

TSTCI INFORMATION

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR TSTCI MEMBER COMPANIES

FEBRUARY 2009

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.

TSTCI TEAM

PRESIDENT'S CLUB

John Howard

DIRECTOR'S CLUB

Robbie Allen

Roger Hutton

Dwight McInturff

LONE STAR CLUB

Alvin Fuhrman

Gracie Fuhrman

Charlotte Hewitt

Danny Johnson

Danny Kellar

Perry Mannis

Ricky Martinez

Bryan Patterson

Jamey Wigley

Jennifer Wilson

CENTURY CLUB

Jason Allen

Lonnie Arthur

Lawana Drosche

Kenneth Ehler

Mike Fillingim

Bill Galyean

Jay Hagins

Gary Harrell

Jimmy Horton

Dan Houchin

Tim Humpert

Tonya Kelsey

Don Mimms

Claudia Morrow

Shane Parsons

Rocky Rocchio

Bill Sides

TSTCI LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE & RECEPTION ONE OF THE BEST EVER!

The TSTCI Legislative Conference and Reception in honor of the 81st Legislature will be marked as one of the most successful Legislative Conferences we have hosted in years. The conference was held February 3 at the Sheraton Austin Hotel, walking distance from the Texas State Capitol.



Attendees gathered for breakfast early the morning of Tuesday, February 3. TSTCI President, Kirk Petty, welcomed everyone and started the day with an invocation. He turned the podium over to TSTCI Legislative Committee Chair, Weldon R. Gray.



Weldon provided information on the task ahead – “sweeping the capitol” – and how this endeavor would be best accomplished. After sharing words of wisdom for those who would be visiting the Capitol, Weldon introduced TSTCI Legislative Advocate, Louis Bacarisse.



Louis gave attendees some insight into how business is run at the capitol and explained to members to not be disappointed if they were not able to visit a legislator in person, to be satisfied with visiting with their staff. After all, legislator's staff members are the ones responsible for keeping the legislators informed on important issues. Louis then introduced our guest speaker of the morning, Representative Joe Heflin.



Representative Heflin serves House District 85, which includes Borden, Crosby, Fisher, Floyd, Garza, Glasscock, Hale, Howard, Jones, Kent, Lynn, Irion, Reagan, Sterling, Stonewall, and Terry counties. His district includes the service areas of several TSTCI member companies. Representing a rural area, Representative Heflin understands the issues that face

TSTCI member companies. Representative Heflin reiterated the fact that legislators' staff members are the “eyes and ears” for those they work for and encouraged members to visit with staffers.

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TSTCI TEAM

CENTURY CLUB CONT'D

Steve Smith
Tommy Swaringen
Bonnie Taylor
Scott Thompson
Lori Vergin
Jim Whitefield

CAUCUS CLUB

Shana Cheyne
Ray Faubus
Twila Key
Philip McCormick

PAC CLUB

Deborah Allen
Joey Anderson
Faith Askew
Lupe Barrera
Barbara Bogart
Jeremy Cabler
Mike Cargile
Stefanie Ericsson
Joey Fincher
Elias Fraga
Terry Gilbert
Jodi Gonzalez
Lance Harris
Doug Hindman
Mack Isaacs
Vanessa McGalliard
Carolyn McPherson
Willie Ortiz
Lisa Paschall
Jerry Roberts
Alan Rohmer
Roy Sanchez, Jr.
Jason Slaton
Richard Stewart
Mitzi Taylor
Stoney Taylor
Andy Vargas

With everyone energized by a delicious breakfast, it was time to visit the Capitol! Member company representatives were encouraged to visit their own Senators and Representatives, as well as introduce themselves and the rural telecommunications industry to legislators whose districts do not include rural telephone company or cooperative service areas.

Attendees returned to the Sheraton to discuss their visits with each other over lunch. Many reported having a very busy morning, visiting as many as six offices. After replenishing their energy levels, it was back to the Capitol to finish up the remaining visits.

At 6:00 p.m., the doors to the Capitol View Terrace opened for TSTCI's Reception in Honor of the 81st Legislature. The reception provided a fantastic opportunity for member company representatives to visit with legislators in a relaxed atmosphere. We realize this is a busy time for our legislators and truly appreciate those who took time from their schedules to attend the reception.

With all the wonderful food, great company, and Austin's country music talent, **Cheyenne**, providing the entertainment, it was an evening to remember!



During intermissions, **Carrie Fussell**, a student at the University of Texas, kept the reception lively, playing solo acoustic guitar and singing.

A popular event at the TSTCI Legislative Reception is the scholarship drawing. TSTCI member companies donate the funds for the scholarships, and legislators attending the reception are provided the opportunity to "put their name in the hat" for a drawing to win the privilege of choosing a school to receive the scholarship funds. TSTCI members donated a total of thirteen \$1,000 scholarships. TSTCI wishes to extend its appreciation to the companies whose donations make this event possible. As we know, our children are our future, and anything that benefits their education is definitely worthwhile!

