



This Week's Headlines

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April 25, 2008

MTA UPDATE

Board Restructures Committees

With an eye for the future, the MTA Board of Directors has taken a thorough look at all of the MTA and former MART committees and has made a number of changes to align committees to the direction that the industry is heading. This restructuring will position MTA to better serve its members. By a unanimous vote, the board on Monday merged and restructured some committees. The committee members are being informed of the changes. A complete list of the new committees will be published in this publication next week.

MTA President/CEO Randy Young and Mike Nowick, director of member services, will be working with the committees that will be changing their format.

The board will also be looking at a new communications plan for MTA. The new communications plan will broaden the access to information that has been available only to committee members through electronic technology. The board hopes to be able to approve a plan for implementation at its May 28th meeting.

More Members Joining 'the Club'—Have You?

The number of members joining the 'Centennial Club' has surpassed 35 and is increasing each day. The MTA Centennial Committee invites all member companies to join the '**Centennial Club**' to help the MTA properly observe its 100th anniversary. The MTA will mark this milestone with a commemorative picture book, a special centennial convention and celebration as well as publicity across the state and nation.

In recognition of your contribution of \$500, your company will be listed as a 'Centennial Club' member in the commemorative picture book and at next year's convention. The book will be found at telephone companies, libraries and museums across the state for years to come. To be properly acknowledged, your contribution must be received at the MTA office by May 1, 2008. Questions about the Centennial Club may be directed to Mike Nowick at 651-291-7311. Send your contribution to the MTA office, 30 East 7th St, Suite 1650, St. Paul, MN 55101

The following companies have joined the Centennial Club.

PEOPLE & COMPANIES

Do you have an announcement for *People & Companies*? Send an e-mail (info@mnta.org) or fax (651-291-2795) to MTA.

Save The Date

MTA Retransmission Consent Workshop

Kelly Inn, St. Cloud
April 29, 2008

MTA Golf Day

July 7, 2008

Stat of the Week

U.S. Web users watched more than 10 billion online videos during the month of February, a 66 percent gain from the previous year. Source: ComSource

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 and we'll add them to the list.

WEEKLY BULLETIN is intended for MTA members. Redistribution is limited to internal audiences only.

If you wish to be removed from the MTA e-List, click here to [unsubscribe](#).

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Centennial Club Members

702 Communications
Ace Telephone Association
Albany Mutual Telephone Association
Alliance Communications Cooperative, Inc.
Blackduck Telephone Company
Badger Communications Corporation
Calix
Christensen Communications Company
CC & I Engineering, Inc.
diversiCOM

- Mainstreet Communications, LLC
- Melrose Telephone Company

Dunnell Telephone Company
Finley Engineering Company, Inc.
Garden Valley Telephone Company
Halstad Telephone Company
HickoryTech
Interstate Telcom Consulting, Inc.
KM Telecom
Lakedale Communications
Lowry Telephone Company, LLC
NECA
NU-Telecom
Midwest Data, LLC
MP Nexlevel, LLC
Olsen Thielen & Company, Ltd.
Park Region Mutual Telephone Company
Park Region Mutual Telephone Company

- Otter Tail Telcom
- Valley Telephone Company

Paul Bunyan Rural Telephone Cooperative
Pinnacle Publishing, LLC
Polar Communications
Rothsay Telephone Company
Runestone Telecom Association
Sherburne Tele Systems, Inc.
Shields Environmental, Inc.
TDS Telecommunications Corporation

- Arvig Telephone Company
- Bridge Water Telephone Company
- Mid-State Telephone Company
- Winsted Telephone Company

Walker and Associates
West Central Telephone Association
Windstream Supply
Woodstock Telephone Company

EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Sharpen Your Skills At Next MTA-U

Attendees at the next MTA-U will come away with a better understanding

Minnesota Telecom Alliance
www.mnta.org
Tel: 651-291-7311
Fax: 651-291-2795
E-mail: info@mnta.org

MTA Officers: John Finke,
Chairman; Robert K. Eddy,
Vice Chairman;
Brent J. Christensen,
Secretary-Treasurer;
Randy Young,
President/CEO

Weekly Bulletin editor:
Moses Dennis

of basic finance and accounting, and tips on handling emotionally charged people. Now in its fourth year, MTA-U for managers and supervisors is the annual source for developing leadership skills and learning important human resources responsibilities. Members have the option of taking the one-day course on June 5 or June 6 at the Radisson Suite Hotel in St. Cloud. The course will cover de-escalating emotionally charged people; industry update & technology trends; and finance for non-accounting professionals. Online registration for the course is available at www.mnta.org

INDUSTRY UPDATE

Telco Executives Ask for Help With Phantom Traffic

Telco executives told Senators this week that phantom traffic is costing the industry billions, with the rural companies hit particularly hard, according to media reports. These calls, mainly from VoIP and cellular phone companies, lack the identification needed for the local telco to charge access fees. The hearing was held by the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee.

Raymond Henagan, general manager of Rock Port Telephone, headquartered in Missouri, testified that 18 percent of his company's voice minutes were unbillable. He said some rural telcos are seeing up to 30 percent of their minutes from phantom traffic. Henagan testified on behalf of the National Exchange Carrier Association and is on the association's board of directors. Teri Asiala, a business analyst who has worked with Minnesota telcos, was instrumental in developing the details for Henagan's testimony.

