

TSTCI INFORMATION

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR TSTCI MEMBER COMPANIES

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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.



NEW E-MAIL ADDRESSES FOR TSTCI STAFF

Be sure to update your address books!

TSTCI staff members have recently received new e-mail addresses, which we will begin using after the Thanksgiving Holiday. We realize that many of you use e-mail filters to cut down on the amount of spam you receive. To help ensure you don't miss e-mail from us, please take a moment to add the following to your address books:

TSTCI Member Services: tstci@tstci.org

Cammie Hughes, Director – Member Services: cammie@tstci.org

Ann Weinberg, Director – TSTCI Conferences: ann@tstci.org

Lynette Hampton: lynette@tstci.org

Martha Shepperd: martha@tstci.org

2007 TSTCI CONFERENCE PROGRAM PLANNING UNDERWAY

The TSTCI Program Planning Committee will meet in early December to discuss the content for the 2007 conferences. If there's a particular topic you'd like to see covered at one of the meeting sessions next year, this is the best time to send in your ideas for consideration. Just e-mail your suggestions to ann@tstci.org. We look forward to receiving your ideas!

2007 TSTCI Conferences:

March 7-9	Plantmen's Conference	Renaissance Hotel	Fort Worth, TX
June 6-8	Spring Managers' Conference	Radisson Resort	So. Padre Island, TX
July 11-13	Bookkeepers/Accountants/ Commercial Conference	Westin Galleria	Dallas, Texas
August 8-9	Futures Retreat	Inn of the Mountain Gods	Mescalero, NM
October 3-5	Annual Membership Meeting	Westin Galleria	Dallas, TX

ELECTIONS CHANGE PERSONALITY OF TEXAS LEGISLATURE

While the Texas Legislature remains in the majority control of the Republican Party following recent elections, the personality of the process and players has changed dramatically, especially in the House.

While Texas Democrats did not make the headline-grabbing change as they did in the U.S. Congress, Democratic candidates made substantial progress, especially in the Texas House of Representatives, to dramatically alter the “face” of the Legislature, which opens January 9, 2007.

In the 2003 legislative session, Republicans with an 88-seat majority in the House, rammed through a conservative agenda and punished Democratic leaders for past Democratic majorities. Since then, Democrats have posted seven straight seat gains to dramatically impact that majority. Democrats had gained one seat in the 2004 elections, and picked up an additional seat in a special election last February. The Democrats then made a dramatic five-seat gain in this year’s general election to reduce the Republican majority to 81-69. Overall, four incumbent Republicans were defeated for re-election this year, and two other Republican-leaning seats were captured by the Democrats. The major Republican who lost in the GOP primary was powerful Education Committee Chairman Kent Grusendorf.

The Democratic gains, combined with a bruising GOP primary season and a mass exodus of House chairmen loyal to Speaker Tom Craddick, means that both floor debate, and the personality of crucial committees, will be affected significantly.

Over on the Senate side, there appears to be little change as a result of two new Senators’ elections. Conservative Democrat Ken Armbrister chose not to seek re-election and is being replaced by Republican Glenn Hegar. Former Austin Mayor Kirk Watson, a conservative Democrat, won the open seat for the Travis County senatorial position. The result was the Republicans went from a 19-12 advantage to a 20-11 advantage for the upcoming session.

The key seats in the House which were changed in the recent election include Democrats holding on to every major seat, including several closely contested races in the rural areas which Republicans had hoped, but failed, to gain. Some of the key House elections include:

- Democrat Juan Garcia defeated incumbent Republican Gene Seaman from Corpus Christi;
- Republican Drew Darby defeated Republican Scott Campbell in the primary;
- Democrat Joe Heflin won the seat to replace former Speaker Pete Laney over heavily financed Republican candidate Jim Landtroop in a seat Republicans had counted on gaining, but lost;
- Republican Diane Patrick defeated Education Committee Chairman Kent Grusendorf in the primary;
- Democrat Allen Vaught defeated Education Committee member Republican incumbent Bill Keffer; and
- Democrat Ellen Cohen defeated Republican Rep. Martha Wong.

