

“Recharge the Range” Infrastructure Action Group

Follow-up Meeting - 8/4/16

BoomTown – Eveleth, MN

AGENDA

- 3:15 - 3:30 PM** **Arrive/Networking**
- 3:30 - 3:45** **Welcome & Introductions**
- 3:45 - 4:00** **Re-Cap of Previous Meetings and
review of Infrastructure Action Group
initiatives and ideas**
- 4:00 - 4:15** **Discussion of proposed Sub-Groups:**
- **Broadband**
 - **Local Government**
 - **Regional Rail**
 - **Regional Connections (Airports, light rail, highways, etc.)**
 - **Others...?**
- 4:15 - 4:45** **Designate Sub-Group Captains and Team Members;
assign a Co-Chair to oversee each Sub-Group**
- 4:45 - 5:00** **Next Steps (Homework Assignments):**
- **Recruit new Sub-Group Members (min. 5 in each group).**
 - **Identify at least 3 key initiatives/priorities for your Sub-Group.**
 - **Determine how Sub-Group will meet, communicate and work together.**
 - **Sub-Group Captain reports Sub-Group activities to Co-Chairs.**
- Next Action Group Meeting: Set a date?**
- 5:00 PM** **Adjourn**

Infrastructure – Focus Group

August 4th, 2016

Boomtown Woodfire

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

In attendance: Jeff Borling, Julie Marinucci, Mark Zimmerman, Steve Giorgi, Mark Bakk, Whitney Ridlon, LaTisha Gietzen, John Fedo, Harold Langowski, Sara Ferkul and Tom Whiteside.

Started meeting with discussion of the current initiatives and notes. Did not go into huge discussion of initiatives that were on the list.

Why did you come back to be a part of this focus group?

Major discussion was broadband. How do we bring fiber to smaller communities? Has been difficult to get support in certain areas from the representatives and officials. Most want to make use of infrastructure that is already in the ground and not put in new. Believe that one issue is there may be a disconnect from the older generation to the younger generation.

Itasca County already making head way. What did they do that maybe we can do across the rest of the region? Working with different partners, surveys to find out who want broadband, learning what funding/grants area available. When presenting to officials/legislatures/representatives/boards, have studies already completed (grants/funding are available for feasibility studies). Bring in school districts to push for fiber. Making broadband more accessible to studies with further education. Creating studies to show how having broadband available would make our region more appealing to businesses coming to this area. If you look at the 2016 state broadband grant you will see some of the items that you will need to be eligible for this grant and may also give you an idea of what may beneficial to know when you are putting a presentation together. Range mayors may be a sounding board on some of these

issues. Bringing mayors together to have a more unified voice as a region instead of individually.

Approaching the broadband companies themselves with the studies that are available to show them or encourage them where to expand to next.

Sub Groups of Infrastructure:

Regional Connections: Highways, light rails, connection across the region

Broadband: Bringing broadband to the entire region

Local Government: Addressing policy changes in the area.

****Regional Rail:** Trying to bring competitive rail connections to this area. (Already a group on the east end of the range that is working on this initiative, would like to recruit a couple more members from central and west parts of the range to assist in this project)

***Regional rail may be just an assisting role that brings back information to the infrastructure group.*

What's next?

How do we harness these tools that are out there so we can be prepared when all these things move forward? How can we convince larger economic development agencies that typically serve larger areas like Duluth, to serve our part of the region as well? What are you going to do or what do you want to come out of these subgroups?

Naming of captains and participants of subgroups:

Broadband: Tom Whiteside (Captain), Whitney and Mark Bakk

Regional Connections: Shawn Germolus was recommended to lead this group.

Local Government: Steve Giorgi (Captain), John Fedo, Whitney Ridlon and Julie Marinucci

Regional Rail: Julie Marinucci will help with this initiative

Decided that this group will meet quarterly, no date for next meeting has been set.

