

MINUTES

JOINT COMMITTEE ON ADVANCED COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Wednesday, November 17, 2021

11:00 AM

Room A, MAC

Little Rock, Arkansas

Committee members present: Senators Blake Johnson, Chair; Linda Chesterfield, Jane English, and Ricky Hill; Representatives Stephen Meeks, Chair; Spencer Hawks, Vice Chair; Stan Berry, Harlan Breaux, Karilyn Brown, Joshua Bryant, John Carr, Jim Dotson, Denise Ennett, Denise Garner, Fredrick Love, Robin Lundstrum, Rick McClure, Milton Nicks, Jr., Johnny Rye, and David Whitaker

Other members present: Senators Joyce Elliot, Scott Flippo, Ben Gilmore, Kim Hammer, Terry Rice, and Gary Stubblefield; Representatives Mark H. Berry, Frances Cavanaugh, Marsh Davis, Steve Hollowell, Jack Ladyman, Aaron Pilkington, and Danny Watson

Senator Johnson called the meeting to order.

Consideration to Adopt September 14, 2020, Meeting Minutes [Exhibit C]

Representative Meeks made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Representative Dotson, and the motion carried.

Consideration to Adopt Motion Authorizing Chairs to Approve Special Expenses Incurred by the Committee

Without objection, the motion was approved.

Presentation on Broadband Development and Accessibility [EXHIBITS E-E1]

Mike Preston, Secretary of Commerce, gave a presentation on Broadband Development and Accessibility throughout the state highlighting challenges contributing to inadequate access.

Presentation on Arkansas Rural ID Program [EXHIBIT F]

Dr. Joseph Stanford, Director of Institute for Digital Health and Innovation, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, provided a presentation on the Arkansas Rural ID Program, a grant program designed to expand the broadband footprint in rural communities.

Presentation on State Broadband Plan [EXHIBIT G]

Lou McAlister, CEO, Broadband Development Group, LLC, provided a presentation on the State Broadband Plan and AR Broadband Now, a company providing customers with research to compare local internet provider's plans, pricing, and availability.

Presentation on Farm Bureau Connectivity Summit and Company Direction

Phillip Powell, Assistant Director of Public Affairs, Arkansas Farm Bureau, discussed the Arkansas Farm Bureau Connectivity Summit and the development of plans to improve high-speed, broadband, and cellular connectivity in Arkansas.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m