

Economic Affairs Interim Committee

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Rural Montana's Use of Broadband and Wireless: Struggles and Possible Solutions



Mike Kilgore, CEO/General Manager

Mid-Rivers
COMMUNICATIONS



Michael E. Candelaria, General Manager



Nemont Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

(Including Subsidiaries)

- Incorporated in 1950
- Headquarters In Scobey
- 201 Full Time Employees
- We provide Voice, Broadband, Wireless and Video services over a service area of approximately 15,000 Sq. Miles in NE and South Central Montana including the Ft. Peck and Crow Indian Reservations.
- Providing Cellular service since 1995
 - CDMA
 - UMTS
 - LTE
- 115 3G Cell Sites
- 64 4G Cell Sites



- Designated as Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC) by MT PSC.
- Nationwide voice, data and messaging roaming

Mid-Rivers Wireless

- Providing cellular services since 1997
- Cover approx. 10,000 square miles in Eastern and Central MT
- Most of this area was previously UNSERVED
- Only cellular signal available to much of this area today
- Designated as Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC) by MT PSC
- Nationwide voice roaming
- Nationwide text roaming

Mid-Rivers
COMMUNICATIONS



- Nationwide data roaming
- Provide CDMA/3G/4G LTE

Challenges

- Density Challenges
- Technology Challenges
- Regulatory Challenges



Density Challenges

- Montana is Big State ~ 145,000 Square Miles
- Montana Population Density ~ 7 People/Sq. Mile
- On a National Level the Population Density is ~ 87.4 People per square mile.
- In Eastern Montana the Population Density is less than 1 person per square mile.
- Aging and declining population in many parts of rural Montana.
- Bottom line is that there are many miles to cover, and so few people to serve.
- This translates into fewer people to pay for these costly communication networks of the 21st Century. They are expensive to build (Capex) and expensive to maintain (Opex)
- Without some form of “support”, it is un-economic to serve Rural Montana.

