

MEDA Broadband Committee
August 10, 2020
2pm

On the call: Tracy McIntyre, Chair; Brian Obert, Paul Tuss, Allison Corbyn, Mehmet Casey, Diane Smith, Jason Williams, Stephanie Juneau, Christy Dawson, Adam Vauthier, Brit Fontenot, Steve Simonson, Geoff Feiss, Russ Fletcher, Gordon Fowler, Jason Moothart, Anne Boothe, and Gloria O'Rourke.

1. Welcome and Overview of Committee- Tracy McIntyre
Tracy welcomed everyone to the call and briefly discussed ground rules.
2. Review of the MEDA Next Generation Analysis and Report- Brian Obert
Brian Obert, MEDA President, shared an overview of the MT Next Generation of Community and Economic Development Tools project. One of the recommendations with multiple objectives was to address broadband issues in Montana.
3. Introductions:
Some time was spent on introductions so those around the "table" could be aware of each person's objective for joining the group. Some objectives included:
 - Gloria - Coordinate discussion and action to address Montana's broadband issues.
 - Diane Smith – Entrepreneurs to have what they need to thrive and prosper.
 - Brian Obert – Address problems in both rural and urban areas.
 - Mehmet Casey – Downtown Billings- wants to learn how to be part of the larger discussion and how to help cities and counties prioritize and respond to the need.
 - Jason Williams – Blackfoot Communications – Reality of day-to-day mechanics in providing broadband in various areas across the street. Blackfoot is a co-op.
 - Allison Corbyn – Address inconsistencies within urban and rural areas. Allison would be glad to share research she has done on the issue.
 - Gordon Fowler – Bozeman Fiber – provides connectivity to schools and commercial areas downtown. Interested in expansion.
 - Paul Tuss – BearPaw Economic Development-address barriers to economic development.
 - Brit Fontenot– City of Bozeman- Objectives: upgrade Montana – 1. broadband office at state level, 2. accurate clear maps, and 3. statewide broadband plan.
 - Adam Vauthier – clarify what the broadband goals are (what is fast enough), and consistent internet speeds; redundancy.
 - Jason Moothart – Eureka – InterBel Telephone Cooperative- 4,000 customers. Fiber to the home. Objective – bring practical applications to the committee.
 - Stephanie Juneau and Christy Dawson, MWED; (Jerry on vacation) – hope to move forward with improving Montana's broadband.
 - Steve Simonson – Beartooth RC&D- address disparity between cost and speed in rural areas. Build in resiliency as well.
 - Geoff Feiss – MTA; members are co-ops as well as commercial entities. Remove barriers to broadband deployment; Provide perspective and background, help peel layers. Access vs Adoption obstacles.
 - Russ Fletcher – a. provide laptops to students; join the broadband viability map, implement community broadband
 - Tracy McIntyre - Montana Cooperative Development Center- bring the diverse players to the table to a comprehensive approach without harming what is already in play
 - Anne Boothe – rural connectivity and promoting remote workforce

4. Identification of Resource and homework
 - a. Articles and Information to share – Russ has gathered info on his MATR site with a special link. MEDA will create a website under the NextGen page for this committee.
 - b. Reading and Prep for Next Committee Meeting
Invite those who could also be involved: Anne Boothe, Jenny Stapp, VisionNet, GOED, USDA/RD representative Roger Meeks roger.meeks@usda.gov 4024164936; rural health care provider, tribal, rural schools, low income, tribes, MDOC rep, McCall Flynn, Education Policy Advisor; MACo. Sue Taylor or Mary Walks Over Ice from NADC; Brett Weisz from MSUB brett.weisz@msubillings.edu; Erin Lutz, MidRivers.
5. Wrap-up and Set Next meeting
 - a. One hour meetings are preferred; meet every two weeks. Next meeting: Monday at 2pm. August 24th; Gloria will set up a series for the next six months every two weeks.