TSTCI NFORMATION

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR TSTCI MEMBER COMPANIES — APRIL 2008

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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.

TEAM 2008

PRESIDENT'S CLUB

Robby Allen
Susie Handley
Bob Ingram
Beverly Meade
Scott Thompson

DIRECTOR'S CLUB

Robbie Allen
Darlene Burden
Alicia Haynes
Justin Haynes
John Howard
Thomas Hyde
Joan Johnson
Joe Macias
Rusty Moore
Toney Prather
Milton Sargent
Brian Stalzer
Charlie Thomas
Bob Wilson
Bruce Wood

LONE STAR CLUB

Mary Ackley
Denny Bergstrom
Terry Gentle
Roger Hutton
Ricky Martinez
David McEndree
Lauren Sanders
Bill Stinson
Jim Whitefield
Delbert Wilson

A SUCCESS STORY – THE 2008 TSTCI MARKETING CONFERENCE

TSTCI has built a strong reputation for providing quality educational and training opportunities for their membership, and the first-ever TSTCI Marketing Conference was no exception. The conference, held Thursday, April 3 at the Embassy Suites Outdoor World in Dallas, provided excellent topics and speakers for the marketing and customer service managers who attended.

Setting the benchmark for future marketing conferences, the one-day conference was filled with timely information relative to the issues facing telco staff members in the marketing and customer service arenas.

Starting off the day was **Tim Owens, Cronin Communications,** with his presentation on *Marketing 101- How to Turn CSRs into Marketers and Sales People*. Tim discussed his nine-step approach to helping current CSRs become successful sales people for their companies. Tim provided helpful tips and proven statistics on moving staff in the direction of sales and the impact it can have on a company's bottom line revenues.

Next up was **Darlene Burden**, **Big Bend Telephone Company**. Darlene brought her first-hand knowledge on *Incentives for Employees* and discussed opportunities available to businesses that will excite and engage employees, boost morale and improve quality and productivity. Darlene shared the process implemented by Big Bend Telephone Company, the pros and cons of the process, and the success Big Bend is experiencing with the program.

Tara Young, CHR Solutions, took the podium and shared her knowledge on *Requirements for Marketing*. Since everyone had received "technical" training on CPNI, Tara focused on the ways companies may use CPNI in their marketing efforts. She also explained some of the exceptions to the rules that many attending may not have previously understood or found confusing, thereby keeping them from marketing their services to the fullest extent available.

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TEAM 2008

CENTURY CLUB

Charles Albert
James Allen
Blake Belcher
Jim Tom Cardwell
Philip Cox
Ray Ellis
Alvin Fuhrman
Barak Harlan
Tim Humpert
Stephen Jones
Danny Kellar
Tonya Kelsey
Donald McArthur
Vanessa McGalliard
Jackie Mitchell
Felix Nuniz
Shane Parsons
Bernidine Raines
Amanda Ramsey
Don Richards
John Sablatura
Bonnie Taylor
Patrick Tinley
Sandy Vandevender
Lori Vergin

TOGETHER EVERYONE ACCOMPLISHES MORE!

After a great lunch, attendees returned to a panel discussion *on Marketing Successes and Failures – Stories from Member Companies*. **Carolyn McPherson from Nortex Communications** and **Nancy Kimball from XIT Rural Telephone Cooperative** shared their marketing experiences with the group. Each talked about a marketing project that had worked very well for their respective companies.

The final speaker of the day was **Cindy Quesenbury, Panhandle Telephone Cooperative, Inc.**. Cindy enlightened us on *Service Agreements – 3 Lines or 30 Pages*. Telephone company personnel must regularly deal with service agreements, and they are often difficult to understand. Cindy helped clear the confusion and offered some useful tips on simplifying the forms and making the process more comfortable for the company and its customers.

After a short question and answer period, the TSTCI Marketing Conference adjourned with applause, and everyone asking, "When is the next one?" Congratulations to the TSTCI Marketing Committee for a successful first marketing conference!

Special thanks to our
2008 MARKETING CONFERENCE SPONSORS

PLATINUM
Big Bend Telephone Co., Inc.
Eastex Telephone Coop., Inc.
John Staurulakis, Inc.

