

Snowden Community Council 08.02.2023 Meeting

Council Members present: Roger Gadway, Chuck Kliesh, Tom Montag, Lloyd Olson, and Chris Stein Absent: Robert Conner, Jenne Patterson, Jenn Sharp. There were nine additional Snowden Community members present; and guest speakers Shane Milburn and Melissa Kephart from Klick-Net Internet Services.

Shane introduced himself as an IT and networking specialist with 25 years of experience including work with Intel and NASA. He and Melissa have a home in the Klickitat Canyon, and have firsthand experience with poor internet service available to rural Klickitat County residents. Unlike most of us, Shane had the technical expertise to set up excellent internet service for his own home – but he and Melissa realized there is a great need in Klickitat County for other rural residents to have improved service. As participants in the KC Broadband Action Team (BAT) they knew there is federal funding pouring into the County to support rural broadband access, and that rural communities and residents were doing their best to figure out how to use this opportunity to improve their internet access. Shane and Melissa (CTO and CEO) founded Klick-Net, a local Internet Service Provider, specializing in providing internet service in the challenging terrain and conditions of rural Klickitat County, areas traditionally spurned and underserved by large corporate ISPs.

Shane explained that Klick-Net relies on a hybrid approach to providing broadband access, using existing fiber and power infrastructure where possible, and providing “last mile” connection to individual sites by creating a community micro-network. The community based micro-network is made by establishing a hub with strong service, then using a repeater signal from the hub broadcasting to more distant sites. Some of these remote sites are eventually used as hubs to broadcast repeater signals even further out. Every connection by necessity is customized depending on terrain, aspect, trees, snow loads, power, and other considerations.

Shane and Melissa pointed out that Klick-Net service is provided on a month-to-month basis, so customers are free to leave at any time if they are not satisfied, and there is no data cap.

There is an internet access survey on the Klick-Net website (<https://www.klicknetworks.com/home/service-inquiry>) Shane urged everyone to take a few minutes to fill out the questionnaire, as the information (without signing up for Klick-Net) will ATTRACT FEDERAL RURAL INTERNET DOLLARS to our area, and also help Shane design the micro-networks needed to serve our area.

Shane presented much more information, and there were many questions and much discussion. For more information about Klick-Net go to www.klicknetworks.com.

Some Council Members had to leave after the presentation, so there was no longer a quorum.

Broadband Committee: Roger read Broadband Committee Chair Jenne’s report which re-emphasized our collaboration with the Klickitat County BAT. The County Internet Feasibility Study is still in progress. An update from August 01 reports that “79% of households in Klickitat County can be served with a combination of modalities”. Roger observed this is the hybrid approach just described by our guest speaker.

Fire District #3: Tom announced that in accordance with Task Force findings, Klickitat County will present to voters in November a chance to approve formation of a Regional Fire Authority (RFA), combining FD#3 and White Salmon Fire Districts. This will scarcely impact Snowden residents’ taxes. Fire District 3 strongly supports this measure, as it will regionalize manpower and equipment, provide a full-time training officer and a full time fire prevention officer, which will also add two more people to the pool of responders. Over-all, formation of the RFA will greatly strengthen the capacity to fight both wild and house fires and provide better safety and training to staff and volunteers. The RFA may also achieve a better rating which would lower fire

insurance costs for everyone. There is a need to inform voters of these advantages before the election. More information is available on the Fire District #3 website, <http://www.kcfd3.com/notices>.

There was no other Snowden Community Council business conducted, and the gathering dispersed at 8:52PM.

Report respectfully submitted by

Bea Lackaff, Secretary (pro-tem)