

TSTCI INFORMATION

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR TSTCI MEMBER COMPANIES

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www.tstci.org

Texans Helping Texans

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Texas Statewide Telephone Cooperative, Inc. is a statewide telecommunications non-profit organization representing the interests of Texas rural independent telephone systems. All member companies are regulated by the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

2006 TSTCI PLANTMEN'S CONFERENCE – MARCH 1-3 *Don't Forget to Make Your Room Reservations and Register!*

The Conference is being held at the Westin Riverwalk Hotel, 420 West Market Street, San Antonio, Texas 78205; phone 210-224-6500; fax 210-444-6000; web site: www.westin.com/riverwalk. For room reservations, call the hotel toll free at 1-888-627-8396. Be sure to ask for the TSTCI Plantmen's Conference group rate of \$189 for a single or double room. The deadline for our group room rate is February 3, so be sure to call right away. Reservations requested after that date will be on a space and rate available basis.

Be sure to check out the agenda on the TSTCI website (www.tstci.org) to see the updated list of speakers. You won't want to miss this valuable program or the Tabletop Trade Show on Thursday evening. For registration information, contact Martha Shepperd at 972-243-8705 or by e-mail: martha.shepperd@chrsolutions.com or Ann Weinberg at 703-237-1644 or e-mail ann.weinberg@chrsolutions.com. Registration forms are also available on our website.



SANDY VANDEVENDER TO SERVE ON NTCA BOARD

When the NTCA Board of Directors meets in February during the 2006 annual meeting in San Diego, they will be welcoming three new Board members, including Sandy Vandevender, Executive Vice President/General Manager of Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc. Sandy will represent NTCA member companies in Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and Oklahoma. For more information on Sandy and the other new NTCA Board members, see the December-January 2006 issue of NTCA's publication, *The Exchange*.

Sandy has been a great asset to TSTCI, having served as President, a member of the Board of Directors, and on several committees. Sandy currently is Chairman of the TSTCI Legislative Committee and a member of the TSTCI Planning Committee.

Congratulations to Sandy on his appointment to the NTCA Board!



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TSTCI BOARD OF DIRECTORS WELCOMES NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

During their meeting January 10, the TSTCI Board of Directors approved applications of two new Associate Members.

The Mund Group, Ltd., dba Alternative Benefit Solutions, located in New Braunfels, is a provider of employee benefit solutions including group medical insurance, retirement plans and more. For information, you may contact Jeff Mund at (830) 620-4839.

Insurance Network of Texas, Inc., provides specialized insurance including commercial auto, property, general liability and more. You can call Gary Nitsche in La Grange at (979) 968-6494 for a customized plan to fit your needs.

NECA

An Invitation for You

NECA INVITES YOU JOIN THEM FOR LUNCH AND MEETINGS MARCH 8

Do you want to know what NECA is doing to address industry issues important to you? You can find out. The NECA Board of Directors invites you to its meeting in Austin on Wednesday, March 8. NECA is especially interested in TSTCI members participating in this meeting. You are invited to a luncheon at noon, then at 1:30 you may join the open committee meetings and Board meeting. A reception and dinner will begin at 5:30.

NECA Appoints Joe Douglas VP of Government Relations and Communications

The National Exchange Carrier Association (NECA) recently announced the appointment of Joe Douglas to the position of Vice President of Government Relations and Corporate Communications. Mr. Douglas will be based in NECA's Washington, D.C. office.

In his new position, Mr. Douglas will be the primary NECA liaison on telecommunications related issues with government entities including the FCC. He will also be responsible for consolidating the coordination and development of NECA's government relations and corporate communications functions.

Mr. Douglas, a 20 year NECA veteran, has served in a variety of regulatory and industry relations posts during his career. Most recently he served as Director, Industry Relations Settlements/Methods.

The meeting will be held at the Barton Creek Resort & Spa in Austin, Texas. This is an excellent opportunity for you to hear about and discuss important issues with the NECA Board. Please contact JoAnne Jaycox at 800-351-9033 at your earliest convenience to inform her of which events (lunch, meetings, dinner) you wish to attend.

If you need a room at the Barton Creek Resort, JoAnne will be happy to arrange a reservation for you. The room rate is \$205, and the cutoff date is Monday, February 13.

NEWEST FCC COMMISSIONER APPOINTED TO SERVE AS CHAIR OF FEDERAL-STATE JOINT BOARDS

Deborah Taylor Tate, who was sworn in by FCC Chairman Kevin Martin as a Commissioner on January 3, was elected January 13 by the FCC to serve on and act as Federal Chair of the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, as well as the Federal-State Joint Board on Jurisdictional Separations.