SILVER
CHR Solutions, Inc.
Mapcom Systems

BRONZE
Central Texas Telephone Coop., Inc.
Hill Country Telephone Coop., Inc.
Taylor Telephone Coop., Inc.
UDP

DISCRETIONARY FUND
Eastex Telephone Coop., Inc.

Time to Register for the Spring Managers' Conference!

Be sure to register soon for the 2008 Spring Managers' Conference, June 4-6 at the Radisson Resort on South Padre Island. We have another great program in store for you this year! Registration information was sent by e-mail April 12. Registration forms are also available on our website – www.tstci.org.

If you have questions about the conference, would like to register for the golf tournament, or need assistance with your registration, contact Martha Shepperd at 972-243-8705 or by e-mail: martha@tstci.org.

TCEI MAKES GENEROUS CONTRIBUTION TO TSTCI

Texas Communications Expo, Inc.

Texas Communications Expo, Inc. (TCEI) has once again demonstrated their generosity and support of the telecommunications industry. Following this year's EXPO in Belton, TCEI donated $6,000 to the TSTCI Discretionary Fund.

We wish to express our sincere appreciation and recognize TCEI for their continuous dedication to the rural telecommunications industry. As many of you know, profits from each year's EXPO are donated to telecommunications organizations that promote education and training within our industry.

On behalf of our members, a Texas-size thanks to Texas Communications Expo, Inc. for their support!

TIM HUMPERT BECOMES NEW GM FOR COLEMAN COUNTY TELEPHONE COOP.

The Board of Directors of Coleman County Telephone Cooperative, Inc. in Santa Anna, Texas is proud to announce that Tim Humpert has joined the cooperative as General Manager as of April 1, 2008.

Tim graduated from Midwestern State University with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting. He comes to Coleman County Telephone with 32 years of experience in the telephone industry. For the past 18 years he has served as general manager of Community Telephone Company in Windthorst, Texas.

Tim and his wife, Marilyn, have been married for 30 years and have a daughter, Hayley, who is presently attending Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas.

In his spare time, Tim enjoys golfing, ranching, and outdoor life.

The Board of Directors and employees of Coleman County Telephone are excited and looking forward to working with Mr. Humpert. He brings years of knowledge and managerial experience that will serve him well in this position.

The TSTCI Board of Directors and staff congratulate Tim on his new position and we are pleased that we will be able to continue working with him as a TSTCI member company manager.

COMPTROLLER ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL TIME TO FILE ANNUAL FRANCHISE TAX REPORTS

Business given extra month to navigate revised tax

(AUSTIN) — Texas Comptroller Susan Combs announced April 22 that businesses who are unable to meet the May 15 due date for the franchise tax will have an additional 30 days to submit their returns or file an extension without penalty.

The Comptroller's office recognizes the complexity of the revised franchise tax and the newness of the enhanced electronic reporting methods have caused concern among tax practitioners and taxpayers statewide. The extended deadline allows businesses to avoid a 5 percent penalty they would have faced had they not filed by May 15.

"We want to make sure businesses and tax practitioners have adequate time to make sure they're complying with the revised franchise tax," Combs said. "Because they're dealing with new calculations and enhanced technology for filing reports, the one month penalty waiver will help taxpayers accurately complete their returns in the first year of this brand new tax."

Information about the revised franchise tax is available on the Comptroller's Web site at www.window.state.tx.us or by calling 800-252-1381.

TSTCI WELCOMES NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Please join the TSTCI Board of Directors and staff in welcoming our newest associate members.

Draka Comteq provides optical fiber cabling and connectivity solutions for network operators, installers and enterprises for delivery of broadband services. Visit their website: www.drakacomteq.us.

HRH Insurance offers all lines of insurance, loss control and risk management. Visit their website: www.hrh.com.

Hughes Network Systems is a provider of high-speed internet via satellite. Visit their website: www.hughes.com.

C. Gaylen Ackley Memorial Golf Classic

Friday, May 16, 2008

Please join the Bellville Hospital Foundation and the Ackley family as they hold their annual charity golf tournament at the Stephen F. Austin Golf Course in San Felipe, Texas.

