

MINUTES OF THE SENATE UTILITIES COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Mike Thompson at 1:30 pm on Thursday, March 17, 2022, in room 548-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Senator J.R. Claeys – Excused

Committee staff present:

Carly Humes, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Heather O'Hara, Legislative Research Department

Lindsay Archer, Legislative Research Department

Nick Myers, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Sheila Wodtke, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Brent Legg, Executive Vice President, Government Affairs, Connected Nation

Cort Buffington, President and Executive Director, KanREN

Others in attendance:

No list available

Informational briefing:

Brent Legg, Executive Vice President, Government Affairs, Connected Nation, presented before the Committee on "Carrier Neutral Internet Exchange Points: Why they are Important for Kansas".

Connected Nation is a nonprofit organization founded in Kentucky in 2001. Their mission is to close the "digital divide", which is the gap between regions which have access to high speed internet, and those that do not, typically, rural areas. Their focus areas are impacting state and federal broadband policy, broadband mapping and data validation, state and local broadband planning, school connectivity, digital literacy and skills planning.

He explained how internet traffic is exchanged, and that Kansas is one of 17 states that does not have an internet exchange point (IXP). He went through the regional benefits of internet exchanges, and showed a map indicating the current internet exchange point location in Kansas City, Mo, and the location needs in Kansas. He suggested hubs in Manhattan, Salina, Wichita, Hays and Dodge City. He stated there is a need for a physical home for the cloud and regional hubs, or communities won't be prepared for the future evolution of internet. He said the Capitol Projects Fund the U.S. Treasury is making available to states right now could be used to pay for these hubs. The range in cost for the hubs is \$1.5 to \$3 million per facility. Finally, he pointed the Committee to a web link in the written testimony for a video entitled, "What are IXPs? Why are they Important?". ([Attachment 1](#))

The Chairman opened for a period of questions and answers.

Unless specifically noted, the individual remarks recorded herein have not been transcribed verbatim. Individual remarks as reported herein have not been submitted to the individuals appearing before the committee for editing or corrections.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES of the Committee on Utilities at 1:30 pm on Thursday, March 17, 2022, in room 548-S of the Capitol.

Informational briefing:

Cort Buffington, President and Executive Director, KanREN, presented on "Anchor Institution Broadband".

KanRen, Kansas Research and Education Network, is a non-profit public service organization founded in 1992 by public universities, community colleges and private colleges and universities. It is one of 44 research and education (R & E) networks in the United States. Mr. Buffington spoke on the Kansas broadband landscape, the home digital divide, for which there has been some progress, and the institutional (anchor) digital divide, which has not been addressed. He stated internet service is only one component of broadband infrastructure, which also includes data transport, dark fiber, layer cybersecurity, and guarantee performance. He asked the Committee "to ensure the money that Kansas invests in broadband infrastructure creates both access and affordability for all services built with it, not just internet service". ([Attachment 2](#))

The Chairman opened for a period of questions and answers.

Seeing no more questions, the Chairman thanked the Committee and staff for their hard work and a job well done, and adjourned the meeting at 2:30 pm.