Charting Open Waters, A Collaborative Leadership Experience scheduled for April 26 at the Balsz Community Center.

#### 3.3.2. Greater Arizona Educational Leadership (GAZEL) (Steve Peters)

The GAZEL Board hasn't met since early 2022 and needs reactivation and refreshing to further operationalize GAZEL. Steve has been in touch with existing Board members in an effort to revitalize the Board as a functional entity. The Board still needs to acquire Directors & Officers (D&O) insurance for good governance and proper protections especially if funded projects are to be undertaken.

Work to produce a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between GAZEL and ATIC on the AZBSN has been on hold and a determination should be made about whether this is still necessary and if so, how to accomplish it. Mark Goldstein stated that GAZEL needs to be reinvigorated including its interaction with ATIC on the AZBSN Digital Access Task Force. Steve stated he is looking into reactivating the GAZEL Board, and is talking to past GAZEL Board members to come up with a plan as well as engage new Board members.

#### 3.3.3. Sun Corridor Network (SCN) (Laura Etter)

The Sun Corridor Network (SCN) is Arizona's Research & Education Network supporting the state universities, education, healthcare,

government and CAIs. Laura Etter's contact points are: Sun Corridor Network - <https://suncorridor.org/> and [Laura@suncorridor.org](mailto:Laura@suncorridor.org).

Laura Etter commended Mark on his recent broadband presentation given at the "Arizona Broadband for All" special meeting, briefly recapping 35-years of Arizona broadband policy and initiatives and titled Arizona Broadband Policy Past, Present, and Future. You can view and/or download the presentation on SlideShare at <https://www.slideshare.net/slideshow/aredf-broadband-for-all-aticazbsn-presentation-032524pdf/267188058>.

Laura reported on the National Digital Inclusion Association (NDIA) Net Inclusion Conference in 2025 planning session that was held this morning at the Gila River Tribe site. This conference will emphasize digital inclusion in tribal nations.

SCN is working on the Maricopa County Broadband Initiative, and has issued an RFP for ISPs. They are also focusing on how to support the BEAD Challenge Process, such as helping conducting speed tests. Mark asked if SCN will be leasing its middle-mile dark fiber through eX<sup>2</sup> Technology, and Laura replied that SCN will work with ADOT directly and eX<sup>2</sup> Technology on this.

Henry Goldberg reported that he met with Kelly Chung Mukherjee, who manages the Maricopa County Broadband Initiative and its broadband mapping portal AZ-1 as discussed by Laura Etter at the February ATIC Board meeting. Kelly suggested that she could include ATIC and/or AZBSN as a supporting resource/partner listing on the AZ-1 portal if we send her the organization's logo and a brief description of what the organization does to support broadband and digital inclusion in the state. Henry e-mailed Mark and Steve Peters about this, and they should discuss this and communicate with Kelly.

### **3.4. Arizona State Library (Holly Henley, Mala Muralidharan)**

Mala Muralidharan noted that this is National Library Week and she urged everyone to promote and protect your library. She reported that the E-rate application deadline for the coming fiscal year was March 27. This year Arizona Schools and Libraries applied for pre-discount \$84 million and post-discount \$65 million. This was less than the \$100 million last year and Mala thinks this is because prices are coming down with more competition. The available national E-rate funding this year was \$4.94 billion. This year there was a 3.6% inflation-adjusted increase from the FY2023 cap to keep pace with changing broadband needs of schools and libraries. The total national applications were \$3.19 billion so there will be surplus money available. The new programs, such as the

cybersecurity pilot program and hotspots program will have funding available due to this surplus.

Regarding the Universal Service Fund (USF), there has been some discussion on increasing the base of contributions from only landline phone providers to a broader range of technology companies such as wireless providers and companies that use the Internet. The FCC has set up a committee to discuss USF reform. Mala reported on a presentation prepared for INCOMPAS, a trade association advocating for competition policy across all networks. A copy of the presentation can be found at [https://www.incompas.org//Files/filings/2023/The%20Economics%20of%20USF%20Reform%20Brattle\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.incompas.org//Files/filings/2023/The%20Economics%20of%20USF%20Reform%20Brattle_FINAL.pdf). It includes discussions on USF and connection-based assessments, FCC committee discussions on USF reforms, SHLB participation and more. As mentioned at the March ATIC Board meeting, SHLB sponsored a study nearly two years ago called USForward activity covering the options available for USF reform.