For more information, call Margie K. Lovell, at 979-865-3141, ext. 154 or Billy Browne, SFA Pro Shop at 979-885-2811.

IS POLITICAL ACTIVITY TAKING A BREATHER IN TEXAS?

Compared to recent months, the general public believes the campaigning is over until later this year; but in reality, the work in the Texas campaigns continues – behind the scenes.

Obviously on the national basis, the Democrats are still in the headlines trying to select their Presidential candidate. In Texas, only Nathan Macias from Bulverde, who lost his House seat by seventeen votes to Doug Miller from New Braunfels in the Republican primary, continues to contest the outcome. Macias lost an official recount but filed a petition with the courts to have a new election. The case is scheduled for trial in mid-May. Additionally, Governor Perry's announcement that he plans to run for re-election in 2010 created not only headlines but comments from possible candidates or their campaigns, the parties and of course, the political pundits.

The majority of the political activity is focused on the upcoming conventions. The Democrats will hold their convention from June 5-7 in Austin and the Republican convention is slated for June 12-14 in Houston.

The campaigns winning the primary elections had their short celebrations and immediately went to work on opposition research concerning the candidates they will face during the upcoming general election. There are more than 100 races on the November ballot in Texas with candidates from each of the two major parties. History has proven the candidates from "other" parties are rarely elected, so the emphasis will be on the major party candidates.

As we enter the general election cycle, and based upon the dollars spent during the primary races, we can be assured it is going to be a very expensive election. We must step up our fundraising efforts on a statewide basis in order have the funds needed to support our friends. It bears repeating – the individuals elected in November will become the "decision makers" during the 81st Legislative Session. As we are keenly aware, we need 76 votes in the House and 21 votes in the Senate to pass good legislation, and more importantly, to defeat any bad legislation!

Many of our member companies are planning to provide education and communication for their employees stressing the importance of investing in TSTCI PAC. There will be many opportunities to participate with the PAC prior to November. We have a number of golf tournaments, functions during TSTCI conferences, and the individual pledge card commitment through the **TEAM 2008** program. Remember, if we do not invest in our industry, *who will*? If not now, *then when*?

TEAM 2008

TOGETHER EVERYONE ACCOMPLISHES MORE!

News from Associate Members

NECA Names New Director – Southwest Region

NECA is pleased to announce that Ronny Puckett has accepted the position of Industry Relations Director – Southwestern Region effective April 1. Ronny replaces Dean Schneberger, who retired after 23 years of service with NECA.

Ronny began his telecommunications career with an independent telephone Company in Texas, where he also served as a state lobbyist for rural telephone cooperatives. Since that time, he has worked in wireless and CLEC operations, as well as VoIP product implementation. Ronny will be located in NECA's St. Louis office and can be reached at 314-567-2819 or by email at rlpuckett@neca.org.

Ron Davidson Joins EnerSys

Ron Davidson has joined EnerSys as a Sales Engineer in the State of Texas replacing Dawn Roberts who was promoted to the Seattle area. Ron has spent his entire 20 year telecommunications career serving the Independent Telephone, CLEC, Value Added Re-Seller, Distribution, and National Account base customers in Texas and that will continue to be his responsibility. Give Ron a call for any of your battery needs.

During his 20 year career, Ron has represented Emerson Network Power, ADC, Thomas & Betts and most recently owned his own Manufacturers Representative firm. Ron will continue to work on the Board of Directors for Texas Communications EXPO and on the Convention Committee for the TTA.

You reach Ron at 972-263-6200 or by email at ron.davidson@enersys.com.

Upcoming Events

April 2008

25	Texas PUC Open Meeting

May 2008

8	Texas PUC Open Meeting
14	FCC Open Meeting
16	**C. Gaylen Ackley Memorial Golf Classic – San Felipe, Texas**
22	Texas PUC Open Meeting
26	**Memorial Day *(TSTCI offices closed)***

June 2008

4-6	**TSTCI Spring Managers' Conference – South Padre Island, Texas**
5	Texas PUC Open Meeting

July 2008

3	Texas PUC Open Meeting
4	**Independence Day *(TSTCI offices closed)***