

School & Library Network Advisory Board Meeting Minutes March 18, 1998

Members Present: Bill Black, Barry Crommett, Steve Gilbert, Phil Lindley, Reginald Palmer, Ray Poulin (Linda Lord), Gary Nichols, Joanne Steneck

Members Absent: Barry McCrum

1. Approval of Minutes from January 7, 1998 Meeting. Art Henry noted one correction to the minutes. "As of December 31, 1997, 1106 schools and libraries were connected to the Network." With this change, the minutes were approved.
2. Report on Applications/Installations. A few applications continue to be received mostly for newly eligible sites. As of March 18, 1998, 1115 sites were connected. Bell Atlantic has learned through the recent survey and anecdotally that a number of sites may have connections (and computer grants) but are not using the Network yet. Art estimated this number as between 20-50. Bell Atlantic will call all such known sites over the next two weeks to determine why they are not using the Network and to find out what assistance they need. Art will make referrals to John Pierce for training, where appropriate. Art will report back to the Board at the next meeting on the status of these contacts.
3. Reviewing Survey Results. Art Henry reviewed his plans for issuing the survey results and asked for any additional comments on the planned contents by March 24, 1998. Art plans to issue a final report on March 31, 1998. He will mail copies to all Board members and send five copies to the Commission. It was agreed the report will be posted on the PUC's website.
4. Update on Training. John Pierce reported that the year 2 training program is going more smoothly than first year implementation. Initial trainees through March 15 is slightly ahead of projections: 359 or over 22% of 1,500 target. The majority of those receiving training are repeaters from last year. USM is particularly active with all sessions filled through June and additional sessions being added. Training schedules for all three areas of the State will be online by next week. Reggie Palmer suggested adding questions to the evaluation instrument asking for overall comfort level and whether they could access the Network at the conclusion of the training. These could likely replace the "Can you use the mouse?" question. John said he would add these questions.

Art reported that the first technical coordinator trainings have just been scheduled. Response has not been great but the invitations went to the

technical coordinator list. Those persons may not need training. Art and UMO will further examine whether this training is needed and ways to better target.

6. Status of FCC Universal Service Fund Support for Schools and Libraries (E-Rate). Linda Lord introduced Edna Comstock who is heading the State team implementing the E-Rate.

Edna explained the process to date. The continued threats of changes from various federal legislators have presented challenges. Maine's congressional delegation (Senators Snowe and Collins and Representatives Baldacci and Allen) have been very helpful. Apparently a compromise is in the works on Senator McCain's proposal that would require filtering software at any site accepting E-Rate discounts.

March 18 was the deadline for filing Form 470 applications to participate in the initial "window" for applicants. 350 applications filed from Maine. The State filed six blanket applications: plain telephone service for schools and libraries, long-distance service for schools and libraries and ATM for service line charges and equipment. Most Maine schools are eligible for a 50% discount or greater.

7. Assignment of Generic - E-Mail. About 2/3 of the schools have responded. Art expects to have the list available for public distribution within three weeks.
8. Status of Network. Phil Lindley questioned the recent slow down in response time, primarily to out-of-state websites. Jeff LeTourneau reported that there have been problems: some within the State and some beyond our control. Also usage tends to increase in Spring. The University is adding 6 T-1 lines by the end of the month and has a T-3 on order. The additional T-1 lines should provide some immediate relief until T-3 is in place. Jeff discussed actions that can take place on-site that can help such as the use of "caching" software. The University is also looking into caching at their level.

Meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m. Next meeting is scheduled for **10:00 a.m.**, April 29, 1998, Commission's Conference Area on the first floor of the PUC.

PLEASE NOTE MORNING MEETING TIME.