**E-Rate**

The Form 470 window for our Category 1 services is now in the "allowable contract date" phase having received proposals from Access Montana, our current internet provider, 3 Rivers Telecommunications, Northerntel for the colony schools and Hughes Net. This phase is where the district evaluates the bids received based on cost and other factors as prescribed from USAC/E-rate. At this time Northerntel will receive the contract for the colony schools as they are the only provider available for them and a very high probability that 3 Rivers will receive the internet. We do have to factor in our WAN connections to Babb, BHS and BMS and that could factor into the decision to insure we keep those campuses connected as our WAN connections are currently provisioned by Access Montana along with our internet.

A history of why we left 3 Rivers four years ago for our internet was simply they were not able to provide the bandwidth required for the district. At this time 4 years ago the district had 3 internet connections to BHS, BMS and the rest of the district. Each of these were 100 Mbps connections requiring 3 firewalls, 3 filters and a whole lot of trickery in the network configurations to get them internet service. Access Montana was able to provide up to 1 gigabyte of service. Our proposals today call for upping our service level from todays 500 megabytes to 1 gigabyte starting July 1. These speeds are offered by both Access Montana and 3 Rivers as 3 Rivers now has capacity to provide that service.

 7 years ago Babb was relying on Hughes Net satellite which was not reliable and slow to where it was barely usable at best and later transitioned them to a Verizon mobile JetPack until the WAN connections were installed which for the time was much faster than the satellite solution. Because of today's WAN connection to Babb, they realize the same speeds and reliability in service as our students in the Browning proper receive.

The Form 470's for Category 2 services is now in the question and answer phase for the next 28 days and should conclude March 20th. A reminder from last month that this includes new networking in all buildings except the high school (some new equipment will be in the high school with the existing cabling being at the current CAT6a specification). A walk through with possible vendors who will do the work was held this past Monday 2/18. We should see some good competitive bids for the project with 5 companies represented during the walk through. There will be more to update as we transition through the question and answer into the allowable contract phase of the e-rate cycle.

**Building Security**

Our new key cards have arrived, new ID badges are being printed with the first approximate 100 of them completed and distributed. Our goal over the next week is to be near 100% with all staff having their new ID's on them during the school day. Our progression will be expecting ALL adults in our buildings to have a school ID on them during the school day. To facilitate this, we will be distributing numbered substitute ID badges and guest badges/passes. This also facilitates our safety plans so that in the event of an emergency such as a lockdown, providing the school ID will quickly allow law enforcement officials to eliminate badged individuals as a threat as well as having knowledge of who is in our buildings throughout the school day.