<div align="center">MINUTES</div>

HOUSE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY, & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

DATE:	Thursday, January 24, 2013
TIME:	1:30 P.M.
PLACE:	Room EW41
MEMBERS:	Chairman Raybould, Vice Chairman Eskridge, Representatives Anderson(1), Hartgen, Vander Woude, DeMordaunt, Nielsen, Thompson, Anderson(31), Anderst, Mendive, Monks, Morse, Trujillo, Smith, Rusche, Woodings
ABSENT/ EXCUSED:	Reps. Anderson(31) and Nielsen
GUESTS:	Jaime Hansen Idaho Nonprofit Center; Gens Johnson, Idaho Commission on Libraries; LaDonna Larson, Department of Health and Welfare; Erinn Cruz, University of Idaho, Office of Community Partnerships; Robert Hugi, Public Safety Communications; Vickie Winkel, Idaho Rural Partnership; Bill Farnsworth, Department of Administration; Mike Field, LinkIDAHO; Brady Kraft, Julie Best, and Kristin Magruder, Idaho Education Network

Chairman Raybould called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

MOTION:	**Rep. Smith** made a motion to approve the minutes of January 22, 2013.

Mike Field, LinkIDAHO and State Broadband Coordinator, explained the vision of LinkIDAHO. He said LinkIDAHO remains neutral as to providers and type of technology, be it copper, fiber, cable or wireless. Their goal was to remove barriers to broadband accessibility and utilization while identifying the gaps. They encourage broadband investments that will result in better jobs and business opportunities, expanded access to health care, education, public safety and government. He said that their accomplishments included: broadband assessments, mapping, stakeholder interviews, and consumer surveys. This identification process was instrumental in development of a regional broadband investment plan, and a state broadband framework and implementation plan. He also emphasized the collaborative nature of the Broadband Advisory Team as well as their desire to interact and inform policy makers and the general public.

Gens Johnson, Idaho Commission on Libraries (ICL), explained that while the stimulus-funded Broadband Technology Opportunity Grant had expanded free access to broadband resources, increased bandwidth, purchased computers, expanded internal networking and filtering, it was one-time money. She said that the targeted populations for grant assistance were the rural, the young, the non-English speakers, the jobless and the underemployed. The ICL goal is to connect Idahoans with purposeful Internet plus address sustainability. Ms. Johnson related the success of connecting 55 of the most rural and remote libraries in Idaho. She noted that each library has it's own contract with a private Internet service provider but that each library applies for E-Rate support, which typically pays 80% of the bill.

Ms. Johnson said other successes centered around the educational courses and tests that were administered online. Over 20,000 participants improved skills and/or secured jobs as a result of the newly provided opportunities. She said challenges, besides keeping the broadband available, are teaching Internet skills; and, keeping libraries operational during the hours of highest demand. She also wanted the collaboration to continue.

LaDonna Larson, Coordinator, State Health Information Technology (HIT) explained that HIT is a framework to describe the comprehensive management of health information across computerized systems and its secure exchange. The goal of the Washington-Idaho Region is to improve patient care and improve the health care system. The HIT priority for broadband is in electronic prescribing which Ms. Larson stated, would reduce drug abuse and assist in electronic health record (EHR) adoption. She said Medicare and Medicaid encourage EHR adoption and all of Idaho's hospitals plan to implement an EHR. HIT is currently working with 700 Idaho providers. She also explained that the Idaho Health Data Exchange is growing with over 1,000 users, over 1.5 million patients, and more than 2 million requests to view patient information last year. She noted that a new functionality was the use of virtual image exchange.

Ms. Larson said that the telehealth being used in St. Mary's Hospital in Cottonwood and Clearwater Hospital in Orofino include: telepshchiatry, which is covered by Medicaid; telecardioloty; telemergency care; and teledermatology. She said telepharmacy efforts were underway in other areas. She targeted reliability; insufficient bandwidth capacity and latency in remote areas; lack of cell and cell data service; and affordability as challenges for implementation of HIT.

Christine Frei, Director, Clearwater Economic Development Association, presented her report via telephone. She explained that economic development and the business sector were dependent upon broadband for research, marketing, transferring money, and getting quotes and submitting bids. She also listed the providing of training and the hosting of meetings in remote areas as necessities for economic growth and sustainability. She agreed that the same "remote area" challenges exist for economic development as exist for other team sectors.

