



PO BOX 201706  
Helena, MT 59620-1706  
(406) 444-3064  
FAX (406) 444-3036

**Montana Legislative Services Division**  
**Communications Office**

---

TO: Legislative Council

FROM: Kevin Hayes, Legislative Communications Officer

DATE: August 2, 2012

RE: Social media accounts for 2013 session

The Legislative Communications Office is planning to set up two Facebook accounts for the upcoming 2013 session. One account will be dedicated to information relating to audio/video topics, especially TVMT and streaming broadcasts while the other account will focus on general legislative information, such as daily committee hearings and the overall legislative schedule.

According to a recent Nielsen study regarding internet usage, approximately 212 million Americans went online in March 2012. Of those 212 million, 152 million (over 70%) visited Facebook at some time during that month. These numbers highlight the popularity of Facebook and are indicative of its widespread acceptance. The National Conference of State Legislatures maintains a listing of legislative social media sites. A quick glance at this listing shows that nearly every state legislature or their associated caucuses now uses Facebook and/or other social media programs.

The establishment of Facebook accounts associated with our legislature will provide another tool for the public to access legislative information through an outlet which many of them use and are familiar with. The intent is to provide only information that is accessible on our current website. Certain information, however, lends itself to being more easily displayed and highlighted on Facebook than on our website. An example, for instance, would be information regarding the general bill transmittal deadline. While the legislative calendar is accessible on our website as well as explanations regarding the legislative process, Facebook would be ideal for posting a notice as the legislature approaches its 45th day that we are approaching a transmittal deadline and explaining exactly what that means.

In addition to Facebook, the Office is also considering the establishment of a Twitter account to inform followers of such things as changes in times or locations of committee hearings, adjournment notices of hearings or floor sessions, and times and locations of conference committees.