

MBEP Community Impact Award



MBEP Board Chair Eduardo Ocha, CSUMB president, and Vice Chair Matt Huffaker, Watsonville city manager, presented MBEP's Community Impact Award to Tellus Venture Associates President Stephen Blum. Given each year at the State of the Region, the award is in recognition of an individual or organization who demonstrates significant community impact, tangible job creation or measurable impact in other ways, particularly in regards to multiple projects that demonstrate commitment to the community and quiet leadership from deeds or action that inspire others.

Blum's consulting firm helps communities develop broadband policies, programs, and networks that attract new businesses and jobs, revitalize commercial and industrial areas and deliver state-of-the-art resources to residents and businesses. "His dedication and work have demonstrated both equity and economic impact," said Ochoa. "Steve has been an unsung hero, especially for the underserved areas of Monterey County."

Huffaker said he's had the opportunity to see firsthand Blum's efforts to expand Watsonville's fiber network over the last couple of years and to expand broadband access in Watsonville, but said he's really had a statewide impact.

"He's been instrumental in bringing high-speed broadband to the region, including assistance with the Sunesys fiber backbone from Salinas to UC Santa Cruz. As a key member of the Central Coast Broadband Consortium, he has led and advocated for many projects in underserved communities. Steve has planned and implemented municipal fiber networks in Watsonville, San Leandro, Union City, and Santa Cruz and has developed broadband master plans for over 20 cities throughout the state of California. Steve has developed business plans and financing for CASF grant funding projects. Steve was an invaluable partner to MBEP and our broadband initiative.

Blum thanked those who have participated in the Central Coast Broadband Consortium for the past 10 years. "We believe that broadband is uniquely suited to enable opportunities for people well into the 21st century. It's going to be what the 21st century is about. We are about kicking in the door to opportunities to disrupting the status quo. And I'm just grateful that I've been able to take part in this, and that this work we believe is both meaningful and effective."

For a link to video of the award presentation, please [click here](#).

Contact Tellus Venture Associates

Thank you very much for your interest.

Please contact me directly at:

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