

Alaska Senate Community & Regional Affairs

Assessing the Present and Looking to the Future:
What are the broadband gaps in Alaska?

Thursday April 15, 2021: 3:30 pm



DENALI COMMISSION

Chad Stovall – Director of Programs

Erik OBrien – Broadband Program Manager

Overview of Broadband in Alaska



Chad Stovall – Director of Programs (5 min)

- Denali Commission – Overview

Erik OBrien – Program Manager: Broadband (10 min)

- Overview of Broadband in Alaska today
- Map of Alaska shows fiber connectivity in along green corridors – high capacity, blue corridor is microwave less capacity, other communities have least capacity
 - Lays landscape for broadband in Alaska
- 2010 – US NTIA Grant for Broadband Planning Data Collection, Task Force
- 2014 – Alaska Broadband Plan: *Blueprint for Alaska's Broadband Future*
 - Challenges, Infrastructure, Recommendations, Cost, Funding, Case Studies
- 2019 – Denali Commission Update
 - Purpose was eligibility to USDA Reconnect points; Worked with Governors Office and ATA
 - That effort led to all available points being available to applicants
 - Only 1 of 8 applications not selected; 80+ million federal funds for partners
- Alaska PPPs are critical to hundreds of millions of investment in Alaska Communications
- Alaska is Difficult Place to Serve, Large Geography, Small Population
 - Internet physically connects all users of global internet
- Public Investment Required for the Communication Need of Rural Alaska
 - FCC Programs, USDA Reconnect, USDA Community Connect, USDA Distance Learning & Telemedicine, NTIA Tribal Broadband, Stimulus Infrastructure Funding
- NTIA Connectivity Grants - 1) Minority Communities (\$285mm), 2) Tribal Broadband (\$1B), 3) Broadband Infrastructure (\$300mm)
 - Nationally competitive; Alaska needs Strategic Coordination to maximize allocation
 - Alaska has some of the highest need in the country, and greatest challenges
 - Unprecedented opportunity to address fundamental broadband access gaps
- Accomplishments
 - Close coordination with State & Federal Partners; strategic coordination to understand stakeholder needs
 - Ensure all available points for USDA Reconnect
 - Worked with tribes and FCC resulting 180 FCC-TSL for tribes
 - Worked with Communities to submit more Community Connect than any previous year
 - Closely communicating with tribal entities to ensure preparedness for the NTIA Tribal Broadband Grant