

MAIN STREET MONTANA PROJECT

A BUSINESS PLAN *For Montana by Montanans*

Interconnectivity and Telecommunications KIN Meeting Minutes

February 12, 2015
10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Helena, Montana

Co-Chairs:

Bill Squires, Blackfoot Telecommunications Group
Rob Ferris, Vision Net

KIN Members Present:

Paul DeWolfe, Access Consulting, Missoula
Chris Fulton, Charter Communications, Billings
Mike Kilgore, Nemont Communications, Scobey
Erin Lutts, Mid-Rivers Communications, Glendive (via video conference)
Thelma McClosky Armstrong, Billings Clinic, Billings (via video conference)
Jason Moothart, CenturyLink, Billings
Judy Preston, Ronan Telephone, Polson
Darryl Rensmon, Morrison-Maierle, Helena
Paul Roble, Stockman Bank, Miles City
Joe Sullivan, Montana Sky, Kalispell (via audio bridge)
Martha Tate, Electric Lightwave/ Integra, Denver
Sarah Walsh, PayneWest Insurance, Helena
Chris Warden, Washington Companies, Missoula

100% attendance!

Staff/Public:

Jim Molloy, Governor's Office
Dan Lloyd, Governor's Office of Economic Development
Michaela Wolfinger, Montana Department of Commerce
Geoff Feiss, Montana Telecommunication Association

KIN Subcommittees:

Mapping

The KIN discussed the current state broadband map, and ongoing maintenance if funding under HB14 failed. The KIN asked Jim Molloy to inquire with the Department of Commerce regarding the archiving of the current mapping system should ongoing funding cease. The KIN believes mapping is critical to particularly metro last mile efforts. Bill committed to resend the link to the Utah Broadband Plan and interactive map.

The Missoula municipal map is completed and shows redundant fiber available. However, access to that fiber, and also to buildings (customers' premises) remains a challenge that is being addressed in the next phase of the Missoula project.

Additional mapping of tier 1 and 2 communities may be done. The KIN believes mapping is critical to metro last mile issues.

Possibility of looking at available providers similar to Utah's map. Larger mapping project may also look at Utah as an example.

What would map ideally represent?

- Location of available assets

- Providers in certain locations—some concern on exact services available and further discussion on value to consumers to knowing the type of services available

- Total miles of infrastructure relative to street miles

- Contact information of providers in area would be valuable to consumers

What level of information is appropriate?

- Information on exact capacity/capabilities is proprietary in competitive environments

- Missoula has fiber map

- Providers comfortable with this

- Next step may be to show ownership

Issue of lit and unlit fiber

- Providers think the distinction is minor

- End-users not likely impacted by needing to light unlit fiber

Current data shows existing providers. Jim Molloy was asked to confirm that the current Montana mapping data will be retained and archived even if continued funding is not available.

Proximity to fiber is the key for customers

Metro Last Mile

Have met a couple of times since previous meeting of the full KIN

Discussed average cost per mile

Need map to move conversation forward

Discussed meet-me point or common space to reduce overlays (cross connect box)

Issues on who would operate common cross connect

Providers are interested in last mile public-private partnerships

City of Boston example: requires notification on any new construction to all stakeholders

Options for cities to install conduit and lease to providers

- Conduit could be considered similar to sewer, sidewalks, etc.

- Fiber conduits different than water and sewer but similar to power

Bozeman is looking at "dig once" policies

Rural Last Mile

Presentation by Mike Kilgore, Nemont Communications, on the history of rural deployment and universal service policies.

Backhaul expenses remain a critical affordability component.

Bozeman Broadband Project:

Design Nine selected as contractor
Final plan approved by city commission on January 26, 2015
Re-bidding for services
Breaking ground this summer
Consideration of incumbent providers
Prefer to use existing facilities where they meet requirements
Prefer not to overbuild
Two years of construction to connect public entities
Requires commercial subscription to be economically feasible

Legislative Review:

House Bill 14

Currently in joint committee on long range planning
Establish a \$15 million fund to match private investment in broadband infrastructure
What are the odds something with bonding will pass?
 Too early to tell, 2/3 votes is a challenge
Cash versus bonding has been a battle
 May be a little more appetite this session for bonding
How can KIN members participate to promote/debate on the merits of the bill?
 Contact committee members/legislators
Bill Squires – pessimistic after 1st hearing
 No opposition, but some confusion
 Let KIN members know if you can testify
Thelma McClosky Armstrong – talking points for KIN members? Geoff Feiss of Montana
Telecommunications Association volunteered to prepare bullet points.
 Is there a caucus for high tech in the legislature?
Still might be appetite for interim work
 Interim Study, task force. Members cautioned against an interim committee, preferring a task force instead.

Other

Workforce
 Tax credit for employers who have/used apprenticeship credits
Potential of bringing in Pam Bucy to discuss apprenticeship tax credit
 Any restrictions? Is \$1000 enough?
 MT League of Cities and Towns would have information on workforce issues
Blue Ribbon Task Force – in the 90's
 Support for the Telehealth came out of that

MT Chamber Update (Glenn Oppel):

HB 213: Business equipment tax reduction
 Would increase exemption from \$100k to \$500k
SB 171: Tax simplification proposal—eliminate/revise tax credits and lower income taxes
HB 166 & SB 200: Income tax reduction
HB 277: Provide for apprenticeship tax credit

HJ 7: Interim study on next-generation 911 regulations

Montana Telecommunication Association (Geoff Feiss):

FCC will rule it has the authority to preempt state law on municipal broadband. FCC also set to make ruling on net neutrality.

FirstNet providing \$7 billion nationally

Next generation 911 study

Privacy discussion

Future Topics/Guests:

OPI representatives

Montana Educator Technologists Association (META) would know about technologies in schools with respect to broadband

Montana Economic Development Association (MEDA)

MT Association of Counties (MACO)

The KIN would like to hear from and collaborate with the Innovation KIN.

Closing Discussion:

Next meeting in 45-60 days – near the end of the legislative session.

Timing of KIN deliverables?

Goal to have recommendations to Governor before end of 2015