



U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

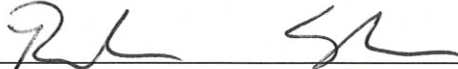
EMPLOYEE POST-TRAVEL DISCLOSURE FORM Original Amendment

This form is for disclosing the receipt of travel expenses from private sources for travel taken in connection with official duties. This form does not eliminate the need to report privately-funded travel on the annual *Financial Disclosure Statements* of those employees required to file them. In accordance with House Rule 25, clause 5, **you must complete this form and file it with the Clerk of the House, by email at gifttravelreports@mail.house.gov, within 15 days after travel is completed.** Please **do not** file this form with the Committee on Ethics.

NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

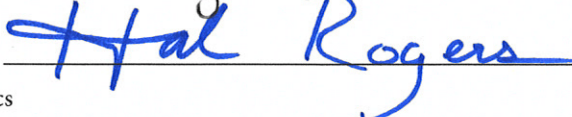
1. Name of Traveler: Rebekah Smith
2. a. Name of Accompanying Relative: _____ OR None
 b. Relationship to Traveler: Spouse Child Other (specify): _____
3. a. Dates: Departure: August 17, 2021 Return: August 20, 2021
 b. Dates at Personal Expense, if any: _____ OR None
4. Departure City: Washington, DC Destination: Great Falls, MT Return City: Washington, DC
5. Sponsor(s), Who Paid for the Trip: The Foundation for Rural Service
6. Describe Meetings and Events Attended:
 Travel throughout Montana to visit local broadband providers and companies or operations that rely on broadband and highlight the geographic and financial challenges of providing rural broadband.
7. Attached to this form are **each** of the following, *signify that each item is attached by checking the corresponding box:*
 - a. a completed *Sponsor Post-Travel Disclosure Form*;
 - b. the *Primary Trip Sponsor Form* completed by the trip sponsor **prior** to the trip, **including all** attachments **and** the *Additional Sponsor Form(s)*;
 - c. page 2 of the completed *Traveler Form* submitted by the employee; **and**
 - d. the letter from the Committee on Ethics approving my participation on this trip.
8. a. I represent that I participated in each of the activities reflected in the attached sponsor's agenda.
Signify statement is true by checking the box.
 b. If not, explain:

I certify that the information contained on this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Traveler:  Date: 09/03/2021

I authorized this travel in advance. I have determined that all of the expenses listed on the attached *Sponsor Post-Travel Disclosure Form* were necessary and that the travel was in connection with the employee's official duties and would not create the appearance that the employee is using public office for private gain.

Name of Supervising Member: Hal Rogers Date: 09/03/2021

Signature of Supervising Member: 



U.S. House of Representatives

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SPONSOR POST-TRAVEL DISCLOSURE FORM

Original Amendment

This form must be completed by an officer of any organization that served as the primary trip sponsor in providing travel expenses or reimbursement for travel expenses to House Members, officers, or employees under House Rule 25, clause 5. **A completed copy of the form must be provided to each House Member, officer, or employee who participated on the trip within ten days of their return.** You must answer all questions, and check all boxes, on this form for your submission to comply with House rules and the Committee's travel regulations. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the denial of future requests to sponsor trips and/or subject the current traveler to disciplinary action or a requirement to repay the trip expenses.

NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

1. Sponsor(s) who paid for the trip: Foundation for Rural Service
2. Travel Destination(s): Great Falls, Carter, Havre, Kevin, and Glacier Park Village, MT
3. Date of Departure: August 17, 2021 Date of Return: August 20, 2021
4. Name(s) of Traveler(s): Rebekah Smith

Note: You may list more than one traveler on a form only if *all* information is *identical* for each person listed.

5. Actual amount of expenses paid on behalf of, or reimbursed to, each individual named in Question 4:

	Total Transportation Expenses	Total Lodging Expenses	Total Meal Expenses	Total Other Expenses (dollar amount per item and description)
Traveler	\$1078.70 (airfare) + \$217 (coach bus) = \$1,295.70	\$288	\$73.07	none
Accompanying Family Member	none	none	none	none

6. All expenses connected to the trip were for actual costs incurred and not a *per diem* or lump sum payment. Signify statement is true by checking box.

