

Science/Technology/Innovation (STI) Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 8, 2014

The Science/Technology/Innovation (STI) Committee meeting was held in the Madison-Jefferson County Extension office conference room at 7:00 a.m., Wednesday, October 8, 2014. Participants were Lee Good, Tom Harrington, Todd Breitenfeldt, Tom Phillips, Charmaine Weyer, Marcy Lamb and Leonard Wortman.

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 am and August meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

1. Lee G. provided an update on the ongoing fiber activities. 3 Rivers connection to the business park was approved and they are in the process of planning to have fiber to the same location that CenturyLink has a presence in the park. They also have a communications building they are willing to donate that is located in Big Sky and a site visit is being coordinated to look at the building and determine if it will meet the business park needs. Discussed the fiber to home plan and working on doing a test block in Whitehall. Lee talked about the high cost of transport and that working to reduce this cost would allow the capacity to increase.
2. Data center feasibility study is in draft and out for comment. Report indicates the site is feasible and that more than adequate internet is available. A surprise was the power availability is more of a limitation and power is currently sole source.
3. Wind development project development is ongoing and group should be onsite in October to begin operations and start the planning on a prototype of the new wind tower. They are planning on leasing one of the new office warehouse units at the SBP. Wind price setting case is still working through the system and coordination is ongoing with parties involved.
4. Warehouse office building construction is complete and one bay is occupied. Borden project is moving forward and on schedule. Building utilities are connected and internal communications has been installed. The fiber connection has been installed along with telephone and access to cable television.
5. School Update: Todd B. mentioned he is gearing up the biological weed program and is looking at possible grants. Wind/solar tower is running smoothly. Budgets are very tight and expenditures are being closely watched. Fall enrollment numbers are higher than last year and is a plus for funding. Working to get more community involvement and interaction to increase the visibility of the school.
6. Leonard W. provided an update on the Jefferson Slough and Pipestone Creek projects. Landowner coordination is ongoing and flood plain mapping issues are being worked DNRC. He also talked about the new county Natural Resources committee that was formed.
7. Other Items: Lee discussed other opportunities for the group to look at such as geothermal opportunities or cogeneration that might help reduce power needs for the community. Discussion occurred and it was felt that maybe a subcommittee of STI could be formed that would involve individuals interested in these areas.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 a.m. The next meeting will be held in the Extension office conference room Wednesday, November 12, 2014 at 7:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Harrington