



The Internet as a Public Utility

A Joint Meeting of the RCEDF and Futures Group

Thursday, April 7, 2022, 11AM – 12PM

[Click Here to Register](#)

AGENDA

Welcome & Introductions

DVRPC planning staff from the Futures Group and Regional Community and Economic Development Forum will welcome attendees and introduce the guest speakers.

Deploying Broadband in Chester County

Jim Mercante will discuss the background and current status of two Digital Equity initiatives underway in Southern Chester County: a Digital Broadband Connectivity Assessment project and a Digital Skills/Literacy project.

Jessica Zufolo will discuss broadband funding and network deployment opportunities for rural unserved communities throughout Southern Chester County.

Where is the Internet Headed?

Amani Bey will present their review of “Visions of the Internet in 2035”, a collaborative report by Pew Research Center and Elon University which documents experts’ hopes and expectations for social media platforms and other online public-discussion spaces to be improved by 2035 in ways that significantly serve the public good.

Q&A

A very brief opportunity for questions will be held at the end of the event.

Connecting People, Places & Prosperity in Greater Philadelphia

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related nondiscrimination statutes in all activities. For more information, visit www.dvrpc.org/GetInvolved/TitleVI.

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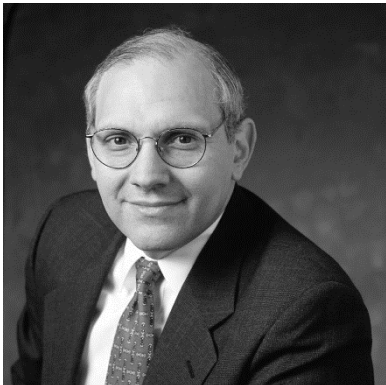
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SPEAKER BIOS

Jim Mercante

Volunteer, Southern Chester County Opportunity Network (SCCON)



Jim has been a volunteer with the Southern Chester County (SCC) Opportunity Network (SCCON) for the past two years. SCCON is a collective impact initiative made up of partners (social service agencies, schools, churches, and others) from across the region working together to address poverty in comprehensive ways.

Jim is active in a number of community initiatives in SCC: affordable housing and housing stability; public transportation; economic & workforce development. He is also a member of KACS (Kennett Area Community Services) New Building Committee and KACS IT (Information Technology) Committee

Currently Jim is a co-partner, with Joan Holliday, in driving the launch of two Digital Equity initiatives in SCC: a Digital Connectivity/Broadband Assessment project, led by the Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU), and a Digital Skills/Literacy project led by RSVP (Retired Seniors Volunteer Program).

Jessica Zufolo

Vice President of Rural Broadband Strategy, Magellan Advisors



Jessica joins Magellan after serving in various senior leadership roles throughout federal government and non-profit sectors for over 28 years. Prior to joining Magellan, Jessica served for over five years as the Senior Advisor for Strategic Partnerships for the Lifeline Division at the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) where she managed all state, federal and tribal engagement that led to the establishment of the Lifeline National Eligibility Verifier.

Prior to her tenure at USAC, Jessica was appointed to serve as the Deputy Administrator for the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) where she helped oversee a \$65 billion federal loan and grant portfolio that finances water systems telecommunications and

broadband networks, precision agriculture, electric utility, smart grid and renewable energy projects in rural and tribal communities.

Jessica also served as the Legislative Director for the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) where she was responsible for developing legislative strategy for all 50 state public service commissions involving telecommunications, technology, consumer protection and water. Early in her distinguished career, Jessica worked on Capitol Hill for eight years overseeing telecommunications and energy policy. Jessica earned her MBA with Honors from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a BA in military history and political science from the University of Colorado in Boulder.

Amani Bey

Planner, DVRPC

Amani Bey is a Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) Planner in the Offices of Capital Programs and Long-Range Planning. They received their Bachelors of Arts in Urban Studies from the University of Pennsylvania, with time abroad studying international urban development with the International Honors Program and University College of London. Their undergraduate thesis examined federal grant programs' effect on cross-sector collaboration for home repair in Philadelphia. Their fieldwork produced a comparative analysis of cooperative occupations in cities across four continents. They have experience at the Philadelphia Housing Authority, managing an urban business corridor, as a tenants' rights advocate, as administrator for the Germantown Mutual Aid Fund, and as DVRPC's most recent Fellow.

Amani's interests include equitable futurism, resource allocation, and ecological resilience. They contribute to DVRPC's vision to make the Greater Philadelphia Region a prosperous, innovative, equitable, resilient, and sustainable place by supporting the Transportation Improvement Programs for New Jersey and Pennsylvania and the Connections 2050 Long Range Plan.