I certify that the information contained in this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: *Pamela Becker* Date: 08/25/2021

Name: Pamela Becker Title: Executive Director

Organization: Foundation for Rural Service

I am an officer of the above-named organization. Signify statement is true by checking box.

Address: 4121 Wilson Blvd, #1000, Arlington, VA 22203

Email: pbecker@frs.org Telephone: (703) 351-2044

Committee staff may contact the above-named individual if additional information is required.

If you have questions regarding your completion of this form, please contact the Committee on Ethics at 202-225-7103.



U.S. House of Representatives

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TRAVELER FORM

1. Name of Traveler: Rebekah Smith
2. Sponsor(s) who will be paying or providing in-kind support for the trip:
Foundation for Rural Service (FRS)
3. City and State **OR** Foreign Country of Travel: Great Falls, Carter, Havre, Box Elder, and Stanford, MT
4. a. Date of Departure: August 17, 2021 Date of Return: August 20, 2021
b. Yes No Will you be extending the trip at your personal expense?
If yes, list dates at personal expense: _____
5. a. Yes No Will you be accompanied by a family member at the sponsor's expense? **If yes:**
(1) Name of Accompanying Family Member: _____
(2) Relationship to Traveler: Spouse Child Other (specify): _____
(3) Yes No Accompanying Family Member is at least 18 years of age:
6. a. Yes No Did the trip sponsor answer "Yes" to Question 8(c) on the *Primary Trip Sponsor Form* (i.e., travel is sponsored by an entity that employs a registered federal lobbyist or a foreign agent)?
b. **If yes**, and you are requesting lodging for two nights, explain why the second night is warranted:
7. Yes No *Primary Trip Sponsor Form* is attached, including agenda, invitee list, and any other attachments and Additional Sponsor Forms.

NOTE: The agenda should show the traveler's individual schedule, including departure and arrival times and identify the specific events in which the traveler will be participating.

8. Explain why participation in the trip is connected to the traveler's individual official or representational duties.

Staff should include their job title and how the activities on the itinerary relate to their duties.

As Legislative Assistant covering telecom issues for the Congressman, the trip will highlight the challenges rural areas face in accessing broadband. Kentucky's Fifth District faces many of the same issues as the Great Falls region, including serving last mile locations in extremely rural areas and expanding access to telehealth.

9. **Yes No Is the traveler aware of any registered federal lobbyists or foreign agents involved planning, organizing, requesting, or arranging the trip?**

10. For staff travelers, to be completed by your employing Member:

ADVANCED AUTHORIZATION OF EMPLOYEE TRAVEL

I hereby authorize the individual named above, an employee of the U.S. House of Representatives who works under my direct supervision, to accept expenses for the trip described in this request. I have determined that the above-described travel is in connection with my employee's official duties and that acceptance of these expenses will not create the appearance that the employee is using public office for private gain.

Signature of Employing Member Hal Rogers Date 7/7/2021



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Primary Trip Sponsor Form

This form should be completed by private entities offering to provide travel or reimbursement for travel to House Members, officers, or employees under House Rule 25, clause 5. A completed copy of the form (and any attachments) should be provided to each invited House Member, officer, or employee, who will then forward it to the Committee together with a *Traveler Form* **at least 30 days before the start date of the trip**. The trip sponsor should *NOT* submit the form directly to the Committee. The Committee website (ethics.house.gov) provides detailed instructions for filling out the form.

NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001. Failure to comply with the Committee's Travel Regulations may also lead to the denial of permission to sponsor future trips.

1. Sponsor who will be paying for the trip: Foundation for Rural Service (FRS)

2. I represent that the trip will not be financed, in whole or in part, by a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent. Signify that the statement is true by checking box:

3. **Check only one.** I represent that:
 - a. The primary trip sponsor has not accepted from any other source, funds intended directly or indirectly to finance any aspect of the trip: **OR**
 - b. The trip is arranged without regard to congressional participation and the primary trip sponsor has accepted funds only from entities that will receive a tangible benefit in exchange for those funds: **OR**
 - c. The primary trip sponsor has accepted funds from other source(s) intended directly or indirectly to finance all or part of this trip and has enclosed disclosure forms from each of those entities.
 If "c" is checked, list the names of the additional sponsors: _____