As mentioned at the March ATIC Board meeting, Senator Ted Cruz of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation issued a brief blueprint for USF titled "Protecting Americans from hidden FCC tax hikes.". This blueprint discusses such topics as: avoiding duplication with programs like Lifeline and the hotspot lending program (where families may get more than one hotspot if have a child at school); wants USF to stop subsidizing legacy phone companies; target low-income groups who are not using the Internet yet; and combining adoption with availability for low-income groups.

Mala noted that the National Education Technology Plan is a key document for doing BEAD and digital equity allocations. It separates digital divide into 3 different areas: the usage digital divide, the design digital divide and the access digital divide. It recommends expanding professional learning as well as designing lesson plans that more technology efficient in using less bandwidth, as well as assessing usage of digital academic content.

The Cybersecurity Pilot Program comment period ended in January. Some of the more notable suggestions were to shorten the pilot duration from 3 years to 1-1.5 years, increase the funding for the program from \$200 million to \$312 million, broaden the definition of eligible cybersecurity services for funding, uniform methods of tracking progress and some comments about privacy concerns resulting from disclosing schools/libraries cyberattacks that would show their vulnerabilities.

The FCC 706 Report formally changed the definition of broadband to at least 100/20 Mbps service up from the previous 25/3 Mbps.

The Eyes on the Board Act by Senator Cruz is a bill to prohibit the use of school broadband subsidies for access to social media platforms. Mala noted that schools must already enable the Childrens Internet Protection Act (CIPA) controls in order to get E-rate reimbursements so this may be overkill.

For more details, see the State Library Report below, submitted by Mala.

## **ATIC Board Meeting April 10, 2024, State Library Report**

### **E-RATE :**

1. E-rate Application process for. FY 2024-5 closed **Wednesday, March 27, 2024.**

This year AZ Schools and Libraries applied for pre-discount \$84 M and post-discount \$65M

In total, about **\$3.196 Billion..** Federal Communications Commission announced that the E-rate program funding cap for **FY2024 will be \$4.940 billion.** This is a **3.6% inflation-adjusted increase from FY2023 cap of \$4.768 billion.** The FCC began adjusting the funding cap in 2010 to ensure that the E-rate program funding keeps pace with the changing broadband needs for schools and libraries.

**Universal Service Funds :** The Fund finances broadband subsidies in the high-cost programs, including, for example, the Alternative Connect America Cost Model (“ACAM”) program, the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (“RDOF”) and the 5G Fund for Rural America; the Lifeline Program; the Rural Health Care Program; the Schools and Libraries (“E-Rate”) Program; and various other affordability and access programs.

Telecommunications companies pay a percentage of their interstate and international end-user telecom revenues into the USF. This percentage is called the contribution factor, and this factor is calculated four times a year and is increased or decreased depending on the needs of the USF programs. This has been steadily increasing and last week FCC announced that for the 1st quarter of 2024 it is 24.6%. The USF is funded through fees collected from telecommunications providers, which are then typically passed on to consumers as a USF fee on their monthly bills. The traditional telecom base is shrinking because of decrease in landline users. Universal Service Administrative Company (“USAC”) is required to submit a projection of demand for the four universal service programs - High-Cost Program, Lifeline Program, E-Rate Program, and Rural Health Care Program. Thus, if no new funding sources are brought into the contribution base, customers of voice telephone services will face an increasing burden due to the rising contribution factor. Four main proposals have been advanced -

- a. increasing the base of revenues of current companies whose revenues already are assessed,
- b. connection-based assessment,



- c. number-based assessment and
- d. whether new contributors should be brought in as direct contributors to the Fund.

