



### This Week's Headlines

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Do you have an announcement for *People & Companies*? Send an e-mail ([info@mnta.org](mailto:info@mnta.org)) or fax

March 7, 2008

## MTA UPDATE

### Unanimous Vote for Merger

MTA members at its annual meeting on March 3, 2008 voted unanimously to approve a proposal to merge with MART (Minnesota Association for Rural Telecom). The MART members also voted unanimously to approve the merger. The combined organization will retain the MTA moniker. Randy Young, President/CEO of MART will be the CEO of the new Alliance. The Board of Directors selected Michael Nowick, MTA President, as Director of Member services. The organization will change its logo to reflect the combined organization and will be headquartered at the MTA's current location in St. Paul.

The Alliance said it will continue to host the nation's largest state telecom trade show with plans underway for the MTA 100<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention in March 2009 in Minneapolis.

Members also voted to elect directors to the board. Paul Hoge of Crosslake Communications, Ronald Laqua of Halstad Telephone Company, Kevin Larson of Consolidated Telecommunications Company and Cheryl Scapanski of Benton Cooperative Telephone Company were elected to a three-year term. Glenn Miller from Midwest Data will serve a one-year term as the board representative from the associate members. Paul Hoff of Onvoy Voice Services was elected to serve a one-year term as the telecommunications carrier board representative. 1,596 people attended the Convention.

### 21<sup>st</sup> Century Award Recipients

During the annual meeting, the MTA presented the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Awards winners. This year's recipients are: Humanitarian Award presented to Steven R. Kohls, central office switching and network technician for Lakedale Communications; the Industry Leadership Award was presented to Anthony V. Mayer, general manager of West Central Telephone Association; Public Service Award was presented to Derek Groth, Marketing-Public Relations Supervisor for Lakedale Communications and Gary Johnson, Chief Operating Officer for Paul Bunyan Rural Telephone Cooperative; and Tom Farm, Principal and head of the telecom group for Olsen Thielen CPAs, received the

(651-291-2795) to MTA.

### **Save These Dates**

**MTA Golf Day**  
**July 7, 2008**

### **Stat of the Week**

One in every 100 adults is in jail or prison, according to a new report by the Pew Center on the States.

### **WEEKLY BULLETIN**

Is there someone in your organization who you would like to add to the distribution list? Send their name, company, and e-mail address to [info@mnta.org](mailto:info@mnta.org) and we'll add them to the list.

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MTA Officers: John Finke, Chairman; Robert K. Eddy, Vice Chairman; Paul Freude, Secretary-Treasurer; Michael J. Nowick, President

Weekly Bulletin editor:

Associate Member Industry Leadership Award. Consolidated Telecommunications Company, Brainerd, received the Economic Development Award.

This year's safety award winners are: Small Company --Gardonville Cooperative Telephone Association, Gardonville; Medium Company -- Alliance Communications, Garretson, SD; Large Company-- Hutchinson Telephone Company, Hutchinson. The Safety Director's Award was presented to Connections Etc., and Tom Campbell, from Connections Etc., received the Safety Leadership Award.

### **Viodi TV Coverage On Web Site**

Video highlights from the convention events, which were produced by Viodi TV and shown on the in-house television channels for the Hyatt and Millennium Hotels, will be available next week on the MTA Web site [www.mnta.org](http://www.mnta.org). Watch for the announcement and tell your co-workers to tune in to see what they missed.

## **INDUSTRY UPDATE**

### **Senate Passes MTA Bill, House Moves it Forward**

The Minnesota Senate this week passed the MTA bill that would repeal obsolete rules, (SF 2262). This legislation is the result of efforts by the rewrite subcommittee of the MTA Legislative Committee. The subcommittee met with regulators this past year and reviewed all 54 rules in Chapter 7810. They agreed that 22 of the current rules were outdated. The subcommittee and regulatory staffs agreed on proposed new language for 14 of the rules. The rewritten rules will be submitted to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) with a request to open a rulemaking docket to adopt the language of the rewritten rules. The remaining rules are obsolete and are being repealed in SF 2262. The House companion bill (HF 2414) was also heard in the House Telecom, Regulation & Infrastructure division this week and passed to the Commerce and Labor Committee for further action.

### **Statewide Video Study Passes**

The House Telecom Regulation & Infrastructure Division at its final scheduled meeting of this session surprised cable companies by taking the statewide video franchising bill, HF 2351 from the table. The division deleted the bill's language and adopted a new delete-all amendment. It directs the Department of Commerce to contract for a study of at least three states that have already adopted state-wide authorized franchising. The purpose of the study is to gather information on the impact state-wide authorization of franchises has had on creating competition, creating new investment and its affect on local government and local programming. The report would be due to the legislature by February 1, 2009. The Senate will have until March 14<sup>th</sup> to act on the companion bill.

## INDUSTRY UPDATE

### **Paul Bunyan Buying Blackduck Telephone**

Paul Bunyan Rural Telephone Cooperative has signed a letter of intent to purchase Blackduck Telephone Company and Blackduck Cablevision Inc., the companies announced recently.