4. Provide names and titles of ALL House Members *and* employees you are inviting. **For each House invitee, provide an explanation of why the individual was invited** (include additional pages if necessary): See attached list; House employees were invited due to their telecom focus

5. Is travel being offered to an accompanying family member of the House invitee(s)? Yes No

6. Date of Departure: August 17, 2021 Date of Return: August 20, 2021

7.
 - a. City of departure: Washington, DC
 - b. Destination(s): Great Falls, Montana with travel around Great Falls, MT during the 3-day tour of the state
 - c. City of return: Washington, DC

8. **Check only one.** I represent that:
 - a. The sponsor of the trip is an institution of higher education within the meaning of section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965: **OR**
 - b. The sponsor of the trip does not retain or employ a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent: **OR**
 - c. The sponsor employs or retains a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent, but the trip is for attendance at a one-day event *and* lobbyist / foreign agent involvement in planning, organizing, requesting, or arranging the trip was *de minimis* under the Committee's travel regulations.

9. **Check only one of the following:**
 - a. I checked 8(a) or (b) above:
 - b. I checked 8(c) above but am not offering any lodging:
 - c. I checked 8(c) above and am offering lodging and meals for one night: **OR**
 - d. I checked 8(c) above and am offering lodging and meals for two nights: If you checked this box, explain why the second night of lodging is warranted: _____



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10. Attached is a detailed agenda of the activities House invitees will be participating in during the travel (i.e., an hourly description of planned activities for trip invitees). *Indicate agenda is attached by checking box:*
11. **Check only one of the following:**
- a. I represent that a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent will not accompany House Members or employees on any segment of the trip. *Signify that the statement is true by checking box:* **OR**
 - b. *Not Applicable.* Trip sponsor is a U.S. institution of higher education:
12. For **each** sponsor required to submit a sponsor form, describe the sponsor's interest in the subject matter of the trip **and** its role in organizing and/or conducting the trip:
FRS is the sole sponsor of the trip and will make all arrangements for travel (lodging, meals, transportation) and will incur all expenses. The mission of FRS is to sustain and enhance quality of life in rural America by advancing an understanding of rural issues. The trip will showcase the challenges of serving broadband to rural communities.
13. **Answer parts a and b. Answer part c if necessary:**
- a. Mode of travel: Air Rail Bus Car Other (specify: _____)
 - b. Class of travel: Coach Business First Charter Other (specify: _____)
 - c. If travel will be first class, or by chartered or private aircraft, explain why such travel is warranted:

14. I represent that the expenditures related to local area travel during the trip will be unrelated to personal or recreational activities of the invitee(s). *Signify that the statement is true by checking box:*
15. **Check only one.** I represent that either:
- a. The trip involves an event that is arranged or organized *without regard* to congressional participation and that meals provided to congressional participants are similar to those provided to or purchased by other event attendees: **OR**
 - b. The trip involves events that are arranged specifically *with regard* to congressional participation:
 If "b" is checked:
 - 1) Detail the cost *per day* of meals (approximate cost may be provided): breakfasts will be provided as part of the hotel charge; lunches and dinners will not exceed the per diem rate of \$55 (full day) or \$41.25 (partial day)
 - 2) Provide the reason for selecting the location of the event or trip: Montana experiences geographic and financial challenges to providing broadband service to rural areas & illustrates the critical needs for these technologies.
16. Name, nightly cost, and reasons for selecting each hotel or other lodging facility:
- Hotel Name: Comfort Inn & Suites -- Airport City: Great Falls, MT Cost Per Night: \$96
 Reason(s) for Selecting: location close to airport and price
- Hotel Name: Best Western Plus Havre Inn City: Havre, MT Cost Per Night: \$96
 Reason(s) for Selecting: Location close to tour locations and price
- Hotel Name: Comfort Inn & Suites -- Airport City: Great Falls, MT Cost Per Night: \$96
 Reason(s) for Selecting: location close to airport and price
17. I represent that all expenses connected to the trip will be for actual costs incurred and not a per diem or lump sum payment. *Signify that the statement is true by checking box:*



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18. Total Expenses for each Participant:

<input type="checkbox"/> Actual Amounts	Total Transportation Expenses per Participant	Total Lodging Expenses per Participant	Total Meal Expenses per Participant
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good Faith Estimates			
For each Member, Officer, or Employee	\$1250 (\$1000 for flights and \$250 for bus)	\$288 (\$96 x 3 nights)	\$192 (2 partial days @ \$41.25 and 2 full days @ \$55)
For each Accompanying Family Member			

	Other Expenses (dollar amount per item)	Identify Specific Nature of "Other" Expenses (e.g., taxi, parking, registration fee, etc.)
For each Member, Officer, or Employee		
For each Accompanying Family Member		

NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

19. Check only one:

a. I certify that I am an officer of the organization listed below: **OR**

b. *Not Applicable.* Trip sponsor is an individual or a U.S. institution of higher education.

20. I certify that I am not a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent for any sponsor of this trip.

21. I certify by my signature that the information contained in this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: Pamela Becker Date: 6/22/2021

Name: Pamela Becker

Title: Executive Director

Organization: Foundation for Rural Service

Address: 4121 Wilson Boulevard, #1000

Telephone: office: 703-351-2044; mobile: 703-346-0817

Email: pbecker@frs.org

If there are any questions regarding this form, please contact the Committee at the following address:

Committee on Ethics

U.S. House of Representatives

1015 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515

Phone: 202-225-7103 General Fax: 202-225-7392

Theodore E. Deutch, Florida
Chairman
Jackie Walorski, Indiana
Ranking Member

Susan Wild, Pennsylvania
Dean Phillips, Minnesota
Veronica Escobar, Texas
Mondaire Jones, New York

Michael Guest, Mississippi
Dave Joyce, Ohio
John H. Rutherford, Florida
Kelly Armstrong, North Dakota



ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

Thomas A. Rust
Staff Director and Chief Counsel

David W. Arrojo
Counsel to the Chairman

Kelle A. Strickland
Counsel to the Ranking Member

1015 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6328
Telephone: (202) 225-7103
Facsimile: (202) 225-7392

August 13, 2021

Ms. Rebekah Smith
Office of the Honorable Harold Rogers
2406 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ms. Smith:

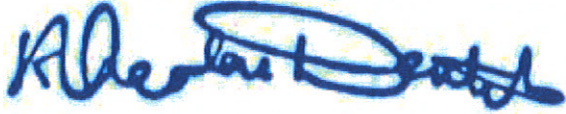
Pursuant to House Rule 25, clause 5(d)(2), the Committee on Ethics hereby approves your proposed trip to Great Falls and Havre, Montana, scheduled for August 17 to 20, 2021, sponsored by Foundation for Rural Service.

This approval represents the Committee's determination that the proposed trip complies with relevant House rules, federal laws, and Travel Regulations promulgated by the Committee. You should engage in your own assessment of the risks and implications of engaging in travel during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

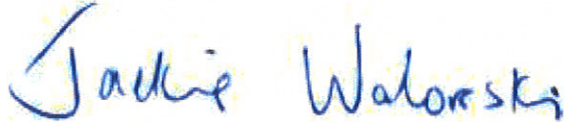
You must complete an Employee Post-Travel Disclosure Form (which your employing Member must also sign) and file it, together with a Sponsor Post-Travel Disclosure Form completed by the trip sponsor, with the Clerk of the House within 15 days after your return from travel. As part of that filing, you are also required to attach a copy of this letter and both the Traveler and Primary Trip Sponsor Forms (including attachments) you previously submitted to the Committee in seeking pre-approval for this trip. If you are required to file an annual Financial Disclosure Statement, you must also report all travel expenses totaling more than \$390 from a single source on the "Travel" schedule of your annual Financial Disclosure Statement covering this calendar year. Finally, Travel Regulation § 404(d) also requires you to keep a copy of all request forms and supporting information provided to the Committee for three subsequent Congresses from the date of travel.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Committee's Office of Advice and Education at extension 5-7103.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Theodore E. Deutch in blue ink.

Theodore E. Deutch
Chairman

Handwritten signature of Jackie Walorski in blue ink.

