

MINUTES OF THE
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
TELECOMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY GROUP

November 29, 2001
MAG Office
302 North First Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona

MEMBERS ATTENDING

*Jim Hull, Mesa, Chair
*Tim Greene, Avondale
*Betsy Wise¹, Carefree
**Scott Rice, Chandler
**Peter Putterman¹, Fountain Hills
*Shawn Woolley², Gilbert
Jerry Wightman, Glendale
T John Imig¹, Goodyear
T Lynn Dunn¹, Litchfield Park
**Cary Parker², Maricopa County

**Duncan Miller¹, Paradise Valley
*Sandy Teetsel, Peoria
Greg Binder, Acting Chair, Phoenix
*Kevin Sonoda, Scottsdale
*John Laue¹, Tempe
Bruce Johnson¹ for Ralph Velez, Tolleson
Roger Baune for Derek Rushing, ADOT
Randi Alcott¹, RPTA

*Members neither present nor represented by proxy.

OTHERS PRESENT

**Mark Goldstein, IRC
Audrey Skidmore, MAG
Heidi Pahl, MAG
Nancy Read, MAG Telecommunications Assoc.

Robb Baillargeon, Norstan
Beth Colledge, Norstan
David Haines, Kimley-Horn
Richard Semer, Kimley Horn

**Participated via telephone conference call.

T Participated via video conference call.

- 1 Site Coordinator
- 2 Site Backup Coordinator

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:21 a.m. by Acting Chair, Greg Binder. Voting members: Scott Rice, Peter Putterman, Cary Parker and Duncan Miller attended via telephone conference call and Lynn Dunn and John Imig attended via videoconference.

2. Approval of October 25, 2001 Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Randi Alcott seconded by John Imig and unanimously recommended to approve the October 25, 2001 meeting minutes.

3. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Prioritization of Projects for FY 2007

Heidi Pahl explained that Jim Hull has been attending Transportation Review Committee meetings and that he wanted the TAG to know that there are a lot of projects this year and not as much funding as in previous years. Randi Alcott asked how much money is allocated for each mode. Heidi Pahl replied that she did not know but could get that information. Greg Binder asked for a briefing on the TIP process at a future TAG meeting.

4. Regional Community Wide Area Network Study

Audrey Skidmore stated that the Regional Community Wide Area Network Study name has been changed to the Regional Community Network (RCN) Study. She introduced Richard Semer of Kimley-Horn. Mr. Semer gave an update on the progress of the project and the three surveys. Richard Semer distributed a handout on the RCN. Mr. Semer said that 93 percent of agencies have responded to the first survey and that follow up needs to be conducted with seven of those agencies. He stated that they have received three responses on the second survey which is due in a week and a half. He noted that they are putting the finishing touches on the third survey which is a community needs assessment. Mr. Semer said that after the responses from the member agency surveys are collected, Kimley-Horn will develop a working paper which will describe the survey process and results. He informed that the next step will be to hold three different focus groups for large business, small business and education to more accurately determine needs. He anticipates the focus groups will be held in February, 2002.

Randi Alcott asked for clarification on the scope of the Regional Community Network Study. Audrey Skidmore stated that the project has two main goals: to identify ways to connect member agencies together and to identify community infrastructure needs. The member agencies were surveyed to determine existing and planned infrastructure and needs. The community is being surveyed to determine whether their needs are being met. Richard Semer added that they are also looking at cost and bandwidth. Greg Binder said that initially he shared Ms. Alcott's confusion on "What is a regional community network?" and added that the RCN Study is essentially an evaluation of connectivity requirements. Mr. Binder noted that addressing 'who needs to be connected' and 'under what circumstances' is more important than the technology used to connect agencies.

Randi Alcott asked if the home builders were being surveyed in regards to providing infrastructure in new housing developments. Audrey Skidmore stated that she did not know if home builders were included but that MAG still has the opportunity to include home builders. Randi Alcott asked if an addendum to the survey could be distributed. Ms. Skidmore said that she would look into that.

Randi Alcott asked if the State of Arizona was doing an economic development study. Audrey Skidmore noted that Government Information Technology Agency (GITA) has a study underway which addresses the telecommunications needs of rural communities. Mark Goldstein stated that MAG should not expect to see survey results or data for another couple months as they have just begun their process of surveying rural communities. Audrey Skidmore mentioned that Brad Tritle from GITA is a member of the RCN review group and is being actively recruited to participate on the Regional Telecommunications Strategic Plan (RTSP) review group.

