



### This Week's Headlines

Retransmission  
Consent Workshop  
Coming In April

Qwest Announces  
Voluntary Buyouts

Auction Raises \$19  
Billion

FCC Expands,  
Improves Broadband  
Data Collection

#### **Video Convention Coverage On Web Site**

Video highlights from the MTA 99<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, which were produced by Viodi TV and shown on the in-house television channels for the Hyatt and Millennium Hotels, is now available on the MTA Web site [www.mnta.org](http://www.mnta.org). Check it out!

Broadband Connections  
Increased by 22% Last  
Year

Former Qwest CEO to  
Get New Trial

#### **FCC & Regulatory Filings**

March 21, 2008

## MTA UPDATE

### **Retransmission Consent Workshop Coming In April**

The MTA has partnered with Cinnamon Mueller law firm to conduct a retransmission consent workshop on April 25, 2008 in St. Cloud. The workshop, sponsored by the MTA Video Committee, is open to all members. The workshop will get under way with a noon luncheon at the Kelley Inn, St. Cloud and conclude by 4:00 p.m. Chris Cinnamon will conduct the workshop. The program will review the retransmission/must carry rules, review the digital signaling transition and its effect on retransmission/must carry, and find out what legal representation may be available from the law firm in upcoming negotiations. Watch this publication for more details and registration information.

## INDUSTRY UPDATE

### **Qwest Announces Voluntary Buyouts**

Qwest and the Communications Workers of America have agreed to a voluntary separation program that could affect up to 700 technicians and other employees supporting traditional landline phone service. According to a release on its Web site, Qwest said the program, which offers financial incentives based on years of service, would impact less than two percent of the company's total work force. News outlets reported that union workers accepting the buyout would receive \$1,375 for each year of service. There was no indication of how many of Qwest's 4,100 employees in Minnesota would be eligible for the program. The move is a response to continued decline of the company's landline customers. The program offer is expected to be completed March 27.

### **Auction Raises \$19 Billion**

Wireless companies bid more than \$19 billion for the 700 MHz auction, the Federal Communications Commission announced on Tuesday. That is significantly more than raised in any past FCC auction. The

## INDUSTRY CALENDAR

### PEOPLE & COMPANIES

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### [Save These Dates](#)

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

**MTA Golf Day  
July 7, 2008**

### [Stat of the Week](#)

The European Union added 19 million broadband lines in 2007, the equivalent of more than 50,000 households per day. Four countries -- Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands and Finland—lead the way. Source: European Commission

### WEEKLY BULLETIN

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auction concluded on Tuesday. In comparison, the 2006 Advanced Wireless Service-1 (AWS-1) Auction raised \$13.9 billion. The radio spectrum is being surrendered as broadcasters move to digital television in 2009.

The auction nearly doubled congressional estimates of \$10.2 billion. All other 68 auctions conducted by the FCC in the past 15 years collectively generated a total of only \$19.1 billion in receipts.

The Commission said it achieved its objective of an open platform on one-third of the spectrum, which will allow consumers to use the wireless device of their choice on those networks and download whatever software or applications they want on it.

The 700 MHz Upper D Block of spectrum, which was dedicated to the creation of a Public Safety/Private Partnership to create a nationwide, interoperable network, did not receive a bid that met the \$1.3 billion reserve price established for this block.

### **FCC Expands, Improves Broadband Data Collection**

The FCC voted this week to increase the precision and quality of broadband subscribership data collected every six months from broadband services providers. Improvements include collecting detailed subscribership information on a local level and more detailed information about the speed of broadband service. Specifically, the Order will:

- Expand the number of broadband reporting speed tiers to capture more precise information about upload and download broadband speeds in the marketplace
- Require broadband providers to report numbers of broadband subscribers by Census Tract, broken down by speed tier and technology type
- Improve the accuracy of information the Commission gathers about mobile wireless broadband deployment.