With respect to the first option, there is significant support in the FCC's record that companies' should include their broadband internet access service revenues, but the FCC also has sought comment on either a connection based or number-based model.

With respect to expanding direct contributors, certain large tech companies and streamers have been targeted for their online content services (such as streaming and advertising revenues).

Ultimately, which services and entities need to contribute to the Fund should be determined by economic principles based on efficiency arguments, and the historic context for why the Fund was set up and who should contribute to the Fund. Expanding the contribution base to include broadband internet access service revenues is both consistent and true to the institutional history and construct of the USF

Read more at:

[https://www.incompas.org//Files/filings/2023/The%20Economics%20of%20USF%20Reform%20Brattle\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.incompas.org//Files/filings/2023/The%20Economics%20of%20USF%20Reform%20Brattle_FINAL.pdf)

FCC setting up an advisory committee...to expand the base. FCC not wanting residential customers to bear any raise but to expand the base Raising a trillion - Digital advertising, streaming,

**USF and Senator Ted Cruz** through the US Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation put forward an 8-page Blueprint for USF - Protecting Americans from hidden FCC tax hikes <https://www.commerce.senate.gov/services/files/5CA218F4-384D-4DCA-8678-6885885209DC>. Suggestions include:

- Avoid duplication between programs like Lifeline and the proposed Hot Spot lending
- Stop subsidizing legacy telephone companies
- Target low income groups who are not adopting internet yet

#### **SHLB's call for Senators on the importance of USF reforms**

<https://www.shlb.org/uploads/Policy/National%20BB%20Plan/SHLB%20Responses%20to%20Senate%20USF%20Working%20Group%20RFC%20-%208.25.23.pdf>

SHLB sponsored study. **USForward**:. FCC Must Reform USF Contributions Now - An Analysis of the Options | SHLB Coalition

**USDA Rural Development** recently announced its fifth round of funding for the ReConnect Program to connect millions of people in rural America to affordable high-speed internet. USDA is making several program improvements under Round 5. The application deadline has been extended to 5/21/24. For a full list of program improvements and program and application requirements, visit <http://www.usda.gov/reconnect>

**FCC Issues Section 706 Report:** Under Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the FCC is required to issue periodic reports as to whether “advanced telecommunications capability is being deployed to all Americans in a reasonable and timely fashion.”. Last week, the FCC released its first Section 706 Report ([FCC 24-27](#)) following the enactment of, and broadband funding provided by, the Infrastructure Act.. Key aspects of the report included. the adoption of:

- A new, “long-overdue,” benchmark for defining advanced telecommunications capability for fixed broadband of **short-term goal 100 Mbps download speed paired with 20 Mbps upload speed..** The previous standard was 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up.
- **A long-term fixed broadband speed goal of 1 Gbps download speed paired with 500 Mbps upload speed.**

On E-rate related matters, the Report:

- Included an updated short-term broadband goal **for schools of 1 Gbps for every 1,000 students and staff (previously 100 Mbps per 1,000)**
- Agreed that “students’ access to broadband at home is an important goal.”. As such, the Report states that the **FCC is “currently considering our proposal to modify the E-Rate program to better meet the needs of off-premises students, school staff, and library patrons” — the latter “proposal” referring to the FCC’s pending action to make hotspots eligible for E-rate funding.**
- Referenced a proposal, dormant since late 2021, “to implement a central document repository through which service providers would be required to submit bids to the E-Rate program administrator, USAC, instead of directly to applicants.”

