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## PRESS RELEASE

### Blackfoot, Missoula Electric and Energy Partners Bring Technology to Rural Schools

February 28, 2008 Missoula, MT– According to the Rural School and Community Trust, more people live in rural America now than did in 1950. In Missoula most residents have family and friends that live in rural communities, but have no idea that some schools in the outlying areas are without computers, televisions, hard drives, software, and printers. The reality is that rural communities in Montana are behind the national average in their ability to navigate the technological “superhighway” simply because they have not been afforded access to current equipment.

Three local Missoula companies are working together to change that limited access. Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Missoula Electric Cooperative, and Energy Partners all service Western Montana rural communities and partnered together 15 years ago to form the Electronic Education Equipment (EEE) program. The program was founded in 1989, and since its inception has purchased over \$336,000 in equipment for rural community schools.

On Thursday, February 28, 2008, Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Missoula Electric Cooperative, and Energy Partners will gather at the Annual EEE Luncheon and donate \$24,000 worth of technology equipment to 84 of the area’s rural community schools. The partnering companies are committed to the educational needs of children living in Western Montana rural communities who have little to no access to current technology equipment. The Annual Luncheon will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn starting at 11:45a.m., and will honor student representatives from each school to accept technology equipment donated by EEE. The following are just a few of the technology items that will be awarded at the luncheon:

- Two Flip Video Camcorders (Clinton Elementary)
- Interactive White Board System (Dixon Schools)
- 17” Flat Panel Monitor (Noxon High School Elementary)
- Dell Projector (Darby School)
- Xerox Color Network Printer (Drummond Elementary)
- DVD/CD Cassette Listening Center (Ovando)

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#### About Blackfoot Telecommunications Group

Named after the Blackfoot River running through much of the territory it serves, the Blackfoot (Blackfoot) Telecommunications Group was originally established in 1954 as Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative. Blackfoot offers state-of-the-art telecommunications, Internet and data solutions to customers in Missoula and throughout Montana and Idaho. Headquartered in Missoula, Montana, Blackfoot employs more than 165 Montanans. Blackfoot can be reached at 406-541-5000 or through its web site at <http://www.blackfoot.com>.

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