A Qwest executive testified that phantom traffic costs telcos between \$600 million and \$2 billion a year. The telcos urged the Senate to push the FCC to require that all voice traffic pay intercarrier compensation fees. If not resolved, the executive warned that telephone voice rates could increase in rural areas and there would be less money available for investing in the network for such services as broadband Internet access. Others, such as Sprint Nextel and VoIP provider Covad voiced opposition to any changes. Charles McKee, Sprint Nextel's director of governmental affairs, said he did not believe that "a significant amount of traffic is being manipulated for fraudulent purposes," according to an Associated Press article. He said the local telcos often haven't updated their networks to identify new forms of voice calls.

[Statement of Senator Daniel Inouye](#)

[Opening remarks of Charles McKee](#) – Director Government Affairs for Sprint Nextel

[Opening remarks of Angela Simpson](#) – Senior Counsel for Government and Regulatory Affairs – Covad Communications

[Opening remarks of Larry Sarjeant](#) – Vice President Federal, Legislative and Regulatory Affairs – Qwest Communications

[Opening remarks of Raymond Henagan](#) – General Manager Rock

Port Telephone Company

[for Net Practices](#)

Martin Indicates Tougher Action Against Comcast

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Kevin Martin indicated this week that the Commission will take action against Comcast for allegedly delaying Web traffic, according to media outlets. Speaking before the Senate Commerce Committee, Martin said it appeared Comcast had chosen to delay content on its network even when it wasn't congested. "Based on testimony we've received thus far, this equipment was typically deployed over a wider geographic area or system and is not even capable of knowing when a segment of the network is congested, he told the committee. Comcast has indicated that it will end some of its practices by year-end, but Martin expressed doubt about the commitment. While he was against legislative action, Martin did say the Commission "has sufficient authority to enforce its four broad principles on broadband Internet management." He went on to say the agency should evaluate complaints on a case-by-case basis.

Copper Thieves Operating In High Places

Apparently, some thieves will go to any length to steal copper. In Duluth, someone actually climbed a 900 foot cell phone tower to remove copper, the Associated Press reported this week. The copper was valued at about \$400 but it will cost around \$6,000 to replace because of the installation cost, according to the AP article. This is just the latest example of copper thieves targeting telecommunications companies. Several member companies had copper cable stolen last year.

AT&T: Layoffs, Additions Keep Headcount Flat

AT&T is laying off 4,600 employees in its landline phone business and will hire nearly as many for other parts of its business, according to media reports. The new jobs are reportedly in the wireless, television and broadband services, the company said. The company also said its total headcount of approximately 310,000 is not expected to change.

Skype Offering Unlimited Overseas Calling Plan

Skype, the Internet based phone company owned by eBay, is now offering unlimited calls to international landline phones in 34 countries for under \$10 a month, according to an announcement on the company's Web site. The package will include all domestic calls as well as those to mobile phones in Canada, China, Hong Kong and Singapore.

The new subscriptions signal the first time Skype has offered a single, monthly flat rate for international calling to landline numbers in 34 countries.

The new subscriptions have no long-term contract and no time limitations on when a call can be made. The company said its customers paid to use 1.7 billion minutes in the first three months of this year, compared to 14.2 billion free minutes via computer-to computer sessions.

Local Content Roundtable Workshop at Melrose

ViodiTV will conduct a local content workshop on May 12 at diversiCOM Melrose Telephone Company. Building upon Viodi's local content workshop series, the roundtable will be a refresher of some of the latest ideas, tips and tools for producing low-cost, high-quality content. Fresh from the exhibits of the NAB show, there will be plenty of ideas as to how independent telcos can become better producers. Ken Pyle and Roger Bindl, co-producers of ViodiTV, will conduct the workshop. The cost is \$50 for MTA members. [Click here](#) for more information

FTTH Workshop For Telcos Planned

The Fiber-to-the-Home Council is inviting telco executives to a workshop on Tuesday, June 3rd at the Embassy Suites in downtown Des Moines, IA. The workshop will cover numerous topics including case studies and best practices, government and regulatory updates, FTTH updates, and overbuilding. Registration is \$50 for the day which includes two breaks, the luncheon and a cocktail reception at the end of the day. For more details and registration info go to www.ftthcouncil.org.

FCC & REGULATORY FILINGS

MAY 1: TELECOMMUNICATIONS REPORTING WORKSHEET: FCC FORM 499-Q, all telecommunications carriers that expect to contribute more than \$10,000 to federal USF support mechanisms must file this quarterly form

MAY 1: RATE INTEGRATION CERTIFICATION: FCC SECTION 64.1900 COMPLIANCE FILING, non-dominant interexchange carriers (IXCs) that provide detariffed domestic interstate services must certify that they are providing such services in compliance with their geographic rate averaging and rate integration obligations. An officer of the company must sign the annual certification under oath.

MAY 31: EMPLOYMENT REPORT: FCC FORM 395, all carriers, including wireless carriers, with 16 or more full-time employees must file their Common Carrier Employment Report by May 31. This report tracks carrier compliance with rules requiring recruitment of minority employees. The FCC also requires all common carriers to report any employment discrimination complaints they received during the past year with the May 31st filing.

INDUSTRY CALENDAR

MTA & Industry Meetings/Events This Week

April 21: MTA Board of Directors Conference Call

April 22: MTA Regulatory, Tariffs & Services Committee

April 23-25: MTA Office Managers Spring Conference

Upcoming MTA & Industry Meetings/Events

April 29: MTA Golf Committee, Crow River, Hutchinson, 9:00 a.m.

April 29: Retransmission Consent Agreement Workshop, St. Cloud, noon

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

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