

MINUTES**JOINT INTERIM COMMITTEE ON ADVANCED COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY****Monday, September 10, 2012****10:00 a.m.****Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas—1 Cooperative Way
Little Rock, Arkansas**

The Joint Interim Committee on Advanced Communications and Information Technology met on Monday, September 10, 2012, at 10:00 a.m., at Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas, 1 Cooperative Way, in Little Rock, Arkansas. The following committee members attended:

Senator Linda Chesterfield, Chair; Representatives Mike Patterson, Chair; and Stephen Meeks (alternate)

Also attending: Representative Jonathan Barnett

Arkansas Broadband Plan Meeting

The Joint Advanced Communications and Information Technology Committee met in conjunction with Connect Arkansas for the Arkansas Broadband Plan Meeting. Mr. Sam Walls, President, Connect Arkansas was introduced for welcoming remarks. He stated that the Arkansas Broadband Plan Meeting was the first of several meetings on the formation of an Arkansas broadband plan. He recognized Senator Chesterfield and Representative Patterson for remarks.

Senator Chesterfield stated she and Representative Patterson recognize their roles as chairs of the Joint Advanced Communication and Information Technology Committee as they must reach out to ensure that all individuals that are involved in the broadband process are doing what is best for the state. She stated that it is critical that we work as a team to move the broadband plan forward for our prosperity. Representative Patterson gave brief remarks and thanked Mr. Walls for the invitation.

Mr. Walls emphasized the importance of the broadband plan effort. He stated that Connect Arkansas' role is to facilitate the process, provide support, advocate for the utilization of the breakout groups conclusions, execute the implementation of those plans pertaining to Connect Arkansas' mission, and support the work of others. Mr. Walls noted that enabling legislation, ACT 604; is the defining language of Connect Arkansas' obligation and mission statement. He stated that ACT 604 states, "to prepare the people of Arkansas to secure the economic, educational, health, social, and other benefits available via broadband use, and facilitate the availability of broadband service to every home and business in Arkansas". "Provide broadband education so that the citizens of every home and business in Arkansas can take full advantage of broadband services and the availability of broadband services to broadband educated citizens in every home and business in Arkansas by the end of 2012." "Connect Arkansas will promote broadband backbone networks that will serve all of Arkansas with the bandwidth to support Arkansas homes and business needs into the foreseeable future."

Mr. Walls stated that in order for Arkansas to fulfill this charge it must foster a spirit of cooperation and mutual support of all of the various interest necessary to make these things happen. As such, Connect Arkansas has adopted a policy of neutrality towards the various interest of whose participation and support are paramount to achieving the above stated goals. There is one party however; where Connect Arkansas' policy of neutrality does not prevail and that is any action that is contrary to the best interest of the people of Arkansas. Connect Arkansas does not believe that the interest of the people and the interest of those resources necessary to achieve their goals are opposed to one another. Mr. Walls stressed the importance of everyone communicating with one another to understand the issues that each one faces, work together to resolve those issues, not acting in a manner that is harmful to one another, and be willing to compromise but always working together as a team towards a single purpose.

Mr. Walls concluded that if we commit to this we will no longer be at the bottom of the scale, but instead serve as an inspiration for all that desire the opportunity to determine their own destiny.

Ms. Marie Bruno, Vice President, Connect Arkansas discussed the procedure for the day and designated groups were dismissed to move to breakout sessions. The meeting concluded at 10:30 a.m., for breakout sessions.

The broadband plan meeting reconvened at 1:00 p.m., to discuss the reports and next steps from the breakout sessions.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.