

Rural Cellular Service in Montana

A presentation to the
Energy & Telecommunications
Interim Committee

November 17, 2011



Mid-Rivers Wireless

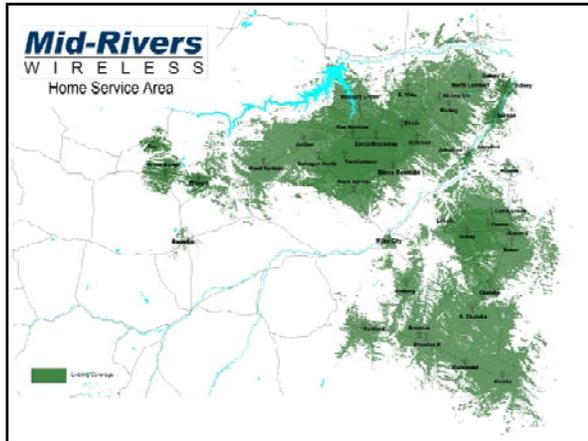
- Providing cellular services since 1997
- Cover approx. **10,000 square miles** in Eastern and Central MT
- Most of this area was **previously UNSERVED**
- Only cellular signal available to much of this area today
- Designated as Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC) by MT PSC

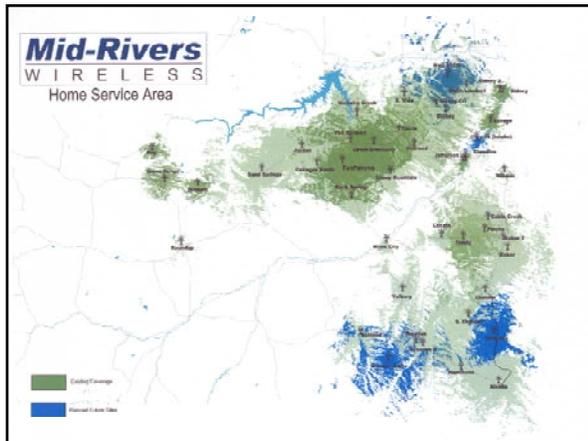


Mid-Rivers Wireless

- “Home” coverage in Nemont Wireless area
- Nationwide voice roaming today
- Text roaming with some nationwide carriers
- Working on data roaming
 - In the process of upgrading network to 3G Mobile Broadband
 - Looking at possible paths to future 4G Upgrade (higher broadband speeds)







Rural Cellular Challenges

- **Spectrum / Licensing**
 - "Fill-In" cellular licensee
 - 700 MHz spectrum interoperability concerns
- **Roaming**
 - Negotiating reasonable agreements for voice, text and data
 - Large carriers not roaming on our network for voice, text, data

Mid-Rivers COMMUNICATIONS

Rural Cellular Challenges

- Handset Exclusivity
 - Access to latest devices exclusive to large carriers, i.e., the iPhone
- Regulatory uncertainty
 - Support in recent years on decline due to Interim Cap; Phase out of all CETC support begins in 2012
 - Bidding against nationwide carriers for Mobility Fund support under new CAF
- Negotiating & market power as a small provider