

Science/Technology/Innovation (STI) Committee

Meeting Minutes

February 8, 2012

The Science/Technology/Innovation (STI) Committee meeting was held in the Madison-Jefferson County Extension office conference room at 7:00 a.m., Wednesday, February 8th. Participants were Tom Harrington, Scott Mercer, Lee Good, Ed Handl, Dave Kirsch, Leonard Wortman, Tom Phillips, Ted Dodge, Todd Breitenfeldt and Marcy Lamb. The meeting started with approval of the January meeting minutes.

The Rocky Mountain Super Computing Center (RMSC) is in the process of being turned over to Montana Tech. Discussed the Optimum fiber lines being installed in the area and contact with NWE indicates they are working with 3 Rivers Communications and doing some in house trading on services. NWE will be running dark fiber on their overhead lines from Whitehall to Butte that will provide a direct linkage between the two locations. Lee G. was provided the NWE contact information and he will get in touch with them and see if an opportunity exists to participate in the fiber expansion. The idea is to expand the internet connectivity and redundancy to enhance economic development opportunities in the area and community. This would be a marketing benefit for the Sunlight Business Park and the Borden's project.

Todd B. reported he is working on getting the weather station project implemented at the school. He has been researching systems and is now looking at the costs and available resources. He said the astronomy class had just started and he will be contacting the individual from Twin Bridges who may be able to assist. Tom P. indicated the lightening detector at the mine has been upgraded and the old system will be donated to the school.

Alternative energy discussions continued to focus on reducing utility costs. The geothermal data collection is being accomplished in conjunction with the Boulder water study that is in progress. Getting temperature readings on the many wells in and around the town has been addressed with the Town of Whitehall public works supervisor. Tom H. provided an update on the EcoTech and LGT projects that have been looking at the Sunlight Business Park. A meeting is planned with EcoTech in the near future to see where they are in their business planning cycle. Discussed the Borden's Hotel feasibility study and the ongoing process to look at the financing options and a committee has been formed to work the project. The plan is to include some alternative energy options to help reduce facility operating costs and look at the building being a demonstration project for old buildings. Heat pumps were addressed again and more will follow as discussions with the architect occur and the possibility of using the city water main and extracting heat from the water.

Ted D. discussed the Pipestone sedimentation project that is working to reduce sedimentation and help mitigate some of the localized spring flooding.

Discussed the \$5000 grant writer match the Town of Whitehall proposed and the process of looking for other interested entities wanting to participate. Tom H. passed along that the library had inquired about the grant writer. Todd B. mentioned Boulder has someone designated to write grants.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Harrington