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PRESS RELEASE

Rural Utility Companies Donate Equipment to Schools

February 15, 2002 Missoula, Mont – Electronic Educational Equipment (EEE) donated \$24,000 worth of equipment to rural public schools throughout western Montana. EEE, a joint program sponsored by Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc., Clark Fork Telecommunications, Inc., Missoula Electric Cooperative, Inc., and Energy Partners, LLC, was formed in 1989 with the goal of the program to focus on purchasing equipment for students' use in rural schools.

Since its inception, the EEE Program has donated computers, televisions, digital cameras and other types of educational equipment to schools in areas the four sponsoring companies serve. This year the program expanded to have sixty-four schools participating in the annual event. Total donations to date exceed more than \$192,000. On January 17, 2002, EEE awarded 47 schools equipment. 362 pieces of equipment have gone out to eligible schools over the past 13 years.

"Many of these are small schools with funding allocated according to the number of students enrolled. By receiving the equipment from EEE, the schools are able to provide their students educational opportunities using technologies they would not otherwise be able to afford," Harry LaFriniere, Chairman of the EEE Committee. "We view the students attending these schools as the future of our companies. We feel that it is important for young people to experience the value of cooperative based principles to demonstrate the value of people pulling together to accomplish more than they can as individuals."

Special thanks to the late Bill Nelson, co-chairman of the EEE luncheon committee, for his commitment to this project. Bill will be missed by us all.

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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