

TSTCI INFORMATION

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR TSTCI MEMBER COMPANIES

JANUARY 2010

www.tstci.org

Texans Helping Texans

Volume XIV, No. 1

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

LONE STAR CLUB

Debbie Broyles
Bill Galyean

CENTURY CLUB

Charlie Cano
Shana Cheyne
Sommer Edge
Jay Hagins
Charlotte Hewitt
Roger Hutton
Thomas Hyde
Danny Johnson
Danny Kellar
Tonya Kelsey
Perry Mannis
Ricky Martinez
Shane Parsons
Jeremy Seahorn
Tommy Swearingen
Bonnie Taylor
Jim Whitefield
Jennifer Wilson

CAUCUS CLUB

Scotty Hart
Twila Key
Philip McCormick
Vanessa McGalliard

Together Everyone Accomplishes More!

With primary elections on the horizon, the TSTCI Distribution Committee recently met and approved campaign support for several candidates who have a history of supporting good rural policy. The TSTCI PAC contributed to campaign funds for Rep. Tommy Merritt (Dist. 7), Rep. Chuck Hopson (Dist. 11), Rep. Fred Brown (Dist. 14), Rep. Edmund Kuempel (Dist. 44), Rep. Patrick Rose (Dist. 45), Rep. Burt Solomons (Dist. 63), Rep. Delwin Jones (Dist. 83) and Rep. Charlie Geren (Dist. 99).

Support of these candidates was made possible through individual investments in the TSTCI PAC Fund. Investing in TSTCI PAC enables us to support candidates that support our industry.

The TSTCI Board of Directors wishes to thank the **Etex Golf Committee**, who recently chose to designate funds from their golf tournament to the TSTCI PAC. The Etex Golf Committee members are **Danny Kellar, Danny Johnson, Charlie Cano, Perry Mannis, Jeremy Seahorn, Jennifer Wilson, Charlotte Hewitt and Sommer Edge.**

The employees of **Nortex Communications** began monthly investments in the TSTCI PAC last year and have continued the program this year.

The TSTCI PAC is a non-partisan political action committee created by TSTCI to support the members of the Texas Legislature who support rural telephony. All TSTCI members are encouraged to become involved in the process and invest in TSTCI PAC for the future of our industry.

As an added incentive, we are continuing the reward program for investors. Awards for various levels of investment will be presented at the Annual Membership Meeting. Information on TSTCI PAC and the investment levels is available on our website. Just visit www.tstci.org and click on the "PAC & Grassroots" button. Additionally, for each \$100 an individual invests in the TSTCI PAC between now and October 1, 2010, the investor's name will be entered into a drawing at the Annual Membership Meeting for a special grand prize! The more you invest, the better your chances of winning!

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TSTCI COMMITTEES IN ACTION!

Several TSTCI committees have been hard at work on various issues affecting our members. We appreciate the hard work and the time these individuals contribute in support of the rural telecommunications industry.

The **TSTCI Legislative Committee** recently met via conference call to discuss the upcoming Sunset Commission review of PURA. Committee members will be meeting face-to-face in Dallas on February 10 to develop a strategy for our Association to participate in the Sunset review process.

The **TSTCI Program Planning Committee** and the **TSTCI Marketing Committee** conducted a joint conference call this month to discuss the possibility of adding a sales-focused session to the annual TSTCI Finance/Marketing/Commercial Conference. As a result of the discussion, a survey was sent to members to determine the level of interest in adding the session for our attendees.

The TSTCI **Regulatory Committee** recently reviewed and provided input on comments to be filed at both the state and federal level concerning issues that affect our members.

Our committees are a valuable asset. The TSTCI Board of Directors and staff appreciate the commitment these individuals have made on behalf of our industry.

See you at the

TSTCI PLANTMEN'S CONFERENCE

March 3-5

**The Sheraton Hotel
Fort Worth, Texas**

Register online at www.tstci.org

Questions about the conference?

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

News from Associate Members

TSTCI Board Welcomes New Associate Member

TSTCI welcomes our newest Associate Member, **Sales and Support Representatives, LLC**, a manufacturers representative with a focus on Test and Measurement, OSP enclosures and Access products. Visit them online at www.sasrep.com or call 512-733-9625. We look forward to meeting President/Owner Scott Savens at upcoming TSTCI conferences.

