

POTENTIAL 2011 BIENNIUM BUDGET ITEMS

Prepared for the Montana Legislative Council
By Susan Byorth Fox, Executive Director
March 2008

The following is an initial list of items for the Legislative Council's consideration in developing the 2011 biennium budget for the Legislative Services Division Program (Program 20) and the Interim Committees and Activities Program (Program 21). Additional items may be identified and presented at the Council's next meeting.

Item: Television Montana (TVMT)

Program affected: Legislative Services Division (Program 20)

Description: TVMT is a statutorily authorized state government broadcasting service administered by the Legislative Services Division (LSD). In its current form, TVMT is a cluster of programming consisting of gavel-to-gavel coverage of legislative proceedings, including interim committees, session committees, and House and Senate floor sessions, as well as selected meetings and events sponsored by Executive Branch agencies and, on occasion, oral arguments before the Montana Supreme Court.

Since 2002, Helena Civic Television (HCTV) has been under contract with the LSD to provide production services related to legislative activities. This programming is available to cable subscribers in some major markets and on a multichannel, closed-circuit television system inside the State Capitol.

TVMT is supported in part through a state special revenue account (5-11-1112, MCA). The account receives \$100 from each lobbyist license issued plus any gift, donation, grant, legacy, bequest, or devise made for the development, operation, and maintenance of the program. The account is not sufficient to cover the costs of statewide broadcasting.

During the 2009 regular session, HB 368 was passed and approved by the legislature. However, because of a contingent voidness clause, the legislation was rendered void. During the May Special Session, a \$200,000 appropriation was passed within the Legislative Services Division budget; this was a restricted, biennial, and one-time appropriation.

Originally, TVMT was to be funded by the state special revenue and by private donations. These revenue sources are currently insufficient. TVMT has been funded primarily through the general fund, sometimes through the Session feed bills and in the 2007 special session through direct appropriation. However, the primary source of funding has been through Program 20 or 21 carryforward funds (a percentage of reverted funds that agencies are allowed to expend). The TVMT contract may be extended through 2010, but will need to start a new request for proposal cycle in 2010 for production, transmission, and equipment/maintenance.

Decision: It would be an appropriate time for the Council to consider a comprehensive funding proposal for the future so that TVMT become incorporated into the base budget and the true expenditures can be funded up front.



Item: Computer System Planning Council recommendations and Information Technology (IT) initiatives.

Program affected: Legislative Services Division (Program 20)

Description: The LSD is statutorily required to provide IT services for the Legislative Branch, including the House and Senate (5-11-112, MCA). These services include computer network support, application development and maintenance, and information technology planning. Section 5-11-403, MCA, requires the Legislative Branch Computer System Planning Council to develop and maintain a branch computer system plan. The Legislative Council must approve and adopt the plan (5-11-405, MCA).

The Computer System Planning Council is in the initial phase of identifying possible projects and initiatives for inclusion in the 2011 biennium IT plan. The Council will be examining a range of proposals involving maintenance of the current computing environment; support and enhancement for existing applications; and software, hardware, and system support for legislators in conducting session and interim business.

The Planning Council will brief the Legislative Council on its proposed information technology initiatives in May/June 2008 and present the plan in September 2008.



Item: Funding for Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER), Legislative Council on River Governance (LCRG), National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), Council of State Governments West (CSG-WEST).

Program affected: Interim Committees and Activities (Program 21)

Description:

1) In 2001, the Legislature statutorily approved Montana's participation in PNWER, an international organization promoting greater regional collaboration among the states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington, the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, and the Yukon Territory. The group also seeks to enhance the overall competitiveness of the region in international and domestic markets (5-11-706, MCA).

2) The LCRG, a committee of the Council of State Governments West (CSG West), is composed of legislators from Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. The Council's mission is to assert state legislative authority over natural resources and river governance issues and to unite states

for a proactive agenda of legislative action. Montana has participated in the LCRG since 1998.

3) NCSL is the national organization for both legislators and legislative staff in all 50 states and provides research, technical assistance and opportunities for policymakers to exchange ideas on the most pressing state issues. CSG is a national organization that serves elected and appointed officials in all three branches of each state and territorial governments. Montana participates in the western region (CSG-West). Both the NCSL and CSG assess membership dues to the states. With the exception of CSG in the 2005 session, the Legislature in recent sessions appropriated funds to pay NCSL and CSG dues for both years of a biennium.

Decision: The Council may want to consider:

- 1) the payment of dues to these organizations; and
- 2) the level of funding for legislator participation.



Item: Districting and Apportionment

Program affected: Interim Committees and Activities (Program 21)

Description: The Districting and Apportionment Commission is required by law to be appointed in 2009. Once appointed, the Commission has 20 days to elect a presiding officer. The expenses for a meeting to elect a presiding officer will be incurred in the 2009 biennium. The Legislative Council provided funding for the organization of the Districting and Apportionment Commission and its initial meeting within the 2009 biennium budget..

Further Commission work will occur during the 2011 biennium. The Commission will receive the census data necessary to complete redistricting in approximately February of 2011, and require funding to begin its redistricting process. The Commission will require additional funding in the 2013 biennium to accomplish the bulk of its work and present its plan to the 2013 Legislature.

Decision: The Council will need to consider allocation of funding for the activities of the Districting and Apportionment Commission from July of 2009 through June of 2011.



Item: Interim Committee Budgets

Program affected: Interim Committees and Activities (Program 21)

Description: In developing interim committee budgets for next biennium, there are a couple of changes in practice that could affect the budget: any changes to the size of committees, the frequency of out-of-town meetings, or the creation of new interim committees. There has been some discussion about increasing the level of participation in interim committees by expanding the committees size, especially the committees that have 8 members, for which additional members would need to be budgeted. During the 2007-2008 biennium, interim committees have

expressed increased desire to meet across the state in locations other than Helena. Previous interim committee allocations, with the exception of State-Tribal Relations, have not been calculated for out-of-town meetings. Also, the Legislative Council sponsored a bill last session to create a separate Local Government Interim Committee which was not successful but may be recommended again. In addition, the Water Policy Committee has indicated an interest in perpetuating itself next biennium.

Decision: The Council may wish to direct information to be compiled regarding any changes to the size of committees, the frequency of out-of-town meetings, audio-visual equipment, or the creation of new interim committees.



Legislative Council strategic planning initiatives which the Council may want to consider:

- 1) Costs for additional training (more days of new training, refresher training, additional presiding officer or rules training) following the 2010 caucus must be included in the 2009 Feed Bill.
- 2) The Council may wish to consider funding the first month of the 2011 session in order to provide more assurance that House and Senate costs are covered prior to the new feed bill being passed.
- 3) Legislator salary, reimbursement, stipend, technology allowances, etc.