

MEDA Broadband Committee Meeting
January 11, 2021
2pm

Present: Bethany Chinadle, Mehmet Casey, Stephen Walter, Russ Fletcher, Steve Simonson, Anne Boothe, Todd O'Hair, Tracy McIntyre, Allison Corbyn, Paul Tuss, Geoff Feiss, Charlotte Lauerman, Brian Obert, Karl Unterschuetz, Michael Mattmiller

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1. Introductions

2. Legislative Issues:

- BSEDA is using two lobbyists to work on two issues: 1. venture capital and 2. Broadband
- [SB51](#) – cities and towns don't like it because it removes property tax funding. Geoff feels it is a tax incentive for broadening the tax base. Admin supports as does Geoff.

⇒ Action item: Do a press release. Gloria will draft an outline and Tracy will complete – share it with this group. We have done our homework and these are concepts for moving Montana broadband forward. The Broadband Committee compiled, MEDA leadership approved. Note: *Do not include Karl Unterschuetz and AMRII until approved; perhaps not other names as well.*

- LC287 is the State Library bill.

Comments posted in the chat:

Closing the Digital Divide Will Take More than Satellites

Although satellite Internet technology has advanced far beyond its initial capabilities, some experts have advised that the emerging broadband solution still has limitations that local and state stakeholders should consider.

<https://matr.net/news/closing-the-digital-divide-will-take-more-than-satellites/>

Wyoming to use federal CARES Act funding to expand broadband infrastructure

<https://matr.net/news/wyoming-to-use-federal-cares-act-funding-to-expand-broadband-infrastructure/>

Regarding lobbying: In general, no organization may qualify for section 501(c)(3) status if a substantial part of its activities is attempting to influence legislation (commonly known as lobbying). A 501(c)(3) organization may engage in some lobbying, but too much lobbying activity risks loss of tax-exempt status. Jul 28, 2020

Next steps:

- Compile press release and engage partners.