

Science/Technology/Innovation (STI) Committee

Meeting Minutes

July 13, 2011

The Science/Technology/Innovation (STI) Committee meeting was held in the Madison-Jefferson County Extension office conference room at 8:00 a.m., Wednesday, July 13th. Participants were Ed Handl, Tom Harrington, Tom Phillips, Kim Kingston, Jim Jacobson, Todd Breitenfeldt, Leonard Wortman, Dave Kirsch, and Holly Parrow. The meeting started with introductions and then proceeded with approval of the last meeting minutes.

Holly P. provided an update on the Rocky Mountain Super Computing Centers (RMSC). Discussed the Qwest high telephone and internet fiber capability for the Sunlight Business Park (SBP) was being installed. Coordination with the other fiber companies to determine capability in area has been very slow and getting information is a challenge. The new Bresnan installation opportunity discussed at the last meeting has not progressed and seems to be stalled at this time. Tom H. discussed the natural resource interpretive center and business assistance center project is still being worked and is looking a couple of different funding sources to get the project moved forward. Todd B. mentioned the noxious weed grant opportunity was interested in the educational aspect of the center and that it may have a good chance of getting some grant funding. Todd B. discussed his noxious weed insect program is being effective and that finding nearby healthy knapweed plants is getting more difficult.

The school astronomy program is still pending. Ed H. discussed an opportunity with a Mr. Witherspoon in Twin Bridges who is building an observatory. Todd B. indicated he would contact the individual and see if there may be some educational opportunity. Discussed the tight school budget didn't have funds for field trips or other educational extras and that it is very limited on taking advantage of opportunities. The potential for a school weather station was discussed and Ed H. indicated he may have a lead on a tower. Todd B. indicated he was interested and Tom H. mentioned a possible MET tower at GSM that may be available and he would follow-up with the mine. The concept for the weather station at the school would be to get students involved with tracking area weather and getting it posted to the school website with a link to the state transportation weather cameras. This would not only be an educational opportunity but would also provide weather information locally.

Alternative energy was also discussed and Holly P. provided an update on ecoTech and their involvement in biomass and geothermal development. They are looking at the SBP as a potential development site. Solar energy opportunities were discussed as well as wind development and the heat transfer system MT Tech is testing. The potential to save operational cost using alternative energy products has the potential to benefit the schools and local community. Ed H. mentioned his firm has experience in alternative energy and would be willing to assist. Discussed the ITEST project doing water monitoring in the Jefferson River Valley is still pending information from Indiana University. The Boulder Valley groundwater study was discussed and the project started July 1st.

Other items that were discussed included the collaborative grant writer project, legislative changes on permitting heat pumps, school funding challenges and noxious weed biomass opportunity

The meeting was productive and the next meeting will be held Wednesday, August 10th at 8:00 a.m. in the Extension office conference room. .

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Harrington