



Dan Villa  
Education Policy Advisor  
Governor Brian Schweitzer  
PO Box 200801  
Helena, MT 59620-0801

April 23, 2010

**RE: ROUND-2: Montana Broadband Stimulus BTOP Applications**

Dear Mr. Villa,

On behalf of InterBel Telephone Cooperative, I'd like to ask you to favorably consider BTOP applications for Federal Stimulus money that are focused on the "unserved and underserved" areas and to oppose (or at least not recommend) applications which duplicate existing networks. If there are any questions about "duplication network areas" I would recommend contacting RUS Field Representative, Kim Jacobs at 307-754-9000. Kim is familiar with the entire state and specific network developments over the years. Certainly another option would be to contact the rural telco provider.

It should be recognized that rural Montana can be difficult to get the numbers or population to support private investment of broadband and fiber networks. And, that those in place today are typically associated with significant debt along with a commitment by the providers who borrowed the money to put them in place. I feel it would not only be unfair to provide grant money to drive competition and duplicate quality services, but a disservice to those companies who have already stepped-up and took those risks and commitments in borrowing the money to build such networks.

I would like to personally invite you, Evan Barrett and Governor Schweitzer to visit InterBel Telephone and see what we are doing with broadband and have done in the past. I've asked your good friend Tracy McIntyre (with ERDP, formed by InterBel and Lincoln Electric) to extend the invite to you and Evan and I'd personally like to see the Governor again – as I used to buy hay from him in Whitefish. In any case, it would be my pleasure to meet you in Helena or have you visit InterBel in Eureka. I can promise you it would be a worthwhile effort and provide a better understanding of the rural telephone cooperatives in Montana. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Randy Wilson", is written over a horizontal line.

Randy Wilson  
General Manager