Jackie Walorski
Ranking Member

TED/JW:tn



FRS Congressional Broadband Tour – Montana

August 17-20, 2021

The Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) is a 501c3 non-profit dedicated to enhancing quality of life in America by promoting a better understanding of rural issues. The vision of FRS is to harness the power of the rural communications industry to enrich lives in America.

The purpose of this trip is to educate Hill staff on the geographic and financial challenges of providing robust broadband service to remote rural areas, as well as to highlight the role rural telecom companies play in providing these essential services that support education, commercial activity, agriculture, health, and public safety. Attendees will visit with a range of small, rural telecommunications companies in Montana as well as companies that provide essential services to these companies. The group will also visit with rural community leaders and discuss ways in which the state has been enhanced by broadband applications. Drive times through Montana will give FRS staff an opportunity to provide educational sessions on the bus, as well as illustrate the difficulty of serving “last mile” areas in a highly rural state.

Per the Ethics rules, no registered lobbyists will attend this trip. All expenses will be paid in full by the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) and will be subject to the daily per diem allowances for Senate and House employees—in other words, all meals, lodging and transportation for staffers will be covered by FRS within these allowance rates.

ITINERARY

Tuesday, August 17, 2021

- OPTION A Leave IAD at 8:55 a.m. United Airlines #1228/4686 via Denver; Arrive Great Falls at 2:04 p.m.

- OPTION B Leave IAD at 7:20 a.m. Delta Airlines #776/4298 via Salt Lake City; Arrive Great Falls at 2:23 p.m.

- OPTION C Leave DCI at 7:05 a.m. Delta Airlines #457/858/4298 via Atlanta and Salt Lake City; Arrive at 2:23 p.m.

- 2:30 p.m. Pam Becker (FRS) will provide staffers with welcome packets and lead them to the bus they will be taking for the entirety of the trip.

- 3:00 p.m. Bus to Hotel for check in.

Comfort Inn & Suites Market – Airport

1801 Market Drive
Great Falls, MT 59404
406-455-1000

- 3:30 p.m. Board bus and ride to Belt for recreation and dinner. On the trip, Geoff Feiss, General Manager of Montana Telecommunications Association, will brief the delegation on Montana’s travel and tourism industry, a mainstay of Montana’s economy. An avid fly fisherman and outdoorsman, Mr. Feiss will present facts and anecdotes about Montana’s National Parks, trout streams and other popular features.
- 6:30 p.m. Dinner
Harvest Moon Saloon
71 Castner Street
Belt, MT 59412
- 8:30 p.m. Board bus and return to hotel in Great Falls

Wednesday, August 18, 2021

- 8:00 a.m. Breakfast at hotel
- 9:00 a.m. Board bus and drive to Vision Net (1309 NW Bypass, Great Falls, MT 59404).

At Vision Net, the group will receive an industry overview, a history of broadband funding mechanisms in the state such as the Universal Service Fund, and how funding programs and policies affect the telecommunications providers of Montana.

The group will then tour Vision Net’s network operations center (NOC) and learn about the advanced managed services provided by Vision Net to enterprise customers around the nation. Vision Net, founded by rural Montana telecommunications providers as an Internet managed services consortium, is a telecommunication solutions company with offices in Great Falls, Billings, Helena and Missoula. The company’s suite of products and services includes: statewide 911 network management; broadband network transport; a range of Internet access services; design and management of customized wide area network (WAN) solutions including SD-WAN, a full line of end point and network security products, and Unified Communications/Hosted VoIP; and network device monitoring.

Presentation and tour provided by:

- Geoff Feiss, General Manager, Montana Telecommunications Association
- Cory Jensen, CEO, Vision Net
- Gary Evans, COO, Vision Net
- Ben Mayo, Director of Cybersecurity, Vision Net

10:15 a.m. Board bus and ride to Benefis Health System (1101 26th St S, Great Falls, MT 59405)

10:30 a.m. Tour and Visit Benefis Health System, a nonprofit independent health care system based in the city of Great Falls and Montana's largest hospital. Benefis serves about 164,000 residents in a vast, 13-county region and operates REACH-MT, a regional telemedicine network providing health services to remotely located health care providers throughout northcentral Montana. At Benefis, executives will provide an overview of how Benefis Health System uses telehealth capabilities for their patients. Presenters will include:

- Jody Haines, Program Manager and President, Montana Telemedicine Association
- Gene Kopyy, Director, Benefis Telemedicine Program

11:30 a.m. Board bus and travel to the Logan Good Farm, Carter, Montana

12:15 p.m. Enjoy box lunch and tour the large farming operation and see "Smart Ag" applications in use on the farm. Former Boeing engineer and fourth generation farmer Logan Good will highlight the use of broadband technologies and advanced smart ag equipment in optimizing efficiencies in large-scale farming operations and discuss federal/state ag policy and economics.