5. Telecommunications Strategic Plan

Audrey Skidmore announced that there will be a brainstorming meeting held directly following the MAGTAG meeting to discuss a possible Scope of Services for the Regional Telecommunications Strategic Plan (RTSP). Ms. Skidmore invited members of the TAG to participate in this brainstorm session.

6. MAG Regional Videoconferencing System (RVS) Update

Heidi Pahl gave an update on the RVS in Kent Bowers absence. Ms. Pahl distributed the videoconferencing system acceptance status report and explained that system acceptance was successfully completed at 24 sites, partially completed at 3 sites and the remainder of sites are scheduled for completion. Ms. Pahl explained the system acceptance process. She explained that the Latitude audio conference system acceptance is tentatively scheduled for December 14 and would involve 48 people dialing into a telephone conference call at the same time. She said that the multipoint conference server (MCS) system acceptance is scheduled for December 15, 2001.

7. Marketing the RVS

Heidi Pahl gave an update on all the marketing activities of the RVS. She said that as part of the marketing working groups initiatives, each MAG committee was approached and asked if they would like a demonstration of videoconferencing technology at a future committee meeting. Ms. Pahl noted that the purpose of the MAG committee demonstrations is to alert MAG committee members that videoconferencing is now available for their use and to encourage use of the RVS for participation in MAG advisory committee meetings and/or for transacting other business.

Heidi Pahl announced that MAG staff demonstrated and explained the benefits of using videoconferencing to the following committees: Regional Council, Management committee, Building Codes, Population Technical Advisory Committee, Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee, Street Committee and Intelligent Transportation Systems committee.

Ms. Pahl stated that videoconferencing demonstrations to the Planners Stakeholders Group, Transportation Review Committee (TRC), and Solid Waste Technical Advisory Committee are being held in December. She noted that the remainder of MAG committees do not meet regularly, have requested a demonstration for next year or feel it is not necessary that their committees receive a videoconference demonstration.

Heidi Pahl said that the committee demonstrations have been well received and Street Committee, Building Codes Committee and the Regional Governance Committee have all used videoconferencing for committee meetings to reduce travel for those members in Gila Bend, Cave Creek, Carefree, and Surprise.

Heidi Pahl mentioned that other demonstrations to encourage the use of videoconferencing have been held at member agency request. For example, the entire staff of Queen Creek from the town manager to the receptionist gathered during a lunch hour to learn more about videoconferencing potential. She mentioned that the Town Manager, Cynthia Seelhammer, said “the videoconferencing worked smoothly and easily and was excited because this new access to MAG will make it possible for a small community like Queen Creek to stay in touch with committees and regional activities.” Ms. Pahl noted that the Town Manager also said, “now we can avoid the one hour drive into Phoenix and still participate.”

Heidi Pahl noted that the planning of the media event is still underway by MAG staff, announcing that the possibility of a Star Trek celebrity as an emcee has been ruled out and any suggestion on a local celebrity who would like to promote video teleconferencing for the MAG region would be helpful.

Heidi Pahl told the TAG that since there is no longer a chair for the MAGTAG marketing working group and since the marketing activities are the responsibility of the site coordinators that she would recruit the site coordinators to help with future marketing events for the RVS. She noted that any member of the TAG still interested in marketing the RVS can participate. Randi Alcott volunteered to be involved.

Peter Putterman noted that site coordinators are very busy and may not have the time to carry out all of the marketing activities of the RVS, such as open houses. Heidi Pahl responded that MAG is not going to mandate that site coordinators hold open houses to market the RVS but that marketing has been an identified site coordinator responsibility since the project’s inception.

8. Site Coordinator Meeting

Heidi Pahl stated that a site coordinator meeting was held on November 1, 2001 as a videoconference between Chandler and Peoria. Ms Pahl noted that the purpose of the meeting was to inform site coordinators of recent events in videoconferencing and give them a chance to use the videoconference equipment and refresh their skills. She mentioned that videoconferencing equipment and network, system acceptance, training, marketing and using the videoconference unit were discussed. She added that the site coordinators have done an excellent job completing the forms which document videoconference and audio conference use. She also noted that part of the meeting was devoted to hands on training. Ms. Pahl said that at the meeting everyone agreed that it would be a good idea to hold future site coordinator meetings. It was suggested the site coordinator meetings be held every other month, so Ms. Pahl stated that the next meeting may be held the first week of January.