Earlier in the year, Democrat Donna Howard won a February special election to replace Republican Todd Staples.

With the re-election of Republican Governor Rick Perry, who defeated nearest challenger Democrat Chris Bell by a 40%-30% vote, and the re-election of Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst and Speaker of the House Tom Craddick, and the election of Republicans to all major statewide offices, Texas remains firmly in the control of the Republican Party. However, the significant gains by Democrats are expected to dramatically change the personality, and the approach of the Republican leadership. With the election, Gov. Perry seized the opportunity to call for "bi-partisanship" indicating very strongly his desire to avoid gridlock in order to "get things done" for Texas.

FCC CHAIRMAN MARTIN CONFIRMED FOR ANOTHER TERM

The Senate voted unanimously on the night of November 16 to confirm Federal Communications Commission chairman Kevin Martin to a second five-year term, according to the office of Senate Commerce Committee chairman Ted Stevens (R-Alaska). Martin was nominated by President George W. Bush to a Republican seat on the commission in 2001, and was named chairman in 2005.

In a prepared statement, Martin said, "I am deeply honored to have been confirmed by the Senate for a second term as commissioner and chairman of the Federal Communications Commission. I thank President Bush and the Congress for the privilege to continue to serve in his administration and alongside my colleagues on the commission."

He added, "I look forward to working with the administration and Congress, as well as with my fellow commissioners and the incredibly able staff at the FCC, to ensure that all Americans share in the benefits and opportunities offered by the best communications system in the world. I will continue to work to provide a regulatory environment that promotes competition and drives investment and innovation while protecting consumers and promoting public safety."

MEIER PROMOTED TO DIRECTOR OF SOFTWARE SALES AT MARTIN GROUP

(Mitchell, S.D.) – TSTCI Associate Member Martin Group, the nationwide leader of Software, Business Services, and Engineering for communications providers, today announced the promotion of Mr. Tim Meier to Director of Software Sales. He assumes this position immediately and will continue to report to Jeff Boozer, Vice President of Sales and Marketing.

Mr. Meier assumes responsibility for ongoing territory sales activity including resource management, account strategy, etc. for Martin Group's Territory Sales Managers and Sales Engineers. Mr. Meier will also coordinate, monitor, and manage sales activity to ensure that all individual and team sales quotas are met. Other responsibilities of Mr. Meier relate to quote and proposal development. He also continues to have responsibility for direct sales in the Texas region.

"Tim Meier has a thorough understanding of the telecommunications industry," said Jeff Boozer, Martin Group's Vice President of Sales and Marketing. "His ability to provide extensive knowledge and expertise will benefit both his team and our clients."

Prior to his promotion, Mr. Meier held a position of Territory Sales Manager. For Martin Group, Mr. Meier has been the top producer, selling into ILECs, Tier 1 and 2 CLECs. Mr. Meier brought 14 years of sales and sales management experience to the team. He also holds five years of sales experience in network services. Mr. Meier previously managed and sold software solutions to Tier 1 and 2 domestic service providers. Mr. Meier is regarded as a CLEC pioneer for his key managerial role in launching the first CLEC in Austin, Texas, which was called Metro Access Networks (MAN).

A Time for Giving Thanks

With Thanksgiving just days away, we tend to think of the things we are grateful for, and to express our appreciation. As an association, TSTCI has much to be thankful for as well. So let us take this opportunity to say,

“Thank you” to all of you for your support throughout this year.

The TSTCI Board of Directors and Staff wishes each of you and yours a safe, happy Thanksgiving Holiday.



Upcoming Events

November 2006

23 Thanksgiving Day (*TSTCI Offices Closed*)

December 2006

4 TSTCI Program Planning Committee Meeting

12 TSTCI Legislative Planning Meeting

25 Christmas Day (*TSTCI Offices Closed*)

26-29 TSTCI Offices Closed

January 2007

1 Happy New Year! (*TSTCI Offices Closed*)

9 80th Texas Legislature Convenes

13-17 OPASTCO Winter Convention – Orlando, Florida

23 TSTCI Legislative Conference and Reception – Austin, Texas