1:30 p.m. Board bus and travel to Triangle Communications
2121 US-2
Havre, MT 59501

On the bus Pam Becker and Geoff Feiss will review the day's visits and answer questions from staffers. Pam and Geoff will discuss the unique west vs. east geography of the state and how these differences affect the state's economy and resources.

3:00 p.m. Visit and tour of Triangle Communications and Hill County Rural Electric Cooperative to learn about the challenges rural broadband and electricity cooperatives face in meeting customers' demand and exceeding expectations. Triangle Telephone Cooperative (TTC) is a company owned by its members. The cooperative was incorporated on March 24, 1953 in Havre, Montana by rural residents of Central Montana. The company provides telecommunications services including Broadband Internet,

local, long distance and mobile telephone service to residents of Central Montana. Their 17,000+ subscribers live in parts of 16 counties from the Canadian to the Wyoming borders covering 23,000 square miles. Hill County Electric Cooperative was started by rural residents of Hill County who wanted to enjoy the benefits of electricity. HCE was incorporated in 1945 and the first electric services were provided to members in the spring of 1947. The group will also hear from the manager of Triangle Wireless who will discuss the challenges of providing wireless services in rural Montana, as well as issues like 5G and supply chain security.

Speakers include:

- Craig Gates, CEO, Triangle Communications and Hill County Electric Cooperative
- Robert Pleninger, Manager of Telephone Engineering & Operations, Triangle Communications and Hill County Electric Cooperative
- Tim Nixdorf, Manager, Triangle Wireless

4:15 p.m. Check in at hotel

Best Western Plus Havre Inn & Suites

1425 Highway 2 NW
Havre, MT 59501
406-265-2888

5:30 p.m. Walk to dinner at Murphy's (1465 US-2 A, Havre). The group will be joined by executives from Triangle Communications:

- Craig Gates, CEO. Triangle Communications and Hill County Eclectic Cooperative.
- Tim Nixdorf, Manager. Triangle Wireless.
- Rich Stuker, rancher, President of Triangle Communications, President of Montana Telecommunications Association and member of the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission

Thursday, August 19, 2021

8:00 a.m. Breakfast at hotel

9:00 a.m. Board bus and travel to Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation
98 Veterans Park Rd
Box Elder, MT

On board, the group will discuss some of the unique challenges facing broadband deployment on tribal lands.

9:45 a.m. Meet Tribal leaders to discuss Tribal telecom (with 100% fiber to the home) and other unique Tribal issues. The reservation is located in Hill and Chouteau counties in north central Montana, about 40 miles (64 km)

from the Canada–U.S. border. It has a total land area of 171.4 square miles, which includes extensive off-reservation trust lands. The reservation is reported to have 3,323 enrolled members, 55% of the total 6,177 enrolled members in the tribe.

Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation is one of seven American Indian reservations in the U.S. state of Montana. Established by an act of Congress on September 7, 1916, it was named after *Ahsiniwin* (Rocky Boy or Stone Child), the chief of the Chippewa band, who had died a few months earlier. It was established for landless Chippewa (Ojibwe) Indians in the American West, but within a short period of time many Cree (Nēhiyaw) and Métis were also settled there. Today the Cree outnumber the Chippewa on the reservation. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) recognizes it (and the tribe) as the Chippewa Cree Reservation. On the Reservation, the group will meet Tribal leaders and discuss economic challenges facing native American communities. Speakers include:

- Members of the Rocky Boy's Tribal Council. (NB: The Reservation has been closed since early March 2020 and not answering calls; so we've been unable to confirm participants.)

10:45 a.m.