Brady Kraft, Technical Director, Idaho Education Network (IEN) explained that the network was created in statute in 2009. He said the IEN connects 132 districts and charter schools serving 215 high schools, 86,101 students, plus some colleges and universities and Internet 2. He indicated that in Idaho, the 7th most rural state in the nation, half of the counties have less than 10 people per square mile and most of the communities are separated by 80 recognized mountain ranges. From a major study done of Idaho schools, it was shown that 9.2 percent have less than 100 students; 24.8% have less than 200 students; and, 64 percent have less than 400 students. He added that of the required subjects necessary, school size and state allocation of funds made it impossible to have enough teachers to teach those requirements. From June 2010 until the fall semester of this year, the IEN has made it possible for students not only to receive instructions in all required subjects, but in addition, some students are dually enrolled in college courses. In addition, he stated that the usage has increased from 500 to over 3500 megabytes.

Robert Hugi, Public Safety Communications, Bureau of Homeland Security, explained that the vision of the 2008 National Emergency Communication Plan was to ensure operability, inter-operability, and continuity of communications to allow emergency responders to communicate as needed, on demand, and as authorized at all levels of government and across all disciplines. He added that the Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 created First Net Authority, a first responder network that must consult with state, local, regional and tribal jurisdictions. It enables governors to choose whether to construct the public safety broadband network with federal funds and restrictions or to develop an alternate plan for FCC approval within 180 days of opting out of the federal plan. He noted that the agency depends on radio and commercial providers but as they found out in the super-storm Sandy disaster, cellular networks were the first to fail.

Responding to a question from the committee, **Ms. Johnson** said the libraries had data on specific populations and their preferences when using library internet sites.

Mr. Hugi, regarding a question from the committee, said that the Office of Homeland Security works cooperatively with government agencies on broadband issues but does not work in conjunction with the military. To another question regarding the planning and preparation for electro-magnetic pulse and electro-magnetic frequency, Mr. Hugi said that they just started looking into those classes of terrorist activities. He noted it would require hardening or shielding of some electrical grids.

In response to a question from the committee regarding the number of Idaho providers receiving the Medicare/Medicaid Electronic Health Record (EHR) incentive payments. **Ms. Larson** noted that as of January 1, 2013, Medicaid had paid 156 eligible providers a total of $3,315,000. There were 78 payments being processed and 190 awaiting eligibility checks. As for hospitals, 8 had been paid payments totaling $5,339,781. From Medicare incentive payments, as of December 2012, were: 329 eligible providers received payments totaling $5,712,550 and sixteen hospitals received payments totalling $16,043,011. In answer to an additional question pertaining to teen suicide prevention, Ms. Larson said that services such as telepsychiatry may be beneficial and the process for advertising that service should be addressed by the partnership.

Mr. Brady, in response to a question from the committee relating to Idaho's broadband capabilities compared to adjacent states, said that he sits on an educational network board of 16 states. He clarified that Idaho's approach to broadband coverage is different than neighboring states. Whereas Idaho purchases the necessary broadband capacity and increases the coverage as needed, keeping rigorous data on usage, Nearby states buy large quantities of broadband capacity but have no data on what portion of the purchased broadband is actually being used. He noted that school districts' demand for broadband varies but is increasing.

In response to questions from the committee regarding the passive approach to funding broadband initiatives rather than aggressively pursuing federal funds, **Mr. Field** said that Idaho, being a conservative state, turns to the private solutions first. He added that private business in Idaho provides good service in urban and most rural cities. It is in remote areas, those areas approximately 3 miles outside our cities, where low population numbers and where high cost of infrastructure will require subsidy to provide broadband services. Regarding another question on the definition of E-Rates, he explained that E-Rates are subsidized funds which come from the FCC. They are paid by land-line telephone users; cell phone users do not pay the surcharges. With fewer land-lines, usage is decreasing thus funding is decreasing. Policymakers are looking to change the formula and move it toward broadband.

Mr. Field concluded the panel presentation by saying that when he became the coordinator for Idaho Rural Partnerships a year ago, he thought that rural Idaho did not have sufficient broadband service. By the end of the year, he knows that remote Idaho is where the need lies. He encouraged legislators to designate any funds regarding technology to the libraries, where those being under-served, come for broadband connection.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

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Representative Raybould
Chair

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Jean Vance
Secretary