**Affordable Connectivity Program -ACP:.** ACP stopped accepting new applications and enrollments on February 7, 2024. Although there is still widespread Congressional support to provide additional funding to keep the ACP program going through the end of the calendar year, the prospects for such funding appear bleak.. **Most specifically, ACP funding is not included in Congress’ FY 2024 appropriations “minibus” package..** Meanwhile, the FCC continues to implement its ACP shut down plan.. Having already announced that April will be the last month in which ACP can be fully funded, the FCC issued a [public notice](#) last week estimating the maximum reimbursement range — 23% to 53%. **Arizona has over 522,000 households who will be jeopardized.**

[The Affordable Connectivity Program Extension Act \(H.R. 6929\) now has 191 Cosponsors \(House of Representatives\)](#)

National Telecommunications and Information Administration informed Congress that losing the ACP would undermine the historic \$42.5 billion the BEAD Program, for which the ACP supports a stable customer base to help incentivize deployment in rural areas. Additionally, ending ACP enrollments will also mean that the more than 240 outreach grant awardees across the country will need to wind down their grant-funded ACP outreach. Even worse is the fact that this will confuse the customers and undermine their confidence in the government and be a setback for the progress this program has made towards closing the digital divide. Senate Congress Committee is considering the new Cantwell/Lujan spectrum bill which includes \$5 billion for ACP.

**Eyes on the board Act** Sen Cruz introduced a. bill Eyes on the Board Act:. PROHIBITION ON USE OF SCHOOL BROADBAND SUBSIDIES FOR ACCESS TO SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS.. Need to keep a watch on this. <https://www.commerce.senate.gov/services/files/DDDB88D2-D04A-439B-B58B-5ADD84B20053>

### End of Library Report

#### 3.5. Telehealth (Mike Holcomb)

Mike Holcomb Interim Director of the Arizona Telemedicine Program (ATP, <https://telemedicine.arizona.edu/>) and newly elected to ATIC's Board, was absent, but he submitted a written report which is included below:

Here are some upcoming telehealth and rural health opportunities:

1. April 17<sup>th</sup> Arizona Telemedicine Council meeting agenda and registration now available at <https://telemedicine.arizona.edu/about-us/atc>
2. April 23<sup>rd</sup> Arizona Telemedicine Program - Developing a Telemedicine Program training course <https://telemedicine.arizona.edu/training/developing-telemedicine-program/webinar/2024-04-23>
  1. Telemedicine Guidelines and Standards for a Successful Program
  2. Virtual Communication Etiquette
  3. Business Aspects
  4. Telemedicine Privacy and Cybersecurity
  5. Telehealth Law & Policy
  6. Building Connections and Relationships
3. May 5-7 American Telemedicine Association meeting in Phoenix <https://ata-nexus.org/>
4. ABRC Workshop - 6th Annual Review Yuma County, NAU, ABRC Forum: Strengthening Partnerships to Sustain Healthy Border Communities <https://events.nau.edu/event/abrc-workshop---6th-annual->

[review-yuma-county-nau-abrc-forum-strengthening-partnerships-to-sustain-healthy-border-communities/](#)

5. 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Arizona Rural Health Conference Flagstaff June 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> <https://crh.arizona.edu/events/50th-annual-arizona-rural-health-conference>
6. Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grants - Program Application Period: Applications are due by April 29, 2024, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/telecommunications-programs/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants>

At Henry's suggestion, Mark will reach out to Janet Major to thank her for her many years of service on the ATIC Board representing the Arizona Telemedicine Program. Mark could not yet get in touch with her because her University of Arizona e-mail is no longer active but will determine her best current contact information and follow up accordingly.

### **3.6. Government Affairs**

#### **3.6.1. Arizona Broadband Policy Update (John Kelly, Mark Goldstein)**

John Kelly was absent, and Mark reported on some recent government activity. Mark noted that John's firm provides ATIC officers and selected Board members with weekly reports on activities at the State Legislature.

At the February ATIC Board meeting John reported that he had spoken to Representative Dunn, who chairs the rural legislative caucus, and the ACA legislative liaison about ATIC's proposal to organize an informal broadband briefing for legislators, where Sandip Bhowmick would be the major presenter. They supported this proposal, so John agreed to work on arranging this, likely as a breakfast briefing, and some ATIC Board members will be invited to attend. However, since the legislature is now meeting only once a week, the possibility of finalizing a meeting during the legislative session is becoming increasingly remote so we may try to do this in the next legislative session.