Board bus and travel to Ft. Benton. Known as the "Birthplace of Montana", Fort Benton is situated on the banks of the Missouri River and is a haven for history buffs as well as canoeists seeking the solitude and unique beauty of the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River. Fort Benton is also located along the Lewis & Clark National Historic trail, the Nez Perce National Historic Trail, and is the gateway to the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. Fort Benton first gained fame as a robe trading post. The discovery of gold in the Montana and Idaho Territories brought countless fortune seekers, outlaws, merchants and madams to this riverside town. Whiskey followed gold, and infamous trails were forged into Canada, including the Whoop-up Trail into Alberta and the Fort Walsh Trail into Saskatchewan. As the terminus for the 642-mile long Mullan Wagon Road, Fort Benton became a crucial link between Missouri and Walla Walla, Washington along the Columbia River. Steamboats plied the Missouri River to Fort Benton for thirty years, until the railroad signaled an end to this towns' prominence as the "Worlds Innermost Port". This once feisty outpost played such a vital role in the expansion of the West, that it is now registered as a National Historic Landmark.

Noon

Lunch at Wake Up Coffee House
1500 Front Street
Fort Benton, MT 59442
406-622-5400

- 1:30 p.m. Board bus and travel to Stanford, MT. On this leg of the trip, the group will learn about the physical and financial challenges of deploying fiber optic infrastructure in remote areas such as the territory they will be exploring. They also will learn about how Federal environmental and natural resource laws such as National Historic Preservation, Environmental Protection, Endangered Species, among others, affect telecom infrastructure deployment and costs of compliance.
- 2:30 p.m. Visit ongoing fiber deployment project outside of Stanford and gain an understanding of what it takes to deploy fiber in remote rural Montana. The project involves a variety of construction methodologies to maximize environmental conservation. The group will learn physical and economic effects of fiber optic infrastructure deployment. Craig Gates, Triangle Communications CEO, will accompany the group and describe operational and capital aspects of the project.
- 3:30 p.m. Board bus for return to Great Falls.
- 5:00 p.m. Check in to hotel
- Comfort Inn & Suites Market – Airport**
 1801 Market Drive
 Great Falls, MT 59404
 406-455-1000
- 5:30 p.m. Dinner at the Cattlemen’s Cut Steakhouse, a Great Falls tradition and a short walk from the hotel. (1400 Market Place Dr.). Pam Becker and Geoff Feiss will recap the trip, lead Q&A and survey the group for comments on content and logistics of the trip.

Friday, August 20, 2021

- OPTION A Depart Great Falls at 2:44 p.m. United #5898/335 via Denver; Arrive IAD at 11:17 p.m.
- OPTION B Depart Great Falls at 12:30 p.m. Delta #4248/844 via Salt Lake City; Arrive IAD at 11:16 p.m.
- OPTION C Depart Great Falls at 7:00 a.m. Delta #4292/1346 via Salt Lake City; Arrive DCA at 4:00 p.m.



Join FRS for a tour of Montana to learn about
rural broadband issues
August 17-20, 2021

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of broadband in rural communities. Want to better understand how federal broadband programs like the FCC's Universal Service Fund or the USDA's ReConnect Program impact community-based broadband providers and rural Americans? Join the Foundation for Rural Service as we explore the rugged, historic beauty of Montana and learn about the significance of rural broadband in supporting education, health, commerce, and public safety.

The tour will start and end in Bozeman and include visits to rural broadband providers, construction areas for fiber deployment, broadband-enabled farms and ranches, telehealth facilities, and opportunities to learn about a wide variety of rural broadband issues in one of the most beautiful and scenic areas of the country.

This trip will comply with all House and Senate ethics rules on privately-sponsored travel for Hill staff. We will also follow all local, state, and federal CoVid-19 safety guidelines.

For more information or to reserve a space on the trip, please contact Pam Becker at (703) 351-2044, or pbecker@frs.org. SPACE IS LIMITED.

Visit <https://www.frs.org/programs/congressional-broadband-tour> for a tentative itinerary of the Montana tour and videos from past tours.



FOUNDATION FOR
RURAL SERVICE

The Foundation for Rural Service is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Arlington, Virginia, that is dedicated to improving quality of life in America by advancing an understanding of rural issues.