



Access in Esmeralda County

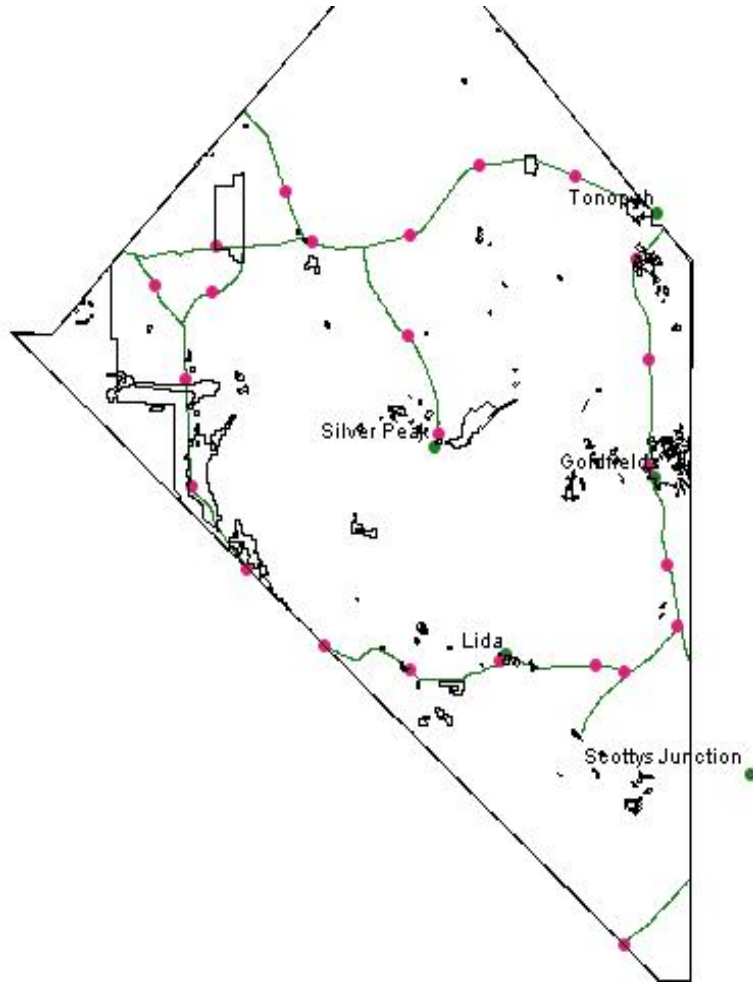
Nevada Broadband Summit 2012

Esmeralda County Data and Challenges



Data

- Esmeralda County became a Territorial County in 1861 and comprised all of Southern Nevada. The county was divided over and over to make all the current counties south of Mineral. This includes Nye, Clark, Mineral, White Pine, and Lincoln Counties.
- Esmeralda County has 2,247,850 acres of land managed federal government or over 97% of the county.
- Population ranged from 1300 in 2008 to 750 in 2010. The drop was due to layoffs in mining. Our population has increased again due renewed mining activity. There is currently a housing shortage.
- Major industries in the county are mining and agriculture. The county is home to Rockwood Lithium as well as an animal food manufacturer and soil supplement operation all of which do business internationally. There are few retail businesses. Most small business is “home grown” and operates at home.
- Approx 100 miles of US 95 which carries the majority of freight and tourists from all points north to Las Vegas is in the county.