### **Broadband Connections Increased by 22% Last Year**

High-speed connections to the Internet increased 22% in the first half of 2007, according to the latest report from the FCC. The report is based on information provided by all facilities-based broadband providers to the FCC's local telephone competition and broadband data gathering program (FCC Form 477).

As a nationwide average, the FCC estimate that high-speed DSL connections were available to 82% of the households to whom incumbent LECs could provide local telephone service as of June 30, 2007, and that high-speed cable modem service was available to 96% of the households to whom cable system operators could provide cable TV service.

### **FCC Bans Exclusive Apartment Phone Deals**

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**Also this week**, the FCC banned carriers from entering into exclusive contracts to provide telecommunications services in residential apartment buildings, and prohibited enforcement of existing contracts that contain exclusivity provisions. The Commission found that these exclusive agreements between carriers and building owners hurt consumers and harm competition, with little evidence of countervailing benefits.

Moreover, the Commission said in a news release, exclusive contracts have blocked access by consumers to competitive and popular “triple-play” offerings of voice, video and broadband. Opening the door to competitive telecommunications services will help provide consumers with increased access to and choice of such providers, the Commission said.

### **Former Qwest CEO to Get New Trial**

Joe Nacchio, the former CEO of Qwest who was convicted of insider trading last year, will get a new trial. A federal appeals court on Monday ordered a new trial with a different judge after ruling that the trial judge wrongly excluded expert testimony that was important to Nacchio’s defense, according to media outlets. He was found guilty last April of 19 of 42 counts of insider trading. In July, he was sentenced to a six-year prison term, fined \$19 million and ordered to forfeit \$52 million.

### **Reprinted From Last Week**

### **Qwest Settlement Update**

The MTA Regulatory, Tariffs & Services Committee’s intercarrier compensation task force, which is working on behalf of MTA to reach a settlement to resolve the outstanding complaint against Qwest, met during the recent MTA convention to discuss Qwest’s latest proposal. Qwest’s current proposal revolves around Qwest withdrawing from LATA toll service in markets served by independent LECs. Qwest would continue to provide LATA toll in their own exchanges and would continue to provide TAB records for use by independent LECs for billing of terminating access. Among the issues raised that will be addressed by the task force in responding to Qwest’s proposal include Qwest covering the costs associated with making the proposed transition and the need for Qwest to develop quality assurance metrics regarding all transit records.

## **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

### MTA & Industry Meetings/Events This Week

**March 18:** MTA Legislative Committee

### Upcoming MTA & Industry Meetings/Events

**March 26:** MTA Centennial Committee, MTA office, 9:30 a.m.

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

**April 9:** MTA Legislative Committee, conference call, 1:30 p.m.

**April 17:** MTA Video Committee, MTA office, 9:30 a.m.

**April 22:** MTA Regulatory, Tariffs & Services Committee, MTA office, 9:30 a.m.

**April 24:** MTA CLEC Committee, 702 Communications, Moorhead, 9:30 a.m.

**April 30:** MTA Golf Committee, Crow River, Hutchinson, 9:00 a.m.

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

## PEOPLE & COMPANIES

### A Tribute to Miriam Johnson

Miriam Johnson, 90, died peacefully at her home in Bancroft Creek Estates, Albert Lea, Minnesota, on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 2008, surrounded by family and friends. She is the mother of **Scott**

**Johnson**, who owned and operated the **Cannon Valley Telecom** along with his wife, **Loretta**.

Miriam was married to **Ken Johnson**, Scott's father. When Ken

purchased the Bricelyn Mutual Telephone Company from his grandfather, Albert Wilcox, Miriam became the office manager and telephone switchboard operator. She and Ken retired in 1983.

There will be a memorial service for family and friends at Bancroft Creek Estates on Saturday, March 22, 2008 at 2:00 PM. Memorials can be sent to the Bricelyn Swimming Pool, Bricelyn, Minnesota 56014. Our deepest sympathy to the Johnson family on their loss.

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