

TSTCI TEAM

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81ST TEXAS LEGISLATIVE SESSION KICKS OFF WITH CHANGE IN HOUSE LEADERSHIP

The 81st Regular Session of the Texas Legislature commenced at noon, January 13. The first order of business for the House of Representatives is the election of a Speaker of the House. By mid-December, there were 11 candidates for the Speaker position.

A group of 11 Republican Legislators met behind closed doors in late December to unite behind one Speaker candidate. They collectively pledged their support to Joe Straus, a Republican who represents District 121 (Bexar County), which includes the communities of Alamo Heights, Olmos Park, Terrell Hills, Windcrest, and northeast San Antonio.

The rest, as they say, is history. Rep. Straus was elected as Speaker of the House by his peers, Republican and Democrat, at the commencement of the 81st Regular Legislative Session on January 13, 2009.

During the 2007 legislative session, Straus served as Vice-Chair of the Committee on Economic Development, served as a member of the Committee on Regulated Industries, and the Committee on Local and Consent Calendars. While serving on the Regulated Industries Committee, Straus chaired the Subcommittee on Energy Conservation and Efficiency, which developed a major bill that puts Texas on the cutting edge of energy efficiency. He also served on the Select Committee on Electric Generation Capacity and Environmental Effects, which studied the state's energy demand and expected growth for the next 50 years in order to develop long-term energy plans for Texas.

In the summer of 2007, Straus was presented the Texas Public Power Association's Public Official Award for leadership and contributions to public power. He was also given the Legislative Service Award by the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club for his work in the area of energy efficiency. Additionally, he received the Defender of the American Dream Award in 2008 from Americans for Prosperity for his record of commitment for protecting taxpayers. In 2008, *Texas Monthly* selected Straus as one of the 35 Texans who will shape the future of the state.

In honor of the 81st Legislature, TSTCI will hold its Legislative Conference and Reception in downtown Austin February 3. The conference and reception provide the opportunity for TSTCI member company representatives to personally visit with Texas legislators and their staff, and to educate our lawmakers on the importance of the services we provide, and enlighten them on issues faced by the rural telecommunications industry.

Registrations for the conference have been pouring in and it looks as if this may be the best-attended TSTCI Legislative Conference ever! Though the hotel cut-off date is past, there is still time to register for the conference. In fact, if you discover at the last minute that a change in your schedule will enable you to attend, we'll welcome you at breakfast Tuesday, February 3 and accept your registration then!

THANKS FROM TSTCI PAC!

Thanks to the members of the **Etex Golf Committee** – Charlotte Hewitt, Danny Johnson, Perry Mannis and Jennifer Wilson, for their investment in the TSTCI PAC! Their collective contribution of \$1000 will greatly assist the TSTCI PAC in supporting our friends in the Texas Legislature.

The Board of Directors of **South Plains Telephone Cooperative, Inc.** also showed their support, contributing a combined total of \$1,150! Thanks to SPTC Board Members Lonnie Arthur, Kenneth Ehler, Mike Fillingim, Gary Harrell, Dan Houchin, Joy Mimms, Bryan Patterson, Bill Sides and SteveSmith.

TSTCI again thanks **Nortex Communications** employees for their continuing support of the PAC. As mentioned last month, many Nortex employees committed to monthly investments to help TSTCI support candidates who uphold policies beneficial to the rural telecommunications industry.

Don't forget - As an added bonus for supporters this year, for each \$100 invested in TSTCI PAC between now and October 1, 2009, the investor's name will be entered into a drawing at the Annual Membership Meeting for a flat panel television! The more you invest, the better your chances of winning!

Remember –

Together Everyone Accomplishes More!

NEW FACES AT TSTCI MEMBER COMPANIES

TSTCI received news in December that **Sid Applin** was recently hired as the General Manager for Alenco Communications, Inc.

Also in December, **Amy Linzey** joined South Plains Telephone Cooperative, Inc., as Assistant General Manager.

TSTCI extends its congratulations to Sid and Amy. We look forward to working with them and hope to see them at upcoming TSTCI conferences.

News from Associate Members



UDP Appoints New Vice President

Claud Gilmer, President of UDP, Ltd., a leading billing and operational support systems provider in the telecommunications industry, recently announced that Doak Field has joined the company as its newest Vice President.