There is some legislative action regarding Internet filtering and AI regulation, but Mark has nothing specific to report on. As reported at previous ATIC Board meetings, the proposal for the Arizona Corporation Commission to regulate broadband by having ISPs report on rates, speeds, and infrastructure died earlier in the legislative session.

#### **3.6.2. Federal Broadband Policy Update (Nicole Umayam/NTIA, Mark Goldstein)**

Nicole Umayam is the Arizona Broadband Liaison Federal Program Officer

(FPO), for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). As such she serves as the interface for the state of Arizona to the NTIA at the national level, supporting the State Broadband Office on the BEAD and Digital Equity Programs. Nicole has shared with NTIA key activities in Arizona such as those of the Arizona State Library and the ADE Final Mile Project.

Nicole was not present at today's meeting and there was no report.

#### **4. Information and Action Plans**

##### **4.1. ATIC Website & Teleconferencing (All)**

As noted previously by Mark and Steve, the ATIC website is aging a bit so this is an opportunity to clean it up and restructure it. The website is shared with AZBSN.

The website needs to be leveraged to publicize the Digital Access Task Force Report recommendations as well as using it for communications and public engagement, such as newsletters. Kirk noted that he will continue to promote ATIC/AZBSN on LinkedIn and elsewhere.

Kirk Busch needs to update the website regarding board members who have left and new members who have been added. There are four people listed who are no longer ATIC Board members: Bill Bolin, Matt Dostal, Janet Major, and Mike Keeling.. There are two new people that must be added as new ATIC Board members: Mike Holcomb and Dario Solis.

Kirk also needs to add the bios (as either a pdf or link to their LinkedIn profile) for all ATIC Board members.. Kirk has e-mailed ATIC Board members to submit their bios.

##### **4.1.1. AZBSN Communications & Newsletter**

Mark at a previous meeting suggested that we should think about how to leverage some of the information sessions from AZBSN Digital Access Task Force meetings.

There remains a continuing need for volunteers to work  
(1) on regular maintenance of the Weebly ATIC website and  
(2) on providing a regular newsletter about all that's going on in the broadband world.

#### **4.2. ATIC Mailing List & CRM (All)**

Steve is discussing with Mark and Kirk Busch subscribing to a CRM/E-mail management service to meet the needs of the AZBSN Task Force.

#### **4.3. New Business and Motion Considerations (All)**

##### **ATIC vs. AZBSN Roles and AZBSN Governance.**

At a previous meeting Mark added that we did start to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2020 and the Executive Committee held several meetings on this topic. One of the decisions that was made was to let the finances of AZBSN operate under the management of GAZEL. However, the GAZEL Board has not met for some time and is not effectively acting in an operational capacity. Kirk Busch asked about the state of the draft MOU and Mark said he would send him a copy.

#### **5. Events Attended and Upcoming Meetings**

Telecommunications & Information Council (ATIC) Chair, Mark Goldstein, presented Arizona Broadband Policy Past, Present, and Future on March 25, 2024 at the Arizona Broadband for All special meeting briefly recapping 35-years of Arizona broadband policy and initiatives. You can view and/or download the presentation on SlideShare at <https://www.slideshare.net/slideshow/aredf-broadband-for-all-aticazbsn-presentation-032524pdf/267188058>.

Oris will send a copy of this meeting's Zoom chat to Mala, Kirk, Steve, Henry and Mark. Mark and Oris will follow up with Nan Williams/AzTEA to see if downloading of the chat by all meeting participants can be enabled.

#### **6. Announcements**

#### **7. Adjourn**

At 1:15 pm



## Upcoming ATIC Board Meetings

Upcoming ATIC Board Meetings for 2024 are scheduled for the second Wednesdays of the month (except August and December) from 12:00-2:00 p.m. and will be held fully virtually until further notice. Board Meetings are open for all to participate. Please plan to join us.

