

Science/Technology/Innovation (STI) Committee
Meeting Minutes
August 9, 2011

The Science/Technology/Innovation (STI) Committee meeting was held in the Madison-Jefferson County Extension office conference room at 8:00 a.m., Tuesday, August 9th. Participants were Ed Handl, Tom Harrington, Lee Good and Leonard Wortman. The meeting started with approval of the last meeting minutes.

Considerable discussion occurred on the internet connectivity and potential to link to the Rocky Mountain Super Computing Centers (RMSC). The Qwest telephone and internet fiber pedestal are being installed in the Sunlight Business Park (SBP). Coordination with the other fiber companies to determine capability and linkage has been difficult and companies have been very slow providing information. The new Bresnan line was again discussed as opportunity and Lee G. felt we need to get aggressive and contact the Billings office. Leonard W. indicated he will be in Billings on September 14th and could stop at the Bresnan office and discuss the new installation. Tom H. will try and locate a contact person prior to the visit and will see if Earl Dodd has a Bresnan connection. Tom H. discussed the natural resource interpretive center and business assistance center project is still being worked and is looking at a couple of different funding options for the project.

The school astronomy program is still pending. The potential for a school weather station was discussed and Ed H. discussed the potential tower. Tom H. indicated GSM may have a tower that was used for a MET station that could be donated to the school. The intent is to get students involved with tracking area weather and posting it on the school website as an educational and public service opportunity.

Alternative energy was also discussed and the many opportunities available. The ground heat source options were discussed and that there may be an opportunity to use existing water or ground resources that could generate heat that could benefit the local area. The alternative energy development using solar, wind or other technologies could be a local benefit to the schools, town and/or residents. Tom H. indicated the EcoTech discussions are on-going and that they are working on a project feasibility study that will determine if the project can move ahead. They are looking at the SBP as a potential development site. The JLDC is also doing a feasibility study on the Borden's Hotel and a component will be alternative energy options to help reduce facility operating costs. Discussed LGT will be here for a site visit and is interested in wind development and manufacturing. There is a possibility of a demonstration project at the business park using some new wind technology.

The meeting was productive and the next meeting will be held in the Extension office conference room Wednesday, September 14th at 7:00 a.m. to accommodate school participants.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Harrington