"This purchase, when completed, will strengthen our cooperative and continue to bring advanced telecommunication services for the residents and businesses of Blackduck," said Paul Freude, Paul Bunyan's Chief Executive Officer and General Manager.

Blackduck Telephone Company has served the Blackduck area since 1903 and Ash River since 1998. The service area covers about 1,200 square miles and includes Blackduck, Hines and Ash River. Blackduck Telephone Company and Blackduck Cablevision Inc. offer local and long distance service, Internet service and cable television.

### **BEVCOMM Buying Charter's Cable Systems**

BEVCOMM announced this week that it has entered into an agreement to acquire cable television systems serving approximately 1,000 video customers from Charter Communications in Blue Earth and Elmore, pending regulatory approval. BEVCOMM anticipates that it will begin cable operations in the two communities around August 1, 2008.

Bill Eckles, BEVCOMM Chief Executive Officer said, "This acquisition provides us with a wonderful opportunity to provide television services to our current customers within Blue Earth and Elmore, while we continue with our plan to upgrade our telecommunications plant within the communities to offer customers a high quality interactive digital television service in the future. BEVCOMM and Charter will work closely over the next few months to ensure a smooth transition for all customers."

### **FCC Order: Promote Transition to Digital TV**

The Federal Communications Commission this week released the DTV Consumer Education Order requiring television broadcasters, Multi-Channel Video Programming Distributors (MVPDs), telecommunications carriers, retailers, and manufacturers to promote awareness of the nation's transition to digital television. The Nation's full-power television stations will transition from analog broadcast television service to digital broadcast television service on February 17, 2009. The FCC said in a release that the educational efforts of these diverse groups are intended to provide consumers with clear and correct information about the DTV transition. Here are the key requirements in the order:

- Telecommunications companies participating in the Low Income Federal Universal Service Program must provide notice of the transition in their monthly customer billing

statements to their low income customers and potential customers.

- Broadcasters must provide on-air information to their viewers about the DTV transition, and have the flexibility to comply with one of three alternative sets of rules to best serve their widely divergent communities. Broadcasters must report these efforts, on a quarterly basis, to the Commission and the public.

### **Qwest Looking to Replace Wireless Partner**

Qwest has held meeting with several telecom carriers, most recently AT&T, about replacing Sprint as its wireless partner. Qwest CEO Edward Mueller said he is considering deals that would give Qwest customers access to new mobile devices that can surf the Internet at higher speeds.

### **FCC & REGULATORY FILINGS**

**MARCH 31: LIFELINE & LINK-UP WORKSHEET DUE:** FCC FORM 497, last day to submit revisions to Form 497 for 2006 and all months prior to January 2007

**MARCH 31: UNIVERSAL SERVICE QUARTERLY LINE COUNT UPDATE:** FCC FORM 507, line count updates are required to recalculate a carrier's per-line universal service support and covers lines served as of September 30, 2007

**MARCH 31: COMPETITIVE CARRIER LINE COUNT QUARTERLY REPORT:** FCC FORM 525, competitive eligible telecommunication carriers are eligible to receive high-cost support if they serve lines in an incumbent LECs service area, and that incumbent carrier receives high-cost support. The report covers lines served as of September 30, 2007

**MARCH 31: PROJECTED ANNUAL COMMON LINE REVENUE REQUIREMENT FORM:** FCC FORM 508, rate-of-return incumbent carriers filing due to USAC to enable the calculation of the annual common line revenue requirement for each study area served in order for the carrier to be eligible to receive Interstate Common Line support

**APRIL 1: FCC FORM 499-A: TELECOMMUNICATIONS REPORTING WORKSHEET:** This form must be filed by all contributors to the Universal Service Fund support mechanisms, the Telecommunications Relay Service Fund, the cost recovery mechanism for the North American Numbering Plan Administration and the shared costs of local number portability.

**APRIL 21: LOW INCOME QUARTERLY REPORT:** FCC FORM 497, this form, the Lifeline and Link-Up Worksheet must be submitted to USAC by all ETCs that request reimbursement for participating in the low income program

# INDUSTRY CALENDAR

## Upcoming MTA & Industry Meetings/Events

**March 11:** MTA Regulatory, Tariffs & Services Committee, MTA office, 9:30 a.m.

**March 18:** MTA Legislative Committee, MTA office, 9:30 a.m.

**March 26-27:** MTA Day on the Hill, Embassy Suites, St. Paul

For a look at 12 months and more of industry events, [click here](#)

## MTA 99<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention Sponsors

*Thanks to the following companies for helping to sponsor this year's convention. We couldn't have a successful convention without them!*

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## **PEOPLE & COMPANIES**

Congratulations to CTC Board Director, **Stanley Johnson**, on receiving the NTCA Director Core Curriculum (DCC) Certificate. This program recognizes directors from NTCA member companies who have attended a series of recommended courses which are designed to expose directors to the principles and concepts that will help them become highly effective members of their telcos' board of directors. The eight core courses are offered in rotation at NTCA meetings throughout the year. The 35 DCC Certificate recipients were announced at NTCA's recent Annual Meeting in New Orleans, during the Association Services Committee meeting. Stan has been on the CTC Board of Directors since 1985.

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