

Orick Wireless Broadband Project FAQ – July, 2006

Q: What is broadband?

A: *Broadband definitions vary from “high speed and always-on” to the official FCC definition of “200kbps or higher” speed (kilobits per second). By contrast, dial-up is 56kbps at best. Most people these days would not call 200kbps “high speed”, so the FCC definition is outdated. See the other side of this flyer of a graphic depiction of speeds.*

Q: I want DSL. Why wireless broadband?

A: *In rural, sparsely populated areas, wireless is more cost-effective to install. DSL is normally provided by a telephone company. In Orick’s case, this is Verizon, and they appear to have no plans for offering DSL service.*

Q: I have satellite Internet. Why would I change to wireless broadband?

A: *Satellite Internet, while better than dial-up, has latency (delay) issues and is slower than true broadband, especially when uploading or sending files. Satellites typically do not support applications like Voice over IP (VoIP) or Virtual Private Networks (VPN). If you were considering purchase of satellite Internet, you might want to hold off until you see this project’s results and action plan.*

Q: The previous question mentioned VoIP? What is this and what does it mean to me?

A: *As Orick residents know, every call out of Orick is a toll call. VoIP is a way to make phone calls using the Internet. You may have seen ads for Vonage, one of many VoIP providers. The FCC has good information at <http://www.fcc.gov/voip/>.*

Q: What is this project and who is paying for it?

A: *This project is funded by the County of Humboldt through a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). CDBG funds are targeted for planning projects. The project will evaluate the feasibility and develop a business plan for deployment of wireless broadband in the Orick area.*

Q: Who is doing the project?

A: *Planwest Partners (George Williamson) of Arcata is the lead on the project. Other participants are NERATECH (Tina Nerat) of Eureka and Sparling (Adam Haas) of Portland.*

Q: I live several miles outside Orick. Will broadband come to my home or business?

A: *The area being considered is from Prairie Creek State Park to just north of Big Lagoon causeway, roughly along Highway 101. Costs will have to be evaluated to outlying areas.*

Q: How much will wireless broadband cost?

A: *This cannot be answered - yet. You can help influence the cost – the more subscribers we have, the more feasible the project will be. We will be evaluating the installation costs of various wireless technologies and the ongoing costs to connect an Orick wireless network to the Internet.*

Q: How can I help make this happen?

A: *Tell your neighbors about this project and have them send e-mail to tina@neratech.net to get on our update list. Mark your calendar to attend the September 12 Orick community meeting to give public input to the project and to hear more about broadband. The team is especially interested in knowing how you currently use the Internet and how you might use and leverage the Internet if you had a high speed connection.*