As the evening came to an end, it was time to draw names from the hat! TSTCI President, Kirk Petty and TSTCI Legislative Chair, Weldon R. Gray, assisted by Miss Carrie Fussell, drew and announced the names of the winners. Letters will be mailed to the winners with a form for designating the school of their choice. Once completed forms are received, the funds will be mailed to the chosen schools.

TSTCI appreciates the support of our member companies who made this conference possible. Thank you all for representing the rural telecommunications industry at our state Capitol!

TSTCI Reception in Honor of the 81st Legislature



SCHOLARSHIPS TO BE AWARDED IN HONOR OF THE 81ST TEXAS LEGISLATURE

OUR SPONSORS

GOLD

Poka Lambro Telephone Coop., Inc.

David McEndree, CEO
P.O. Box 1340
Tahoka, Texas 78373
806.924.7234

SILVER

Eastex Telephone Coop., Inc.

Allen Dorman, General Manager
P.O. Box 150
Henderson, Texas 75653
903.854.1000

BRONZE

Central Texas Telephone Coop., Inc.

Jamey Wigley, General Manager
P.O. Box 627
Goldthwaite, Texas 76844
325.648.2237

Coleman County Telephone Coop., Inc.

Tim J. Humpert, General Manager
P.O. Box 608
Santa Anna, Texas 76878
325.348.3124

Community Telephone Company, Inc.

Cliff Humpert, Interim Manager
P.O. Box 130
Windthorst, Texas 76389
940.423.6201

Lipan Telephone Company, Inc.

John Howard, President
P.O. Box 187
Lipan, Texas 76462
254.646.2211

Nortex Communications, Inc.

Alvin M. Fuhrman, President & G.M.
P.O. Drawer 597
Muenster, Texas 76252
940.759.2251

Santa Rosa Telephone Coop., Inc.

Kirk Petty, General Manager
P.O. Box 2128
Vernon, Texas 76385
940.886.2217

Taylor Telephone Coop., Inc.

Thomas Hyde, General Manager
P.O. Box 370
Merkel, Texas 79536
325.846.4111

Wes-Tex Telephone Coop., Inc.

Bob Wilson, Manager
P.O. Box 280
Stanton, Texas 79782-0280
432.756.3393

CONGRATULATIONS!

NTCA ANNOUNCES 2009 NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Sandy Vandevender, Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Elected Vice President

The National Telecommunications Cooperative (NTCA) Board of Directors elected its 2009 officers at the association's annual meeting in Long Beach, California last week.

Harry Thomas, President of the Board of Directors at Venture Communications Cooperative (Highmore, SD), was elected board President. Sandy Vandevender, Executive Vice President and General Manager of Five Area Telephone Cooperative (Muleshoe, TX), was elected Vice President, and Curley P. Higgins, Chief Executive Officer of Horry Telephone Cooperative (Conway, SC), was elected Secretary-Treasurer.

"NTCA is honored to have these outstanding professionals serve as officers on our board of directors," said NTCA Chief Executive Officer Michael E. Brunner. "Each is dedicated to the rural telecom industry and to supporting the association in all its efforts, and I look forward to working with this distinguished group on behalf of our members."

The board also seated two new members, James M. Dauby of PSC (St. Meinrad, IN) and Allen Russ of Atlantic Telephone Membership Corporation (Shallotte, NC). Dauby replaces outgoing board member and immediate past President, Chris A. Bonner (Pulaski-White Rural Telephone, Star City, IN). Russ was elected by NTCA's Region 1 voting members to replace outgoing member Dennis Wallace, who recently retired from Tri-County Telephone Membership (Belhaven, NC).

Joining the aforementioned members on the NTCA board are: Loren Duerksen (Diller Telephone Company, Diller, NE); Terry Force (Blue Valley Tele-Communications, Home, KS); Gregory A. Hale (Logan Telephone Cooperative, Auburn, KY); Kevin Hranicka (Van Buren Telephone, Keosauqua, IA); Donald D. Miller (Northwest Telephone Cooperative Association, Havelock, IA); Mitchell A. Moore (Clear Creek Mutual Telephone, Oregon City, OR) and William Rohde (Mark Twain Rural Telephone, Hurland, MO).

About NTCA

The National Telecommunications Cooperative Association is the premier association representing more than 580 locally owned and controlled telecommunications cooperatives and commercial companies throughout rural and small-town America. NTCA provides its members with legislative, regulatory and industry representation, meetings, publications and educational programs, and an array of employee benefit programs. For more information, visit www.ntca.org.

See you at the

TSTCI PLANTMEN'S CONFERENCE
March 4-6
The Westin Riverwalk Hotel
San Antonio, Texas

Questions about the conference?

Call Paula Groves at (512) 343-2587 or email paula@tstci.org

THANKS FROM TSTCI PAC!

