

**MINUTES
of the
FOURTH MEETING
of the
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

**October 26, 2020
Video Conference Meeting**

The fourth meeting of the Science, Technology and Telecommunications Committee was called to order by Senator Michael Padilla, chair, on October 26, 2020 at 9:04 a.m. by video and audio conference via an online platform.

Present

Sen. Michael Padilla, Chair
Rep. Debra M. Sariñana, Vice Chair
Sen. William F. Burt
Rep. Christine Chandler
Rep. Kelly K. Fajardo
Rep. Tara L. Lujan
Sen. William P. Soules
Rep. Melanie A. Stansbury

Absent

Rep. Jason C. Harper
Sen. Mark Moores
Sen. Bill B. O'Neill

Advisory Members

Rep. Abbas Akhil
Sen. Roberto "Bobby" J. Gonzales
Sen. Richard C. Martinez
Sen. Nancy Rodriguez
Sen. Bill Tallman

Sen. Craig W. Brandt
Sen. Jacob R. Candelaria
Rep. Daymon Ely
Sen. Ron Griggs
Sen. Mary Kay Papen
Sen. William H. Payne
Rep. Joseph L. Sanchez
Sen. Peter Wirth

Guest Legislator

Rep. Willie D. Madrid

Staff

Mark Edwards, Bill Drafter, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Ralph Vincent, Systems Consultant, LCS
Joanne Vandestreek, Senior Legislative Librarian, LCS

Minutes Approval

Because the committee will not meet again this year, the minutes for this meeting have not been officially approved by the committee.

Handouts

Handouts and other written testimony are in the meeting file and posted on the legislature's website.

Monday, October 26

Welcome and Introductions (9:04 a.m.)

Senator Padilla welcomed the committee. Members of the committee and staff introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes (9:13 a.m.)

On a motion made, seconded and duly passed, the minutes of the August 17-18, 2020, September 2, 2020 and September 28, 2020 meetings were approved as submitted.

Roadmap for Implementation of the Energy Transition Act: Innovation and Commercialization for a Regional Energy Workforce ("iCREW Project") at New Mexico State University (NMSU) (9:14 a.m.)

Tom Bowles, fellow, Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), and executive director, North American Intelligent Manufacturing Initiative (NAIMI); Fred Mondragon, economic development director, NAIMI; Patricia Sullivan, Ph.D., associate dean, Outreach and Recruitment, and member, Engineering New Mexico Resource Network, College of Engineering, NMSU; and Kathy Hansen, director and chief executive officer, Arrowhead Center, NMSU, provided the committee with a presentation on the plans for implementation of the Energy Transition Act. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/STTC%20102620%20Item%201%20iCREW%20Presentation.pdf>.

Comments and questions from committee members included the following.

- The state needs collaborative efforts to build an economy around clean energy with an emphasis on job development. The state can collect information to identify opportunities for manufacturing and assembly and can facilitate connecting groups together to help diversify the economy.
- One of the stated reasons for the choice of Facebook, Inc. to build in New Mexico was that the facility could be one hundred percent solar.
- The universities should develop more programs to provide candidates for the 2.1 million unfilled cybersecurity jobs.
- Some projects may need legislation fast-tracked through the legislature. Example projects include the work at Santa Teresa to develop partnerships with Mexican businesses.
- NMSU staff are teaming with staff from the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology and the University of New Mexico (UNM) to develop employment opportunities in clean energy fields.

- Central New Mexico Community College, Navajo Technical University and other educational institutions are also developing training for these new technologies.
- A common theme is to continue to develop regional advisory groups to help move these projects forward.
- While the legislature has been very supportive of many research programs by providing matching dollars to research grants and Local Economic Development Act funding, a portion of the permanent funds could be allocated to invest more in New Mexico.

Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) Update (10:08 a.m.)

James S. Peery, laboratories director, SNL, provided the committee with a status update of the activities at SNL. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/STTC%20102620%20Item%202%20--%20Dr.%20Peery%20--%20Sandia%20Laboratories%20Update.pdf>.

Comments and questions from committee members included the following.

- Members questioned whether the laboratories were finding the right employees in New Mexico and were told that thirty-nine percent of the workforce at SNL have degrees from New Mexico higher education institutions.
- The laboratories hire a high number of staff with degrees in electrical engineering and computer science, but more candidates are needed.
- SNL has close relationships with the three major universities. SNL has a representative on campus at UNM as well as good relations at NMSU.
- SNL experiences higher retention rates with employees who are from New Mexico.
- SNL has a one-year on-campus program to allow staff to further their education.
- SNL has a program for high school students to participate in summer programs at the laboratory.

