

## MINUTES OF THE HOUSE UTILITIES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Steve Alford at 9:00 am on Thursday, February 11, 2016, 582-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Kent Thompson – Excused  
Representative Joe Seiwert – Excused  
Representative Blaine Finch – Excused  
Representative Rob Bruchman – Absent

Committee staff present:

James Fisher, Legislative Research Department  
Erica Haas, Legislative Research Department  
Cindy Lash, Legislative Research Department  
Linda Borrer, Kansas Legislative Committee Assistant  
Nick Myers, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Mike Ross, Sr Vice President of Southwestern Power Pool  
Brian Thomason, CEO of Blue Valley Tele-communications  
Jeff Wick, General Manager of WTC

Others in attendance:

[See Attached List](#)

### **Approve minutes**

Chairman Alford asked for a motion to approve the minutes of February 9, 2016. Representative Frownfelter moved and Representative Hibbard seconded to approve the minutes of February 9, 2016. The motion passed.

### **Guest speaker:**

Chairman Alford introduced Mr. Mike Ross, Sr Vice President of Southwestern Power Pool. He shared the history of his organization first. It was founded in 1941 with 11 members, pooling electricity to power Arkansas aluminum plant needed for critical defense following the Pearl Harbor attack. It took only 9 days. It now has grown with members in 14 states. The major services are Reliability Coordination, Market Operation, Standards Setting, Compliance Enforcement, Training and Balancing Authority.

He then proceeded to discuss Transmission Planning, the 20 and 10 year plan as well as the Near-Term plan. He then shared concepts for Wholesale Energy Market, and Value of Transmission. ([Attachment 1](#)).

## CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES of the Committee on Utilities and Telecommunications at 9:00 am on Thursday, February 11, 2016 in Room 582-N of the Capitol.

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Mr Ross entertained questions by:

Rep Ryckman  
Rep Kuether  
Rep Hibbard

**Guest speaker:**

Chairman Alford introduced Brian Thomason, CEO of Blue Valley tele-communications.

Mr Thomason presented himself as a man that has been involved in this work for 36 years. He spoke with great passion as he detailed the work of providing rural service for approximately 1,000 square miles in Northeast Kansas to a customer density of approximately 3.6 customers per mile. ([Attachment 2](#)). Mr Thomason also presented a video with commentary of several rural citizens explaining what the service has meant to them.

Questions were entertained by:

Rep Schwab

**Guest speaker:**

Chairman Alford introduced Jeff Wick, General Manager of WTC headquartered in Wamego, Kansas.

Mr Wick gave the background of the tele-communications which provides a full line of Voice, Internet and Video services to residential, education, medical, government and business customers within a service area that covers 400 square miles.

He pointed out that WTC is one of 37 rural telcos in the State of Kansas. Rural telcos provide services to over 50% of the land mass in Kansas, some of the service areas having a population density as little as 1.6 per square mile.

([Attachment 3](#)) .

Questions were entertained by:

Rep Kuether  
Rep Schwab

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 10:26