GVNW Announces Seminars for 2010

- June 17, 2010 – Financial Seminar, Portland, Oregon
- August 18-19, 2010 – Executive Seminar, San Antonio, Texas
- August 25-26, 2010 – Executive Seminar, Portland, Oregon

Information on the seminars is available on their website: www.gvnw.com.

HughesNet Offers DSL Solution for Hard-to-Reach Customers

For all those consumers that cannot get DSL services Hughes has the solution for you - *Satellite Internet through you*. HughesNet offers 6 service plans from 1Mb up to 5 Mb. Our 24/7 call centers ensure that your customers can get technical support and service when needed. Purchase or leasing programs available to best suit your customers. With HughesNet, there's no shortage of bandwidth. Hughes has committed to a new satellite that will have 10 times the capacity of our current satellite. Advantages for you? No inventory to stock and Hughes takes care of the installations! For more information on partnering with Hughes, contact Shari Whiteman at 512-293-9481.

CHR Solutions Plays Key Role in ARRA BTOP Grant Award

SDN Communications of Sioux Falls, South Dakota has been awarded a grant from the NTIA's Broadband Technologies Opportunities Program (BTOP). The program is one of the broadband initiatives created as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The \$20 million grant award is the result of a collaborative effort between SDN Communications and CHR Solutions.

Martin Group, which merged with CHR Solutions in September, provided grant application submission assistance for SDN's middle-mile project. The project will deliver 10Mbs service to community anchor institutions, including schools, hospitals, libraries and various government organizations across SDN's Internet backbone. SDN's middle-mile infrastructure will consist of 359 route miles of fiber to nearly 305 anchor institutions. The three-year project is scheduled to begin this year.

"CHR played a key role in SDN Communications' application winning a grant in the first round," says SDN CEO Mark Shlanta. "The fact that SDN was the first to be named in the top 1 percent of the applications speaks to the quality of work by CHR. They brought all the necessary resources to the table and participated as a team member rather than a third party vendor."

JSI Announces Dates for 2010 Management Seminars

John Staurulakis, Inc. (JSI) has announced the dates for its 2010 Management Seminars, as follows:

- Thurs.-Fri., April 22-23 – Airport Marriott, Minneapolis MN
- Thurs.-Fri., April 29-30 – Marriott Rivercenter, San Antonio, TX
- Mon.-Tues., May 3-4 – Airport Marriott, Atlanta, GA

This year's sessions come as the telecom industry as a whole and independent providers in particular await the results of the FCC's call for comments for its mid-March report to Congress on a National Broadband Plan. Policymakers and regulators seek to keep pace with the country's all-out rush to a broadband environment - in technology as well as services. The transition of the network and associated intercarrier compensation and universal service mechanisms could well spell a true paradigm shift for community based telecom providers and others on whom rural Americans depend for service.

The Management Seminars, JSI's signature educational offering, begin at 1:00 p.m. the first day, and run from 8:30 a.m. until noon the following day. JSI has designed its seminar agenda around the technological, policy, economic, financial, and competitive developments that will characterize the industry's shift to an IP-based national network. Among the presenters this year are Manny Staurulakis, JSI president; Steve Meltzer, senior vice president; John Kuykendall, vice president-regulatory; and Douglas Meredith, director-economics and policy. The cost of the seminars is \$749 for the first registrant and \$695 for each additional registrant.

JSI will post content and registration information on its website in the next week or so, and mail the information to clients and others. You can register by mail, fax, or online. For more information, contact Leah Yoakum, seminar administrator, at lyoakum@jsitel.com or 301-459-7590.

Upcoming Events

January 2010

- 20 FCC Open Commission Meeting
- 29 Texas PUC Open Meeting
- 31 NTCA Annual Meeting & EXPO – Tampa, Florida

February 2010

- 1-3 NTCA Annual Meeting & EXPO – Tampa, Florida (*continued*)
- 11 Texas PUC Open Meeting
- 22-24 DIGTESS Damage Prevention Summit – Mesquite, Texas
- 25 Texas PUC Open Meeting

March 2010

- 3-5 TSTCI Plantmen's Conference – Fort Worth, Texas**
- 11 Texas PUC Open Meeting
- 25 Texas PUC Open Meeting (CREZ Light Only)