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Present for the Meeting		
Sara Ferkul	IRRRB	sara.ferkul@state.mn.us
Whitney Ridlon	IRRRB	Whitney.Ridlon@state.mn.us
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LaTisha Gietzen	PolyMet	lgietzen@polymetmining.com
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Steve Giorgi	RAMS	SGiorgi@ramsmn.org
Jeff Borling	GRE	jborling@greenergy.com
Tom Whiteside		Whitesideforhouse@gmail.com

Wished We Could've Been There		
Shaun Germolus	Range Regional Airport	shaun@rangeregionalairport.com
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Mary Finnegan	IRRRB	Mary.K.Finnegan@state.mn.us

Meeting Notes:

3:30 - 3:45 Welcome & Introductions

Jeff Borling, Action Group Host, welcomed the group and introduced himself and the Infrastructure Action Group Co-Chairs, LaTisha Gietzen and Harold Langowski. The rest of the Action Group members present also introduced themselves, as listed above.

3:45 - 4:00 Re-Cap of Previous Meetings and

Borling provided a brief re-cap of the previous Recharge the Range meeting discussions, circulating Action Group Protocols distributed by IRRRB and the notes from the Infrastructure Action Group Meeting held in Chisholm on 6/6/16.

Other action group members also shared their impressions of the June 6th meeting and the conversation quickly became focused on issues related to regional broadband internet access. It was noted that this re-cap conversation mirrored the discussion the group had on June 6th, in that both were dominated by broadband-related topics.

4:00 - 4:15 Discussion of proposed Sub-Groups:

It was acknowledged that the “Infrastructure” heading includes a long list of topics, each somewhat narrowly focused and unrelated to the others. Consensus was reached by the Action Group to establish a set of sub-groups to better coordinate activities under each specific focus area. The initial sub-groups to be established include:

- Broadband*
- Local Government*
- Regional Rail*
- Regional Connections (Airports, light rail, highways, etc.)*

It was agreed that new sub-groups can be established by the Infrastructure Action Group at any time, based on the needs and priorities of the individual members of the Group.

Conversely, however, it was also agreed that if no Action Group members step up and get involved in a sub-group, those sub-groups will be allowed to go dark.

4:15 - 4:45 Designate Sub-Group Captains and Team Members

Most of the Action Group Members volunteered to serve on one or more of the designated sub-groups, as shown on the flow chart attached to these notes.

As a result, most of the designated sub-groups received enough volunteers to get started, with the exception of “Regional Connections” sub-group. The group thought Shaun Germolus might want to serve as Captain of this sub-group, but that still needs to be confirmed with Shaun.

In populating the sub-groups, there was a clear message that all are welcome to get involved in the sub-groups going forward, even if a person was unable to attend the first meeting in August.

Moreover, the Action Group members present all agreed that these grassroots sub-groups will only survive if they have dedicated, self-directed members involved. These sub-groups, nor the Infrastructure Action Group itself, will be managed or directed by IRRRB, the Action Group Host, or the Action Group Co-Chairs.

4:45 - 4:55 Next Steps (Homework Assignments):

The sub-groups were encouraged to begin communicating and meeting independent of the Infrastructure Action Group. Borling encouraged each sub-group to focus on recruiting new members, to ensure they have the critical mass needed to affect results.

It was agreed that these sub-group interactions would be most successful, if the groups formalized how the sub-group will meet, communicate and work together.

Borling also asked each sub-group to identify the 3 key initiatives/priorities (at least) that the sub-group will focus on in the immediate future. He noted that he and the Action Group Co-Chairs would check in periodically with the sub-groups to monitor progress, and he challenged sub-group captains to be prepared to articulate these initiatives, along with a general report of the sub-group's activities.

4:55 – 5:00 Next Action Group Meeting: Set a date?

It was agreed that the entire Infrastructure Action Group should plan to meet quarterly to keep the sub-groups connected and help build momentum for the specific initiatives and activities promoted by the sub-groups.

Borling will send out a meeting poll for the Q3 meeting, sometime in late October or early November.

5:00 PM Adjourn

These notes were respectfully submitted by Jeff Borling, Infrastructure Action Group Host. Please contact me at any time if there are errors or omissions above that need to be corrected.

Thanks!

- Jeff Borling

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Host: Jeff Borling, Great River Energy
 Co-Chairs: LaTisha Gietzen, PolyMet Mining, Inc.
 Harold Langowski, City of Ely

