

Science/Technology/Innovation (STI) Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 19, 2011

The Science/Technology/Innovation (STI) Committee meeting was held in the Madison-Jefferson County Extension office conference room at 7:00 a.m., Tuesday, April 19th. Participants were Tom Harrington - Jefferson Local Development Corporation (JLDC)/MSU Extension, Tom Phillips – Golden Sunlight Mine (GSM), Doug Richards and Todd Breitenfeldt – Whitehall High School and Jim Jacobson – Rural Television Service (RTS). The meeting started with a brief discussion of committee goals and objectives based on the brainstorming session from last meeting. It was felt that the committee probably wasn't quite ready to define specific project goals at this point.

Discussed the opportunity presented at the last meeting involving the Rocky Mountain Super Computing Centers (RMSC) and the proposed Natural Resource Interpretive Center at the Sunlight Business Park (SBP). This opportunity expands the capability for businesses in the park and could be expanded to the community of Whitehall as they pursue economic development. Tom H. discussed the potential access to high-speed fiber lines in the area and indicated Qwest is in the process of preparing cost estimates to get fiber lines installed in the SBP. Fiber lines exist with 3-Rivers adjacent to the park and terminate in Whitehall. There is also unlit fiber from the old Montana Power fiber lines in the area that link to the super computer in Butte. These redundant capabilities can provide an advantage for economic development and the redevelopment of the Borden Building into a smart building with high-speed communications and a state of the art video conferencing/learning center that could appeal to business ventures needing this expanded capability. Tom P. discussed bandwidth capabilities were important and he thought MSU had a gigapop computer capability. He also thought it might be a good idea to get an estimate of monthly costs, bandwidth availability and computer capabilities. The SBP Interpretive Center concept was discussed as a natural resource learning center and could be developed into a more virtual hands-on center. Todd B. indicated there is an opportunity to write a grant in July from the Noxious Weed Trust Fund for educational information/displays in the center and could include some of the insect technology for weed control.

Doug R. discussed the school funding opportunity with the workforce grant Earl D. mentioned at the last meeting had some challenges. He indicated he had seen a letter from Earl D. committing a \$25,000 matching grant to support school funding efforts. Discussed alternative energy opportunities for the school and Tom H. will see if a DNRC feasibility study might fit and will also look for other programs that may fit that could benefit the school.

Discussed the current school astronomy program is interested in pursuing the telescope opportunity Earl D. discussed at the last meeting. This discussion expanded into NASA's Near Earth Object (NEO) program and potential opportunities that could exist and that further research was warranted. Jim J. discussed the NASA education outreach centers are a tremendous asset that could also present some opportunities for the area.

Jim J. discussed television/radio skills and the Media Awareness in Public Schools (MAPS) program and Fred Diaz. This led to discussion on the opportunities with Utube and getting students involved. Jim J. mentioned a program he uses for Utube and that he would make it available if anyone is interested. Jim J. also discussed the involvement of local businesses in the school.

Todd B. said the Jefferson Valley Watershed group was interested in water monitoring and analysis and thought Ted Dodge with the organization might be a good candidate for the committee.

The meeting was productive and the next meeting will be held Tuesday, May 17th at 7:00 a.m. in the Extension office conference room.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Harrington