Heading up Sales and Business Development, Doak is responsible for formulating and implementing UDP's sales and marketing strategies. This includes identifying components from UDP's comprehensive suite of service offerings that are the best for each customer UDP serves.

"I am very excited about the opportunity to be a part of the UDP team. My job is to show prospective customers why partnering with UDP makes perfect business sense," said Field, "I also enjoy being out in the field taking care of existing customers. We have an excellent story to tell of our past 40+ successful years in the billing and OSS business. By working with and listening to our clients and proactively enhancing our solutions to surpass the changing needs of the industry, UDP can ensure that the solutions we offer continue to be the best for the next 40 years."

Doak has more than 19 years of telecom industry experience, including work with a number of long distance companies such as MCI, AT&T and Sprint. Doak's most recent endeavor was running the business group of Time Warner Cable in San Antonio, where he led his team in record-setting performance. Of particular note were the rapid expansion of Metro Ethernet sales, the introduction of Wi-Fi hot spots and the launch of the cable company's VoIP services for business customers. Doak was instrumental in building a successful business-class installation, service and support team that was solely dedicated to exceeding the expectations of the business-class cable customers.

Doak is a graduate of the Hankamer School of Business at Baylor University. While at Baylor, Doak captained the 1980 Baylor Bears Football team that went on to win the 1980 Southwest Conference Championship. Doak subsequently was drafted in the 1981 NFL draft and played as a linebacker in the NFL and USFL. Doak lives in Boerne, Texas, where he is involved in a number of charitable interests for the betterment of Kendall County.

About UDP

UDP has been serving the changing needs of the telecommunications industry since 1964, providing trusted billing and OSS solutions to telecommunications carriers of all sizes. UDP enables service providers to streamline the back-office, cut costs and provide innovative solutions in an increasingly competitive market. Our longevity and expertise in end-user and access billing means UDP customers have confidence that they are billing for every dollar earned. UDP provides full service solutions, as well as flexible components that easily integrate with existing software. Features like telecom-specific CRM, comprehensive analytical reporting, and web-based data retrieval give UDP's customers the tools they need to focus on the bottom line.

For more information, visit www.udp.com.

Tekno Telecom Announces a Revolutionary Product NetInterConnect for SS-7 Based Inter-Carrier Billing

Tekno Telecom, L.L.C., a hardware and software manufacturer of SS7, SIGTRAN, VoIP and ATM network monitoring systems under the NetQuest product flagship has just introduced its latest product, NetInterConnect.

“After years of watching carriers struggle with revenue losses as high as 20% per recent NECA industry publications due to essentially inaccurate billing data and the attendant problems of phantom traffic, bypass traffic, etc., it is satisfying to know that NetInterConnect has now empowered carriers with the advanced technology tools to recapture this lost revenue to achieve accurate and complete inter-carrier billing revenue and total profit maximization,” stated Darrell Merschak, national product manager for Tekno Telecom. “Tekno’s NetInterConnect is a means by which carriers can gain vital business billing intelligence needed to perform accurate and complete inter-carrier billing due to the rich source of information contained in SS7 ISUP CDR data.”

The beauty of NetInterConnect is being able to harness the power of SS7 data and gain access to SS7-based inter-carrier billing platform solutions very economically. Carriers use this service bureau-based solution to monitor and measure their network to quantify the amount of traffic terminating in their network for which they are not receiving compensation. Carriers are able to manage the problem with Tekno’s SS7 CDRs and reports identifying all phantom traffic and generate exception phantom traffic ISUP SS7 CDRs. Once the problem is quantified, carriers can then take “action” to monetize for complete revenue recovery and profit maximization!

For more information, visit Tekno Telecom’s website – www.teknotelecom.com.

Upcoming Events

January 2009

29 Texas PUC Open Meeting

February 2009

3 ***TSTCI Legislative Conference – Austin, Texas***
5 FCC Open Meeting
8-11 NTCA Annual Meeting & Expo – Long Beach, California
10 Texas PUC Open Meeting
26 Texas PUC Open Meeting

March 2009

4-6 ***TSTCI Plantmen’s Conference – San Antonio, Texas***
5 FCC Open Meeting
11 Texas PUC Open Meeting
27 Texas PUC Open Meeting