Technology Department
November 2017

Possible network improvements

Turtle Island Communications has partnered with Siyeh Corporation to help improve internet connections in all areas of the reservation. We have had discussions and visited about the possibility of colocating some of our network equipment at their point of presence. Turtle Island/Siyeh's goals are to have a fiber connection available to every business, school and residence starting with the larger comminities in and around Browning, East Glacier, St. Mary's and Babb. Today we have private fiber approaching 20 years old serving many campuses and paid WAN fiber connections to Babb, middle and high schools. As of this writing they have already brought fiber into the middle school and elementary campuses. For the district, this future proofs our current and future network needs for the next 50 to 75 years having redundant connections, contracts to repair fiber in the ground in the event of fiber cuts, and more. And best of all will permit us upgrading our current backbone from it's current 1 gigabyte to 10 gigabytes in the next 2 to 3 years and a 100 gigabyte backbone as the standards are being developed and expected to be on the market circa 2025-2030.

Cyber-Security

We will be attending the cyber security and law conference sponsored by MTSBA in Helena December 4th and 5th. We will have the opportunity to collaborate with several districts in protecting our networks, data as well as implementing policies and defense mechanisms in the event of a cyber attack. Until just a few months ago, many thought our school districts were low level targets but with the Whitefish incident has risen to now be on everyones radar.

Web Site and ADA Compliance

Much of our now old web site has been taken off line to prevent having a complaint filed against the district by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) such has happened to Great Falls and Centerville school districts. We are currently researching web site hosting solutions that will partner with us to achieve ADA compliance with our web site presence. To insure a quality selection process we are taking a cautious approach with demonstrations of web site systems available to us balancing design, ease of use, cost and ADA compliance awareness and training. Timeline to bring back a properly designed site and be compliant is estimated somewhere late January to mid-February.

Our now current site while being very basic is currently 100% ADA compliant when run through the top rated compliance tools measuring ADA compliance levels. And one of the solutions that many districts are contemplating is keep the site very basic and publish much of the information to Facebook or other social media outlets which already maintain an ADA compliant presence.