

TSTCI INFORMATION

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR TSTCI MEMBER COMPANIES

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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.

Dear TSTCI Members,

TSTCI held a very important membership meeting on January 12 in Dallas to discuss proposed small company legislation. Considering the meeting was held on such short notice, we were very pleased with the turnout and appreciated the attendees' input.

TSTCI wants to make every effort to ensure that all TSTCI member companies have the chance to voice any concerns or questions whenever important legislative issues arise. As you know, any decisions that are made will affect all small companies. That is why your input is so valuable. These are very critical times for our industry. With the possible rewrite of PURA, it is very important for everyone to be involved.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding any legislative issue, please don't hesitate to contact any member of the TSTCI Board of Directors, TSTCI Legislative Committee Chairmen Bob Wilson and Weldon R. Gray, or Director of Member Services, Cammie Hughes.

Thank you for your support and we look forward to seeing you at the 2005 Legislative Conference.

*Sincerely,
Cammie Hughes
Director – Member Services*

XIT RURAL TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE NAMES NEW MANAGEMENT

Last month, Jimmy White retired as General Manager of XIT Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc. We wish Jimmy much happiness in his new "career" as a retiree.

Effective January 1, 2005, Darrell F. Dennis became XIT's General Manager. Kathy Duggan is now Assistant General Manager in charge of Inside Operations and Jeff Harlow is Assistant General Manager in charge of Outside Operations. Congratulations to all!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS - UPCOMING TSTCI MEETINGS

TSTCI Legislative Conference (*Open Only to TSTCI Member Telephone Companies*)

The TSTCI Legislative Conference is fast approaching. On February 8, a number of TSTCI members will convene in Austin to review the important Texas legislative issues and join together to meet with legislators. Lobbying effort gains strength in numbers. Show that you are committed to protecting the rural telephone company positions on the important issues before the state legislature. If you haven't already registered and made plans to attend, do it now! Though the deadline for the discounted hotel rate has passed, there is still time to register for the conference. To register, please contact Martha Shepperd in the TSTCI Dallas office at 972-243-8705 (e-mail: martha.shepperd@chrsolutions.com). If you have any questions regarding the conference, please contact Cammie Hughes at (512) 343-2587 (e-mail: cammie.hughes@chrsolutions.com).

TSTCI Plantmen's Conference

The Annual Plantmen's Conference will be here before you know it. It will be held March 2-4 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in San Antonio. Be sure to call the hotel and send your registration now so that you won't miss the opportunity to hear about a number of relevant topics. A variety of speakers will discuss new technologies like WiMAX, WiFi and Broadband Over Powerline; Fraud and How it Affects Your Operation; Voice Over IP (VOIP); and the new TXDOT rules. Conference favorite Don McCarty will focus on Paired Copper Conductors and Their Role in DSL Transport. You will have the opportunity to ask questions and share information with your colleagues at the roundtable interactive sessions on Construction Issues, I&R and Central Office issues. You also don't want to miss the tabletop trade show on Wednesday, your chance to discuss the latest products and services for your telcos.

So don't wait - make your arrangements today. The conference agenda and registration forms are available on the TSTCI website: www.tstci.org. Exhibitor information is available from Martha Shepperd in the TSTCI Dallas office, 972-243-8705 (e-mail: martha.shepperd@chrsolutions.com).

Questions on any of the meetings?

Contact Martha Shepperd at 972-243-8705 (martha.shepperd@chrsolutions.com) or Ann Weinberg at 703-237-1644 (ann.weinberg@chrsolutions.com).

FCC CHAIRMAN POWELL SUBMITS RESIGNATION

On January 21, FCC Chairman Michael Powell submitted a letter to the President informing him of his intention to step down as a commissioner and chairman sometime in March.

In a statement from Powell on leaving the FCC, he said, "Having completed a bold and aggressive agenda, it is time for me to pursue other opportunities and let someone else take the reins of the agency. During my tenure, we worked to get the law right in order to stimulate innovative technology that puts more power in the hands of the American people, giving them greater choices that enrich their lives. Evidence of our success can be seen increasingly in the offices, the automobiles and the living rooms of the American consumer."

Powell's statement did not provide the reason behind this decision, nor did he indicate what his future plans are.

CAP ROCK TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE TO DELIVER IP TRIPLE-PLAY SERVICES TO NEW LAKESHORE DEVELOPMENT

Optical Solutions Inc., recently announced that **Cap Rock Telephone Cooperative** of Spur, Texas, has selected the FiberPath 500 FTTP system for a 4500-acre greenfield deployment surrounding a popular man-made lake.

