

Science/Technology/Innovation (STI) Committee

Meeting Minutes

December 14, 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, December 14th. Participants were Tom Harrington, Todd Breitenfeldt, Scott Mercer, Dave Kirsch, Dan Happel, Leonard Wortman, Tom Phillips and Marcy Lamb. The meeting started with approval of the November meeting minutes.

No report was available on the Rocky Mountain Super Computing Centers (RMSC). The school project funding support offered by RMSC is still being finalized and is expected to be reduced from the \$4K that was initially offered. The Century Link telephone and internet fiber lines have been installed at the Sunlight Business Park (SBP). Scott M. reported the new Optimum lines will run to Butte. Tom H. reported they are going up the Whitetail and has heard they will be linked in with 3Rivers fiber that will be linked to Dillon. The redundant fiber opportunity in the area could be an economic development benefit for area and community.

Todd B. indicated no new developments with the individual in Twin Bridges who may assist with the school astronomy program. He indicated they still have a need for telescopes for the program. The school weather station development is still being pursued. The GSM wind tower and MET station are still being worked and Tom H. will address this item at the monthly CTAC meeting next week. Tom P. will also check on the status of the tower availability. 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 discussion focused on potential development in the area to reduce utility costs. Geothermal was addressed and the Boulder water study project is now testing water temperatures; the initial readings indicate higher water temperatures from Boulder to Cardwell. This matches the geothermal maps indicating potential development opportunities for this area. Todd B. asked about temperature readings on the many wells in and around the town. This will be addressed with the water study individuals and town maintenance personnel to see if a plan could be developed to get area temperature data. Tom H. provided an update on the EcoTech feasibility study and reported that it didn't get the Big Sky Trust Fund Grant for their project feasibility due to the application being too broad. The plan is to submit an updated application for the next cycle due in March. Discussions with a wind developer interested in the SBP are continuing. The Borden's Hotel feasibility study is in draft and addressed some alternative energy options to help reduce facility operating costs. Todd B. asked for a copy of the report to review the plan.

Todd B. reported the Whitehall Town Council agreed in concept to support a grant writer with \$5,000 in hopes that other entities would join in a partnership to get grants written. Discussed the interpretive center is still in the works and funding options are being researched. Todd B. indicated the weed component still has an interest in being a part of the educational process in the center.

The meeting was productive and the next meeting will be held in the Extension Office conference room Wednesday, January 11, 2012 at 7:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Harrington