Department of Information Technology (DoIT) Status Update (10:44 a.m.)

John Salazar, secretary, DoIT, provided the committee with a status update of the activities at the DoIT. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/STTC%20102620%20Item%203%20DoIT%20Update.pdf>.

Comments and questions from committee members included the following.

- The DoIT has been involved in a significant number of projects related to teleworking required by the pandemic.
- The state's plan for closing the gap between current broadband services and the need for these services includes prioritizing projects with the largest benefit and exploring more federal funding opportunities.
- Committee members expressed concern for the underserved areas of the state, especially small rural villages.

- The plan includes more collaboration with internet service providers (ISPs) to move broadband projects forward with identified federal and state funding.
- Work is currently being done at the Public Education Department (PED) to assess cybersecurity vulnerability at each of the school districts for all assets owned by the district, including laptops that are loaned to students.
- The current method to assist school districts involves funding from the PED to the school district and subsequent procurement by the district for services from an ISP for the students.
- Information technology (IT) systems in state government have major problems with the availability and accuracy of the data being collected. This has caused major problems with the contact tracing program. New business rules for collecting names and addresses and other data need to be developed.
- Legislation will be introduced during the next legislative session to create an office of broadband to identify metrics, prioritize projects for the funding available and coordinate with ISPs to expand services.
- The status of the top-10 IT projects is still being maintained and presented with a dashboard on the DoIT website.
- The Enterprise Project Management Office under the DoIT is responsible for overseeing these IT projects and communicating with the agencies.

New Mexico Innovation Triangle (NMIT) (11:43 a.m.)

John F. Rizzo, chief executive officer and co-founder, NMIT; John Mahoney, co-founder, NMIT; and Larry Hawker, co-founder, NMIT, provided the committee with a presentation regarding the NMIT. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/STTC%20102620%20Item%204%20NMIT%20Presentation.pdf>.

Comments and questions from committee members included the following.

- Members were interested in how the legislature could help in developing a research triangle in New Mexico, and Mr. Rizzo outlined three areas — ensure infrastructure development in Santa Fe and Los Alamos, including transportation alternatives and parking and access to broadband; make improvements to provide quality public education; and remove barriers for businesses with government.
- New Mexico needs coordination among government, businesses and the PED to build curriculum for new technologies in public schools.
- The current investment by the NMIT group is approximately \$1 million, and the project will need \$400 million over the next 10 years.
- Members encouraged the NMIT to continue moving forward with the project.

Science is US (1:26 p.m.)

Jason Espinoza, co-owner, KW Consulting LLC; and Rachel Kerestes, executive director, Science is US, provided the committee with a presentation on the Science is US program. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/STTC%20102620%20Item%205%20Science%20is%20US%20October,%202020.pdf>.

Comments and questions from committee members included the following.

- Members expressed interest in building the foundation for improving science in schools and mentioned earlier legislation to develop a program to teach physics to girls in middle schools.
- Members discussed possibilities for funding to improve the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) opportunities in schools.
- There should be equal valuation of all STEM professionals, and community colleges should be viewed as a valuable pathway to STEM degrees.

Consideration of Legislation for Endorsement (1:42 p.m.)

Mr. Edwards stated that there were no requests for committee-sponsored legislation. However, the committee has discussed a proposal to create an office of broadband with the following responsibilities:

- maintain a broadband map;
- develop statewide pricing and price agreements;
- improve permitting and right-of-way access;
- provide a group of specialists to work with local governments to expand broadband;
- identify grants and other funding;
- plan for development of broadband; and
- plan for legislation to develop regulatory policies.

Proposed legislation will include appropriations requests for \$1 million for start-ups with an anticipated annual budget of \$1,500,000.

LANL Status Update (1:53 p.m.)

Carol Burns, executive officer, Office for Science, Technology and Engineering, LANL, provided the committee with a presentation on the activities at LANL. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/STTC%20102620%20Item%207%20LANL%20Status%20Update.pdf>.

Comments and questions from committee members included the following.

- The technology readiness gross receipts tax credit for LANL was enacted by the 2020 legislature for the next four years.
- A large amount of technology transfer comes out of the research performed at the laboratory. Intellectual property resulting from the research is acquired by businesses.

- Businesses open in New Mexico because of potential access to the national laboratories.

Public Comment (2:31 p.m.)

No public comment was received.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.