UTC Broadband Workshop
June – August 2020

Tuesday, June 16th

3pm   RDOF: The Clock is Ticking

By now, you likely have heard of RDOF, the FCC's unique and transformational broadband funding program. If you still have questions or are not sure about participating in the program, now is the time to act because the deadline is July 15, 2020. Learn about recent FCC updates, the auction process, the consortium concept, and the rules governing the program. The Rural Digital Opportunity Fund is the culmination of years of funding and auction experience, and the value of this program to rural America and solving the Digital Divide is tremendous.

Moderator: David Williams, FiberRise
Speakers: Ryan McCowan, Director of Global Customer Engagement & Solutions - ADTRAN
Jon Wilkins, Partner – Quadra Partners, LLC

Tuesday, July 14th

TBD   Optional Training Sponsored by FiberRise – Part I
Additional Fees Apply – Click here for rates

Considering Entering the Broadband Service Market?
Steps for Utilities to Ensure Operational and Business Success

Regulations and funding opportunities have recently aligned in ways that expand the potential provider base for quality broadband service in rural America. Electric utilities appear best positioned to address this challenge due to their existing infrastructure, customer base, knowledge of the market, organization and mission. But what steps need to be taken to ensure a successful broadband service launch? This pre-conference training will provide an overview of the broadband project, from the initial Board presentation, decision to build, market roll out and building considerations, through operation and sales. Attendees will gain an understanding of the necessity of detailed planning and the benefits that will accrue to the utility from enabling more bandwidth for its community.

Thursday, July 16th

TBD   Optional Training Sponsored by FiberRise – Part II

Monday, July 20th

TBD   Optional Training Sponsored by FiberRise – Part III

Thursday, July 23rd

TBD   The Broadband Group – A Utility Roadmap To a Gigabit City Webinar

Monday, July 27th

TBD   Calix - Marketing For a Competitive Broadbad Environment Webinar

Thursday July 30th

TBD   ADTRAN – Transforming Your Customer Experience - From a Distance Webinar

July date TBD

TBD   ikeGPS Webinar

Tuesday, August 4th

12:30 – 1:30pm
THE BIG STORY: Federal Funding Opportunities: RDOF and ReConnect
The FCC and the USDA RUS together are providing almost $3 billion in broadband funding this year through the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund and the ReConnect programs. This represents a significant opportunity for utilities to access funding to provide broadband in areas of the country that are currently unserved with robust, reliable and affordable broadband services. This session will feature representatives from the FCC and USDA RUS describing the rules for these programs and discuss how utilities can prepare to access funding.

Speaker: Jonathan Chambers, Partner - Conexon
Representative from RUS (TBD)

2:00 – 3:00pm
Alternative Opportunities for Broadband Funding (private equity, as well as state and also federal programs in development)
In addition to or as an alternative from federal funding, there are other ways that utilities have successfully accessed funding for their broadband projects. This session will consider state and regional funds, private equity and partnership resources for funding. It will feature representatives from various public and private institutions describing the opportunities and the requirements for accessing funding available from these various resources.

Moderator: Heather B. Gold, CEO, HBG Strategies, LLC
Speakers: Cliff Bolstad, Vice President – CoBank-Electric Distribution
Mark DeFalco, Manager – Broadband – Appalachian Regional Commission
Kyle Rosner, Broadband Policy Specialist, Office of Gov. Ralph Northam
Jeffrey R. Sural, Direct Broadband Infrastructure Office – NC Dept. of Information Technology

3:30 – 4:30pm

Utilities Connecting Communities

Utilities that have already deployed broadband have become shining examples of the benefits that greater connectivity and bandwidth bring to communities. They also have the expertise necessary to assist un/underserved communities in creating a better broadband future. Using this knowledge, utilities are becoming major players in broadband expansion either within their service territory or in neighboring communities. This session will showcase examples of how a variety of utilities have successfully deployed different aspects of broadband networks and how they are using this expansion to provide broadband connectivity to many communities.

Moderator: Trey Hall, Chief Technology Officer – Walker & Associates
Speakers: Ryan Meche, Engineering Manager, Lafayette Utilities System
Ben Moncrief**,** Sr. VP - Strategic Relations, C Spire
Keith Schnetzer, Sr. Director of Business Development, NA, Nokia
George Stegall, Connectivity Manager, Alabama Power Company

5:00pm

Keynote

Speaker: Doug Kinkoph, Performing the Delegated Duties of the NTIA Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information, NTIA, Department of Commerce (invited)

Wednesday August 5th

1:00 – 2:00pm

Regulatory Issues for Broadband Deployment and Service Offerings (e.g. ETC Status and Broadband Mapping)

Utilities that deploy broadband networks and offer broadband services face legal and regulatory challenges, including initial applications and ongoing reporting requirements as well as other due diligence issues associated with the use of existing rights of way. This session will feature leading attorneys describing these issues and providing guidance for utilities that are considering deploying broadband networks to provide either wholesale or retail broadband services.
Speakers: Sean Stokes, Principal – Baller Stokes & Lide, PC
Brett Kilbourne, VP Policy and General Counsel

2:30 – 3:30pm

Interconnecting Utility Broadband

This session will take a strategic approach for utility broadband, considering ways that we can interconnect with each other to reduce costs and increase the net present value of utility broadband networks. It will provide examples of where utilities are already connecting communities and how they are interconnecting with other utilities in their states and in their regions. This session will also explore opportunities to support these efforts nationwide among all types of utilities.

Moderator: Chris Beisner, Vice President, Product Management – ETI Software Solutions
Speakers: Lee Ayers, Lee Ayers, Vice President of Engineering – Mid-Carolina Electric Cooperative
Steve Foshee, CEO, Tombigbee
Joey Greer, Account Manager – EPB Broadband Solutions

4:00 – 5:00pm

Precision Agriculture, Rural Healthcare, and Distance Learning: What is Needed for Success

Many of UTC's utility members operate in heavily agricultural areas where access to the latest data is essential to improving farming and livestock production and efficiency. In addition to precision agriculture, utility broadband networks also help to promote telehealth with patients in remote locations as well as other advancements in healthcare in hospitals and clinics. Students in classrooms and at home need access to broadband and again utility broadband networks can help to solve the homework gap, as well as provide high capacity access to schools and libraries. This session will feature industry experts and community leaders discussing what elements are critical to obtaining the best tools for success.

Moderator: Darren Farnan, Chief Development Officer, United Electric Cooperative and Chair of the Utilities Technology Council, Utilities Broadband Committee
Speakers: Debbie Hamrick, Director of Specialty Crops, NC Farm Bureau Federation
Kathy Schwarting, MHA – Chief Executive Officer – Palmetto Care Connection
John Windhausen, Executive Director, SHLB