

## A Well-Rounded Education

Service providers and property owners can expand their knowledge about multifamily broadband at these three events.

By Valerie M. Sargent / *Multifamily Broadband Council*

**A**lbert Einstein once said, “The more I learn, the more I realize how much I don’t know.”

That applies to multifamily technology and broadband services as well as to nuclear physics. Whether you are a service provider or an owner/developer, looking for the most comprehensive resources to support your business is a good idea.

Multifamily Broadband Council (MBC) finds three events especially useful for learning about these subjects.

### **MBC’S MDU TRACK AT WISPAPALOOZA: THE PROVIDER VIEW**

As Bryan Rader explains in this issue of **BROADBAND COMMUNITIES**, MBC hosted a dedicated multifamily/MDU track at WISPA’s WISPAPALOOZA event.

This was an opportunity for independent broadband providers and wireless internet service providers (which all compete with the larger franchise cable and telephone companies) to come together for education tailored to how to best serve the multifamily market. The entire WISPAPALOOZA conference had its highest attendance yet, hosting more than 2,200 attendees.

As a result of including a new audience, MBC conducted its most successful conference to date, with record attendance at its educational sessions. Because the needs of the MDU market are unique, the content provided in these sessions was

eye-opening and impactful, especially for wireless internet service providers preparing to enter the market. Companies new to the MDU market often don’t realize how much providing good service in MDUs entails, and they need a road map on best practices.

Now that MDU residents are constantly glued to their digital devices, faster, more reliable networks have become more necessary in multifamily communities. At WISPAPALOOZA, the experts who conducted the MBC sessions covered the types of builds that work best, as well as upcoming technology needs, in the MDU space. We also explored legal concerns and issues providers need to be cognizant of when serving buildings that have multiple providers.

The MBC conference has always focused on giving service providers education they can immediately apply to their businesses, which helps attendees work well with their multifamily owner clients. Although the audience does not include multifamily owners, the conference always centers on the provider-owner relationship and the service provided. MBC’s alignment with WISPA will now help more WISPs, in addition to traditional independent broadband providers, to successfully serve MDU owners, as MBC members have done for years. We look forward to hosting the multifamily track again at WISPAPALOOZA 2019.

### **NMHC OPTECH: THE OWNER AND POLICY VIEW**

In November, MBC attended the National Multifamily Housing Council (NMHC) OPTECH conference. NMHC is the national policymaking and advocacy organization for multifamily owners, and this event attracts multifamily leaders as well as technology and broadband providers.

This year, NMHC invited MBC to participate on a legal panel. MBC representatives discussed the pre-emption petition filed with the FCC regarding the San Francisco

Potential MDU providers must understand what property owners are looking for.

MDU ordinance and the FCC Notice of Inquiry regarding possible barriers to entry for competition in the MDU space. (MBC saw no issues with current FCC regulations and refiled its ordinance petition to the FCC as a response to this matter because of the overlap in issues.)

MBC and its members are focused on their customers, real estate owners, so the organization sprang into action when, in our view, San Francisco essentially took property rights from owners. MBC believes owners should have the power to make decisions concerning their communities.

MBC was concerned about legal action that might result from disagreements about “reasonable compensation” or possible right-of-entry agreement violations, along with the potential absence of competitive alternatives for low-income housing.

NMHC OPTECH is a great place to explore ideas about technology in multifamily housing. Its education program provides insights into trends, market conditions, legal needs and the latest in technology deployment. Categories cover marketing, operations, sustainability, technology and telecom.

## **BROADBAND COMMUNITIES SUMMIT: PROVIDERS AND DEVELOPERS**

MBC enjoys a longstanding relationship with **BROADBAND COMMUNITIES** and is proud to be an annual co-host at the **BROADBAND COMMUNITIES Summit**. This is an especially beneficial event for multifamily owners/developers and the service providers that partner with them, especially companies focused on new development and repositioning.

**BROADBAND COMMUNITIES** has championed independent broadband providers for years, recognizing how important their services are to the overall competitive landscape. The Summit provides a broad range of education in its multifamily track, from fiber-to-the-home certification to monetizing networks and presents multiple case studies that show actual broadband/fiber plans in action.

For service providers working in the MDU space, this is valuable in understanding what is most important to property owners. Owners also get dedicated roundtable time to cover their specific legal questions.

In addition to the multifamily track, the Summit includes an economic development track that focuses on the broadband initiatives of municipalities and other communities. The rural broadband track covers issues such as the costs and challenges involved in bringing broadband to rural America. This topic should interest WISPA members, and more WISPs should attend this event to learn about additional opportunities to expand their businesses.

Plan to join us in Austin, Texas, next April. The **BROADBAND COMMUNITIES Summit** will be held April 8–11, 2019, at the Renaissance Hotel – Austin. MBC invites any multifamily owners who have never experienced the **BROADBAND COMMUNITIES Summit** to attend as its guests. There is also a special MBC rate for service provider attendees. Please use the email address below to receive more information.

## **BE LIKE NIKE – JUST DO IT!**

As you see, there is no shortage of education available to support your business. This is good news for service providers and owners who want well-rounded approaches to providing the best possible broadband options for residents.

The author Franklin Gillette said, “Allow opportunities so they won’t become missed opportunities.”

Be sure to put these events into your business plans for 2019 so you don’t miss these fantastic opportunities to learn, network and expand your business. ❖

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