

Science/Technology/Innovation (STI) Committee

Meeting Minutes

November 9, 2011

The Science/Technology/Innovation (STI) Committee meeting was held in the Madison-Jefferson County Extension office conference room at 7:00 a.m., Wednesday, November 9th. Participants were Tom Harrington, Todd Breitenfeldt, Kim Kingston, Lee Good, Dave Kirsch, Leonard Wortman, Tom Phillips and Marcy Lamb. The meeting started with approval of the September meeting minutes.

No report was available on the Rocky Mountain Super Computing Centers (RMSC). There is still an interest in using the \$4K that was offered for a school project by RMSC. The Century Link telephone and internet fiber and communication line is currently being installed at the Sunlight Business Park (SBP). Coordination with the other fiber companies is still being pursued to determine capability and linkage opportunities. No new information on the new Bresnan line that is being installed around the Whitehall area was available. The opportunity to leverage the many fiber opportunities in the area could be a benefit for business development in the SBP and Whitehall.

Todd B. indicated he has made contact with an individual in Twin Bridges who may assist with the school astronomy program. Todd B. discussed the sustainable living classes and the various curriculums that will be offered. The potential for a school weather station was discussed and GSM is in the process of securing the wind tower at their site that could be used at the school. It apparently has a wind measuring device and what other weather measuring capabilities that may be available are unknown. Tom P. was asked if he could follow up on the tower status. The intent is still to get students involved with tracking area weather and posting it on the school website as an educational and public service opportunity.

Alternative energy discussion focused on geothermal opportunities and current heat pump technology. The ground heat source options may present an opportunity to use existing water or ground resources that could generate heat that could benefit the local area and reduce energy costs. The potential for geothermal in the Boulder area was discussed and Dave K. indicated the resource was validated several years ago. 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 would involve biomass and that they are waiting to hear back from the Big Sky Trust Fund on their grant application for a feasibility study. Kim K. asked about previous discussions to do some test well drilling at the school to determine potential warm water and Tom H. indicated he would follow up with EcoTech. This also developed into discussions about the Boulder water study and if they are capturing any water temperature data. Tom H. will follow up with the water study engineers. Discussions with a wind developer are continuing. 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.

Wetland habitat in the Piedmont Swamp area was discussed. Grant writer support was again discussed as a potential collaborative effort between the Town of Whitehall, Boulder, Jefferson County and area schools. More research will be done on options and Todd B. indicated he would put this on the Whitehall council agenda. Kim K. addressed funding is an on-going school challenge and they have a need for the play ground equipment to be updated due to safety concerns, bleachers need upgrades and reducing school utility costs is a priority.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Harrington