Cap Rock, so-named for the area's rocky transition from plains to hill country, serves 5,000 access lines across 4,800 square miles of West Texas. The cooperative's customer base has traditionally included ranchers and farmers, but the recent creation of Lake Alan Henry – an outflow of the Brazos River – has sparked new development in the area. In the months ahead, Lake Alan Henry will become site to as many as 500 new homes, and Cap Rock plans to serve them with state-of-the-art IP entertainment and communications services.

“With FiberPath we can follow a ‘pay as you grow’ deployment strategy, which makes efficient use of our resources,” said Barak Harlan, Cap Rock's lead engineer and project coordinator. “When a new customer signs up for services, we can simply splice them into the remote cabinet or add a splitter, then requisition an ONT for the side of the home. If we had gone with copper, we'd have had to invest in a fully equipped cabinet from the outset, and bear the expense and maintenance burden of large amounts of unused copper in the air.”

Cap Rock is deploying Optical Solutions' FiberPath 500, the telco industry's first gigabit Ethernet PON solution for the local access market. FiberPath 500 is capable of delivering state-of-the-art IPTV, 100-plus Mbps data speeds and multiple telephone lines. The system is fully compliant with ITU FSAN standards, and is currently operating in more than 120 communities nationwide.

“Our GPON point-to-multipoint architecture provides many economical advantages for service providers like Cap Rock,” said Optical Solutions President and CEO Mike Dagenais. “Provisioning costs are reduced, longer reach is achieved, minimal fiber is required, and operational costs are dramatically lowered by eliminating expensive active electronics in the outside plant.”

Cap Rock will phase-in FTTP service to Lake Alan Henry residents starting this month. The ILEC will offer IPTV, high-speed data and multiple voice lines.

To learn more about Optical Solutions, please visit www.opticalsolutions.com.

NEW NECA BOARD MEMBERS

The Board of Directors of NECA has elected Nolan Moulle, Jr., Vice President-Revenues of CenturyTel in Monroe, Louisiana, as Board Chairman. Moulle has been a member of the NECA Board since January 2001 and represents Subset 2.

Robert Eddy, President of Sherburne County Rural Telephone Company in Big Lake, Minnesota, was elected Vice-Chairman. Mr. Eddy has been a member of the NECA Board since 2000 and represents Subset 3.

CHR SOLUTIONS BROADENS NEXT GENERATION IP NETWORK EXPERTISE

CHR Solutions, a professional firm providing engineering and consulting services in the telecommunications field, is pleased to announce that Ted Summers has joined CHR Solutions as Director of Information Technology and Video Services.

Summers will work with CHR clients to implement the latest IP technologies, including soft switching platforms, IP managed networks, IP headends, digital television, QOS, public IP networks, and video design and transport.

“We are very excited to welcome Ted to CHR. His intimate knowledge of small telephone company operations, coupled with his vast knowledge of next generation and converged technologies, will bring great value to our clients,” said C. Roger Hutton, President/CEO of CHR Solutions.

Summers comes to CHR after 32 years of experience in the telecommunications industry, with an emphasis on data and next generation networks. Prior to joining CHR, he spent 17 years at Livingston Telephone Company as the Inside Plant Supervisor. He was responsible for the implementation of many of the company’s cutting-edge technologies, including their present VoIP network. Before working at Livingston, Summers worked at GTE and for the United States Air Force.

Summers also has hands-on experience with the design and implementation of security system installations, business phone systems, IP PBX systems, data and carrier department Class 4-5 switches, fiber optic networks, development of ATM backbones and Ethernet networks, OSP, ISP, cable television, data and video over xDSL/ADSL/ADSL2 and SHDSL. He is also proficient in the provisioning and maintenance of headend equipment, video middleware systems and residential gateways.

Upcoming Events

January 2005

30-Feb 1 USTA Telecom Leadership Conference – Washington, DC

February 2005

2 ORCA Rural Policy Symposium – Austin, TX

2 TTA Legislative Reception – Austin, TX

7 TACC Director Development Program – Amarillo, TX

8 TSTCI Legislative Conference (*Open to Member Telephone Companies Only*)

13-15 NTCA Annual Meeting & Expo – San Antonio, TX

March 2005

2-4 TSTCI Plantmen’s Conference – San Antonio, TX

13-15 NTCA Telecom Executive Forum – Lake Buena Vista, FL

13-16 TACC/CoBank Joint Cooperative Meeting – Galveston, TX