Land ownership map

Challenge – Land Ownership

Economic

- The county received in 2011 \$97,198 or \$.04 per acre in Payment in Lieu of tax from the Federal government.
- That same year Clark County received \$.65, Carson City, \$2.34, and the average statewide was \$.40

Distance

- Most of our population is in the widely separated communities of Dyer, Silver Peak, Tonopah, and the county seat, Goldfield.
- The distance between each of these is about 30 miles via air. Distance via state roads as shown is much longer as you can see by the 10 mile markers on the map

Challenge- Location

- Esmeralda County historically and currently has within it dividing lines. Some are for utilities for example part of the county is served by NV Energy, the rest by Valley Electric Co-op. Traditional phone companies also had their dividing lines between Nevada Bell and what is now Frontier Communications in our county.
- Satellite TV providers also split our county providing Washoe County local stations to two communities, Las Vegas stations to one and will not provide any local programming at all to one.
- Access to medical care, major retail, and many other services that taken for granted in cosmopolitan settings involve a drive that takes between four to five hours for an Esmeralda resident.
- The mountainous terrain of the county makes even radio communication difficult.

Access Break-out Topics

- Q. What was the process we used to gather technology information?
- A. A committee comprised of county government, school district, citizens, and Connect Nevada was formed and met a number of times.

Access Break-out Topics

- Q. What are some of the opportunities and challenges encountered?
- Challenges:
 - Limited competition
 - 1/3 of residents no access at all
 - Small population insufficient to entice service providers
 - Lack of bandwidth
- Solutions/Opportunities
 - Through the USDA broadband program a provider is slated to create infrastructure that will provide wireless access to most of our residents who are without it now in the near future.
 - The fiber optics line to be built by the hospitals should help with band width.
 - Our only solution to our small population is to get more land privatized.

Access Break-out Topics

- Q. What was the value of going through the Connected process?
- A. It brought our differing geographic areas served by different, or no providers together. This gave all members of our committee knowledge of not only where they lived but the entire county.

We learned that our access situation should improve in the near future.

We showed how important access is to our community by communicating the innovative ways we have already adopted and used the very limited access we have.

Access Break-out Topics

- Q. What does success look like? What is technology utopia?
- A. Current uses and successes include:
 - The ability to video conference from each of our three elementary schools. We use this for distance learning, teacher meetings, occasionally for statewide video meetings and for our Local Emergency Planning Committee meetings.
 - Free 24hr wireless internet access at each of our three public libraries and the courthouse.
 - Every Esmeralda elementary school child has a PC with wireless available in each school.
 - County website includes complete meeting packets, policies, job openings. Each department may update and change content on their portion of the site in house.

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Access Break-out Topics

- Q. What is technology utopia?

Utopia

- Distance medicine
- Coverage for entire county and all visitors passing through so that motorists, visitors, and residents to be able to reach emergency numbers anywhere
- View Nevada Legislature and County Meetings, have access to news, video attendance at any meeting from anywhere
- Ability/Speed to meet reporting standards required by the State of Nevada
- All our business big or small to be able to market and communicate worldwide

Access Break-out Topics

- Q. Who are the stakeholders you plan to engage and what challenges do you anticipate?
- A. Stakeholders include:
 - Community organizations
 - Hospitals
 - Local business large and small
 - Service providers
 - Neighboring local governments
 - State and Federal governments

Challenges- Governmental funding, and interesting service providers due to the small population base.

Access Break-out Topics

- Q. How can other communities benefit from our experience?
- A. Even with the least access available to connect the people that live in our county we(county government, schools, business large and small and the ordinary citizens) have aggressively adopted and put to use what was available many times well in advance of most of our neighbors. This was accomplished by having technology savvy community members and leaders willing to educate others, spend money to provide access, and encourage all to move to the future.

Access Break-out Topics

- Q. What strategies can we use to work together at the regional/state level?
- A.
 - Everything old is new again strategy. Continue to pressure state and federal representatives to act.
 - Join with your neighbors to co-ordinate efforts when dealing with stakeholders and providers.
 - Promote the idea that if all of Nevada is connected it benefits all Nevadans by benefiting our economy ie business startups in rural areas, making the visitors experience more pleasant, non traditional business

Access Break-out Topics

- Q. Do you see value in continuing to assess and evaluate local community technology assets in the future?
- A. Yes periodically to note progress and deficiency state wide.