Heidi Pahl stated that she observed some videoconference champions emerging from the site coordinators and she was excited about the possibility of forming smaller groups to help answer videoconferencing questions and problems.

9. Informational Session

Heidi Pahl stated that Sandy Teetsel could not attend today's TAG meeting to discuss voice over IP but that she would be happy to discuss it at a future meeting.

Heidi Pahl gave an update on the TeleCon 2001 conference that she attended in October. Ms. Pahl noted that there were a lot fewer people and exhibitors at TeleCon this year. She noted that Latitude Communications and Ezenia who were both present last year were not exhibitors this year, these are the companies that manufacture the audio conference server and video bridge that MAG purchased.

Heidi Pahl noted that the largest and most prominent exhibitor at the conference was Polycom and that Polycom has recently acquired PictureTel. She said that Tandberg had a solid presence at the conference introducing the Tandberg 8000, a new high end product in the company's videoconferencing product line. Ms. Pahl stated that VTel had a presence at the conference but the company had been broken into two: Forgent and VTel. She explained that VTel manufactures and services VTel equipment and Forgent is a video network solutions provider providing service for all types of videoconference equipment and networks. She announced that she has information on Forgent for interested TAG members.

MAG purchased 29 VTel Galaxy units. The VTel company is continuing to support those units and has plans for upgrading both the hardware and software. You can see these plans on their web site at www.VTel.com. She said, for example, VTel has created a new remote control that is very similar to your home TV remote control. They are also creating new software upgrades, which many member agencies now have loaded onto their VTel codecs. One benefit of this new software is the addition of 8 static camera presets.

Heidi Pahl announced that www.promity.com is a web site that can help you locate videoconference sites by area.

Ms. Pahl also announced that she learned about an organization called Interactive Multimedia and Collaborative Communications Alliance (IMCCA) at the conference. IMCCA is a repository of information for members interested in learning more about multimedia and collaborative communications technologies. Ms. Pahl noted that once you are a member you have access to white papers, case studies, application stories, glossaries and handbooks to help you understand your technologies and help you to use them to better meet your organizations needs. She announced the web address at www.IMCCA.org.

Heidi Pahl noted that the overall sentiment at the conference seminars was that we need to make videoconferencing easier to use, while controlling costs and improving reliability.

Ms. Pahl said that she attended a conference session called Distance Equal to Zero led by the Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the American Cancer Society (ACS) who attended via videoconference. This session focused on how the ACS successfully implemented a videoconferencing network, with 150 systems nationwide, and has enjoyed terrific results. Their network has bridged the distance between sites, so employees collaborate across divisions on a daily basis. And, it has allowed the organization to reduce expenses - and appropriate more money for cancer research, education and patient services.

Heidi Pahl described one other conference session called the Service Provider Roundtable. Chief Executive Officers (CEO)'s from Raindance, Placeware, Genesys, V-SPAN and AT&T with Andrew Davis as moderator appeared at this session. Ms. Pahl gave examples of some of the items discussed such as the value of videoconferencing to business and the future of videoconferencing over IP.

Greg Binder thanked Ms. Pahl for the update and said that if a compelling need exists, the videoconferencing will be utilized.

10. Announcements and Public Input

Randi Alcott announced that MAGTAG members may be interested in joining a PlaceWare Web casting conference call and demonstration on December 6, 2001, at 2:00 PM. She said she would forward the dial-in/login information to Heidi Pahl to distribute to MAGTAG.

Mark Goldstein announced that AZSOFT.net is holding a conference on January 15, 2002 called, "Thinking the Unthinkable", to help government and education plan for and minimize the impact of catastrophic events. Mr. Goldstein also announced that the Arizona Telecommunications and Information Council has formed a committee to address Cybersecurity issues and that any interested TAG member may join.

Greg Binder announced that much of his time lately has involved cybersecurity issues with the City of Phoenix web site.

11. Suggested Agenda Topics for Next Meeting

Greg Binder suggested that we add a Government Information Technology Agency (GITA) update as an agenda item for a future TAG meeting.

12. Date of Next Meetings

The next meeting is December 20, 2001 in the Palo Verde Room.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 AM.