In a press statement, Commissioner Tate said, "I am deeply honored that Chairman Martin and Commissioners Capps and Adelstein have appointed me to serve as the Federal Chair on the Joint Boards for Universal Service and Jurisdictional Separations. In these roles, I will reach out to states and consumer advocates to preserve and advance the principles set forth by Congress. Specifically, I will continue the efforts I began as a state official to ensure that all consumers – especially those in rural and high-cost areas – are able to obtain services at reasonable rates. Paramount is my commitment to good stewardship and encouraging the deployment of new choices for Americans in underserved areas of our country. As I did in Tennessee, I will continue to stress a pragmatic approach to federalism, build a consensus between multiple jurisdictions and stakeholders, encourage investment, and, above all else, champion the needs of consumers. I look forward to building a lasting cooperation with state regulators as we move forward."

Upon her appointment, Chairman Martin stated that he is confident she will provide strong leadership and will vigorously pursue the goals set forth in the Act, including the provision of quality telecommunications services at reasonable rates throughout the nation.

BARTON PLEDGES TO FOIL THE SALE OF CELL PHONE RECORDS

U.S. Representative Joe Barton, R-Texas, chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, announced plans last week to introduce legislation to foil the business of selling private cell phone records and to encourage cell phone companies to better protect their customers' privacy.

"News reports over the past week have exposed a seamy and dangerous intrusion into the privacy of anyone who uses a cell phone. The discovery started with an urgent warning from the Chicago Police Department to its undercover offices, and we now all understand that it is possible to purchase a person's cell phone records over the Internet for about a hundred dollars."

Representative Barton indicated that the cell phone records were usually obtained from wireless companies by 'pretexting' – which is simply impersonating a cell phone owner and asking for access to personal files. Pretexting to obtain financial records is already illegal, but the legality apparently does not apply to obtaining call records.

He said, "It seems to me that the most sensible action we can take quickly to thwart the buyers and sellers of personal phone records is to make pretexting illegal. I will introduce legislation to accomplish that, and my bill will substantially increase the penalties if telephone companies release consumer telephone records without the permission of the consumer."

ROGER HUTTON APPOINTED TO LONGHORN FOUNDATION BOARD

Glen Rose, Tx.--The Texas Longhorn Heritage Foundation's President, Stan Searle, Monument, Colorado, announced that C. Roger Hutton of South Lake, Texas has been appointed to the Board of Directors of the TLHF.

The TLHF is a nonprofit organization developing a Museum and Center for Reminiscing with serious focus on the Texas Longhorn breed. Early plans include collections of information, archive documents, photos, and art featuring the famous Texas Longhorn. Location of the Museum will be at Glen Rose on a beautiful limestone covered hill overlooking the intersection of #67 and #144.

Mr. Hutton, who joins five other directors and twelve Advisory Board Members, has a sizable interest in breeding quality Texas Longhorn cattle, as well as a commitment to research and document the romantic history of the breed. Mr. Hutton comes with 40 years of experience in the telecommunications industry. During this time he has founded several companies, served in a variety of executive positions and on Boards of several companies. He is presently President and CEO of CHR Solutions, Inc., a consulting and engineering company that provides services to telephone companies serving rural America, and serves as Executive Director of Texas Statewide Telephone Cooperative, Inc. He is a graduate of the University of Texas at Arlington with a B.A in business administration.

Roger and Carol, his wife of 40 years, have two children, David Hutton and Jamie Hutton Brown, DVM. They also have four grandchildren who are a source of great pleasure.

The Texas Longhorn Heritage Foundation will soon be receiving donation items for the Center which relate directly to the history of Texas Longhorn cattle and the people who raise them. Monetary contributions are subject to 501c3 corporation non profit treatment. For more information, visit www.texaslonghornheritage.com.

Congratulations, Roger!

Upcoming Events

January 2006

25-27 Rural Cellular Assn. Network Interoperability Conference – Austin, Texas

February 2006

3 **Deadline for TSTCI Plantmen's Conference group room rate**

5-8 NTCA Annual Meeting & Expo – San Diego, California

15 **Last Day for TSTCI Plantmen's Conference Registration**

March 2006

1-3 **TSTCI Plantmen's Conference – San Antonio, Texas**

8 NECA Open Committee & Board Meetings – Austin, Texas

12-14 NTCA Telco Board Officers Conference – Scottsdale, Arizona

19-23 USTA TelecomNEXT – Las Vegas, Nevada

26-28 NTCA Telecom Executive Forum – Palm Springs, California