- May 8, 2024 from 12:00-2:00 pm
- June 12, 2024 from 12:00-2:00 pm
- July 10, 2024 from 12:00-2:00 pm
- No Board Meeting in August (Summer Break)
- September 11, 2024 from 12:00-2:00 pm
- October 9, 2024 from 12:00-2:00 pm
- November 13, 2024 from 12:00-2:00 pm
- No Board Meeting in December (Happy Holidays!)

## ATIC Special and Public Meetings

AZBSN Digital Access Task Force continues to hold meetings every Thursday morning (except holidays) at 8:00 a.m. See the Planning page at <https://www.arizonatele.org/covid19-planning.html> for details.

Also see Task Force information and related resources at <https://www.arizonatele.org/covid19-about.html>.

Future AZBSN newsletter, webinars, and roundtables are under development.

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## Dashboard

Is your contact information up to date?

### Accounts

Account Type	Account Number	Available Balance
Checking	ATIC 434041 ****04081-0400	\$405.84
Savings	ATIC 073206 ****04081-0000	\$7,575.29

A Available Balance

### Important Information

**Short-Term CDs and Savings Certificates: Maximizing Your Savings**

Whether you're eager to boost your savings, earn attractive interest rates or add a touch of flexibility to your financial strategy, short-term CDs and savings certificates are popular options in 2023.

June 27, 2023

**Top Financial Scams to Watch Out for in 2023**

There are many ways financial scammers can trick you into revealing your sensitive information. Safeguard your financial well-being with fraud prevention tips and resources.

June 27, 2023

### Quick Links

- Credit Card Login
- Investments (Raymond James)
- Mortgage Loans (MLQ5)
- Identity Secure
- Mobile App 101

### Link External Accounts

**Desert Financial Credit Union**

Arizona Telecommunications And Information  
ATIC 434041 \*\*\*\*\*04081-0400

*Transaction History*

Statement Period: <b>All Dates</b>	Date of Statement: <b>04/09/2024</b>
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**Posted Transactions (80)**

DATE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	BALANCE
03/12/24	CENTURYLINK AUTO PAY AZ TELCOM INFO COUNCIL	-26.87	\$406.84
02/12/24	CENTURYLINK AUTO PAY AZ TELCOM INFO COUNCIL	-25.77	\$433.71
01/10/24	CENTURYLINK AUTO PAY AZ TELCOM INFO COUNCIL	-26.01	\$459.48
12/12/23	CENTURYLINK AUTO PAY AZ TELCOM INFO COUNCIL	-26.27	\$485.49
11/10/23	CENTURYLINK AUTO PAY AZ TELCOM INFO COUNCIL	-26.27	\$511.76
10/11/23	CENTURYLINK AUTO PAY AZ TELCOM INFO COUNCIL	-26.61	\$538.03
09/12/23	CENTURYLINK AUTO PAY AZ TELCOM INFO COUNCIL	-26.85	\$564.64
08/10/23	CENTURYLINK AUTO PAY AZ TELCOM INFO COUNCIL	-26.49	\$591.49
07/11/23	DRAFT #2226 TRACER 53197395	-933.00	\$617.98
07/11/23	CENTURYLINK AUTO PAY AZ TELCOM INFO COUNCIL	-26.37	\$1,550.98
06/27/23	ARIZONA TECHNOLOGY 8699 WWW.AZTECHCOU AZ IGOQJ8JX	-400.00	\$1,577.35
06/20/23	ONLINE BANKING TRANSFER FROM 0000	\$1,000.00	\$1,977.35
06/12/23	CENTURYLINK AUTO PAY AZ TELCOM INFO COUNCIL	-26.75	\$977.35
06/05/23	DRAFT #2225 TRACER 52470921	-10.00	\$1,004.10
05/19/23	DRAFT #2224 TRACER 52175931	-500.00	\$1,014.10
05/12/23	ONLINE BANKING TRANSFER FROM 0000	\$1,000.00	\$1,514.10
05/12/23	CENTURYLINK AUTO PAY AZ TELCOM INFO COUNCIL	-26.37	\$514.10
04/11/23	CENTURYLINK AUTO PAY AZ TELCOM INFO COUNCIL	-25.75	\$540.47