



MONTANA
TELECOMMUNICATIONS
ASSOCIATION

MTA NEWS

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MTA Commends Governor Bullock's recognition of broadband benefits in the Main Street Montana Project

The Montana Telecommunications Association commends Governor Bullock's appointing today two of Montana's most-talented telecommunications industry leaders to co-chair the Broadband Communications Steering Committee that will help implement the objectives outlined in his Main Street Montana Project economic development plan. The Governor named steering committee co-chairs Bill Squires, CEO of [Blackfoot](#) Telecommunications Group in Missoula, and Rob Ferris, CEO of [Vision Net](#) in Great Falls. In tapping Squires and Ferris, Governor Bullock recognizes two Montana-grown, nationally known success stories in broadband communications technology.

Blackfoot Telecommunications, celebrating its 60th anniversary this year, employs almost 170 Montanans and delivers advanced telecommunications services throughout Montana and Eastern Idaho. The Missoula-headquartered company provides access to high-speed Internet connectivity to nearly 100 percent of its customers and continues to invest more than \$10 million every year in broadband network enhancements.

Vision Net, with offices in Great Falls, Billings, Helena and Missoula, delivers a wide range of advanced telecommunications network services tailored to meet the needs of business consumers in Montana and across the United States. Vision Net's services include broadband network transport, cloud solutions, backbone Internet access, 24/7 network operations management and technical support, and statewide video conference facilities used extensively by schools and other institutions. Since its inception in 1995, Vision Net has grown to 135 employees.

"I'm honored to be selected by Governor Bullock to co-chair the broadband committee," said Blackfoot CEO Bill Squires, "and I'm excited to start working with stakeholders on developing an economic development plan that builds on Montana's broadband telecommunications assets to deliver the benefits of broadband technology to all the citizens of Montana."

"I too want to thank Governor Bullock for naming me as co-chair of the committee and for recognizing the accomplishments of Vision Net in delivering broadband solutions to Montana's business community," said Vision Net CEO Rob Ferris. "I'm looking forward to working with members of this Key Industry

Network steering committee to help implement a successful broadband economic development plan that benefits all Montanans.”

MTA General Manager, Geoff Feiss applauded Governor Bullock’s appointments. “Broadband deployment and adoption are central to nearly every economic activity in Montana and the nation,” he said. “Governor Bullock has chosen two nationally regarded telecom industry leaders to co-chair the committee. MTA looks forward to working with Governor Bullock and the steering committee to identify ways we can maximize the benefits of broadband technologies for Montana’s business, government and residential consumers to fully realize Montana’s economic potential.”

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