APPROVED SEPTEMBER 21, 2015

EXHIBIT B

MINUTES

JOINT INTERIM COMMITTEE ON ADVANCED COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Monday, July 13, 2015
10:00 a.m.
Room 151, State Capitol
Little Rock, Arkansas

The Joint Interim Committee on Advanced Communications and Information Technology met on Monday, July 13, 2015, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 151 of the State Capitol, in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Members in attendance: Senators Bill Sample, Chair; Bobby Pierce, Vice Chair; Ronald Caldwell, Jim Hendren and Jimmy Hickey. Representatives Stephen Meeks, Chair; Michael John Gray, Vice Chair; Charles Blake, Jim Dotson, Sheilla Lampkin, Brandt Smith, Donnie Copeland (alternate), Charlene Fite (alternate), Rebecca Petty (alternate), Nelda Speaks (alternate), and Jeff Wardlaw (alternate).

Other legislators present: Representatives Trevor Drown, Kenneth Ferguson, Bill Gossage, Joe Jett, David Meeks, John Walker and Marshall Wright.

Representative Stephen Meeks called the meeting to order.

Committee consideration to approve the Minutes of December 16, 2014 and December 17, 2014. Without objection, the motion was approved. [EXHIBITS C-1, C-2]

Fixed Point Wireless: Getting Internet to Rural Arkansas [HANDOUT #1]
Mr. Jay Greiner, Sales Manager, The Computer Works (TCW) was recognized and introduced Mr. Andy Adams and Mr. Jackson Wilson.

Mr. Greiner gave a brief overview of the company and presented a PowerPoint entitled, "The Computer Works Telrad Wireless". Mr. Greiner explained that broadband internet is defined as high speed internet and there are different ways to obtain broadband services in rural areas such as via cable internet, fiber, satellite, and wireless. According to the 2015 Broadband Progress Report, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted to change the definition of broadband by raising the minimum download speeds from 4 megabits per second up to 25 megabits per second. This presents a problem for large companies in Arkansas, as it is not profitable for them to run millions of dollars worth of fiber to rural, low populated areas. Another problem in rural areas is providing the required internet speeds over the existing copper infrastructure.

Mr. Greiner reported that TCW currently provides internet service to rural areas such as Greenbrier, Vilonia, Morrilton, and many other areas. TCW has over 100 towers in place covering over 4,000 square miles. TCW installs small CPE devices at customers' homes and is helping rural community leaders set up wireless infrastructure to serve them and their communities. In addition, TCW works with schools, police and fire departments and utility companies. TCW is currently using Wymac a technology that provides a much faster speed and is better than Wi-Fi however, there are limitations to qualify customers. TCW cannot provide service to customers who live in heavily wooded or hilly terrain. Notably 7 out of 10 customers are disqualified every day due to poor signals in their areas.

The new technology equipment Telrad LTE has better foliage penetration with increased bandwidth capacity up to 100 megabits per customer, and better signal strengths. Telrad LTE sectors will allow TCW to connect up to 800 customers per sector; whereas, Wymac only provides connections for 40 customers per sector. TCW's growth potential is limited in rural areas due to funds. A tower cost approximately $10,000 to erect and the current sectors connected to the towers cost a few thousand dollars each. However, Telrad LTE sectors cost $12,500 each and if TCW can place four sectors on top of the tower pointing in four different directions the total cost would be $60,000 per tower. According to Mr. Greiner this is the most more cost-efficient method and better than the millions that it would cost to run fiber through rural areas.

Department of Information Systems (DIS) 2014 Annual Report [EXHIBIT D]

Mr. Mark Meyers, Director, DIS was recognized, noting the report covered the previous calendar year. Of significance this report reflects the rollout of DIS's partnership with DHS on the Eligibility and Enrollment Framework Project (EEF).

Arkansas Broadband Manager's Reports [EXHIBIT E-1, EXHIBIT E-2]

From a broadband standpoint, Arkansas increased its national ranking from 39th to 36th. In 2014, 5.4% of Arkansans had access to fiber rankings—this number increased to 6.6% in 2015. Currently, 84% of Arkansans in rural areas lack access to the 25 megabits per second standard, whereas, nationally, in rural areas 53% have access. Moreover, 22% of Arkansans do not have access to lower broadband speeds. Arkansas has a lot of room for improvements. Representative S. Meeks asked what resources are available to help small to mid-size wireless providers reach the rural areas. Mr. Myers replied, DIS is doing a better job working with the United States Department of Agriculture to promote grants and loans for this purpose.

Without objection, both reports were favorably reviewed by the Committee.

Update on the School Broadband Contract

Mr. Mark Meyers reported that DIS launched the new improved network program on July 15. The Fort Smith School District will be the first district to plug into the new network. This network is 40 times faster and will have 200 kilobits available per student. School districts will have the option to purchase more bandwidth up to 1 megabit per user. Some schools will still need broadband service. It will take 2 years to complete the expanded network and connect all school districts in the state. The implementation plan should be ready for the next meeting of the committee. Representative D. Meeks asked if 200 kilobits per student would be enough for testing. Mr. Myers replied, DIS is in collaboration with the technology supplier and he feels that the schools are in good shape.

Regarding E-rate funding, DIS received its first E-rate commitment of $7 million, noting that for the past three years, Arkansas has not received E-rate funding commitments from the FCC due to the contract dates with providers not matching up with the program years and service. Some schools still need broadband service.

Update on the activities of the Arkansas Geographic Information Office [HANDOUT #2]

Mr. Shelby Johnson, Geographic Information Officer, GIS presented a PowerPoint entitled, "Arkansas GIS Office Agency Annual Report". He said that GIS has been around since 1999 in previous forms noting that GIS coordinates and maintains the GIS map data.

Regarding the parcel mapping status, 65 counties have published maps and 10 have not. The address file/database consists of the physical address location and the legitimate address assigned by the 911 addressing authority. The ten counties are currently working to complete their address data file. A new road file improvement initiative project is being revisited with the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department to add additional information such as the pavement status and the jurisdictional status. Currently 14 counties have begun the process and 6 counties have finished with 55 remaining. GIS has a total of 3,352 registered users of the system. In an effort to decrease storage costs, GIS successfully migrated to iCloud.

During the first legislative special session of 2015, legislation was passed which transferred the Division of Land Survey to GIS. GIS is planning for an upcoming statewide imagery procurement agreement to get updated satellite imagery that will be utilized by each county 911 system, county assessors, and various state agencies. GIS works closely with counties in support of public safety. Dispatching first responders to the correct location is vitally important to the state.

Representative S. Meeks asked what advantage does the state have with purchasing the satellite imagery versus utilizing Google or other online sites. Mr. Johnson replied, GIS sets the specifications whereas, Google images are acquired at any given time which is bad for mapping. He noted that assessors can benefit greatly from utilizing this imagery with their real estate appraisals and evaluations.

Next Meeting Date

The Committee will meet on Monday, September 21 at the National Weather Service Center in North Little Rock.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:04 a.m.