A big thank you goes out to the employees of **Cap Rock Telephone Cooperative, Inc.** They banded together and collectively contributed a total of \$1,760 this month!

Thanks also to **Nortex Communications** employees for their continuing support of the PAC. Nortex employees have been making monthly investments in support of protecting the interests of the rural telecommunications industry.

BONUS!!!- 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! Visit www.tstci.org and click on the "PAC & Grassroots" button for information on investing in TSTCI PAC.

Remember –

Together **E**veryone **A**ccomplishes **M**ore!

News from Associate Members

Mapcom Announces the Release of M4 Solutions Version 8

Added capabilities enhance telecommunications using M4's Geographic Operations System (GOS) platform.

Mapcom Systems has released the newest version in its line of geographical operations management (GOS) software, M4 Solutions. The launch of M4 Solutions Version 8.0 provides telecommunications providers even greater opportunities to grow revenues, gain efficiency and improve workflow in the day-to-day design, planning and operation of fiber, copper and coax network infrastructures.

The latest developments include numerous enhancements to the M4 Fiber Module, allowing users to more efficiently and effectively track FTTH and long-haul fiber routes. Advancements include extra splicing functionality through fiber complements, fiber links which allow tracing through multiple segments of fiber on multiple maps, interactively-generated splice diagrams, and numerous improvements to the Network Equipment Manager module. In addition, the development of M4 Boundary Tools allows for accurate cost allocation of fiber across multiple jurisdictions and tax maps.

“The complexity of our customers’ fiber infrastructure is ever-increasing,” said company president John Granger. “It is important to keep our customer base ahead of the curve by providing them with the best mission-critical tools to build and manage their networks. These advancements build on Mapcom’s commitment to provide the telecommunications industry with cutting-edge technology so that they can run their operations more efficiently and more effectively, while also enhancing customer service,” he explained.

In addition, the release marks the addition of M4 Mapsync and M4 Conduit Manager. M4 Mapsync allows users to download and edit copies of their project and sync changes to the live project remotely. Key features in M4 Conduit Manager enable users to assign and manage cables within conduit and provide instant access to capacity and fill rate information.

“For over 35 years, we have evolved our software to meet the demands of our customers and take them one step further. We see real results that M4 is reducing our customers’ operational costs significantly while enabling them to better compete in today’s competitive telecommunications world,” added Granger.

About Mapcom Systems

Mapcom Systems is the developer of M4 Solutions – a map-based Geographical Operations System (GOS) software suite that allows telecommunications providers to enhance their information flow by displaying data in a geographic view. The open-system approach enables users to integrate and correlate data from existing billing, accounting, GPS tracking and network monitoring applications with a geographically-correct land base map of all network elements in M4. Since 1971, Mapcom has developed one of the strongest reputations in the industry working with independents, cooperatives, fiber communities, and campus telecommunications providers of all sizes across North America and the Caribbean.

For more information, visit the Mapcom website at www.mapcom.com.

UDP Partners with CSS to Offer Dispute Resolution and Collections Services for Intercarrier Compensation



UDP, Ltd., a billing and operational support systems provider in the telecommunications industry, and Creative Support Solutions (CSS), a leading operational support system consultant to communications service providers, have announced a comprehensive offering for dispute resolution and the collection of intercarrier compensation charges.

Tracking payments and handling disputes can be labor intensive for carriers. The new dispute resolution and collections offering, a feature of UDP's GALAXY™ access billing service, saves customers valuable time and allows them to focus on growing their business rather than dealing with multiple carriers to collect receivables. "This new option expands UDP's carrier access billing service, making it easier than ever for carriers to collect the compensation owed to them," said Claud Gilmer, President of UDP.

Gilmer added, "UDP is proud to be working closely with CSS on our collections offering. Marnell Robertson and her team have the industry knowledge and dedication to customer service that UDP looks for in a partner."

Says Robertson, "CSS is looking forward to a great working relationship with UDP in this endeavor. UDP has again show itself to be customer focused in finding creative and effective ways to serve its clients.

For more information, visit UDP online at www.udp.com, and Creative Support Solutions' website at www.solutionsbycss.com.

Upcoming Events

March 2009

- 4-6** *TSTCI Plantmen's Conference – San Antonio, Texas*
- 5 FCC Open Meeting
- 11 Texas PUC Open Meeting
- 22-25 NTCA Legislative & Policy Conference – Washington, DC
- 27 Texas PUC Open Meeting

April 2009

- 7-9 Texas Communications EXPO 2009 – Belton, TX
- 8 FCC Open Meeting
- 9 Texas PUC Open Meeting
- 23 Texas PUC Open Meeting

May 2009

- 4-6 OPASTCO Legislative & Regulatory Conference – Washington, DC
- 7 Texas PUC Open Meeting
- 14 FCC Open Meeting
- 21 Texas PUC Open Meeting