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May 2, 2008

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## MTA UPDATE

### Committees Restructured to Better Serve Members

The new MTA Committee structure, which is a combination of the MTA and former MART committees, has been adopted by the board. Committee members have been informed of the changes, which the board of directors approved in late April. The new structure better reflects the direction the industry is heading and positions the alliance to better serve its members. Another benefit is the time savings and cost to members from not having to serve on essentially duplicate committees. Under the new format, six committees were eliminated, 14 will continue, and nine peer groups were created from existing committees. The committees fall under the categories of governance, activities, policy, program and peer groups. Here is the new committee structure.

#### **Governance**

Board of Directors  
Director Nominating Committee  
Executive Committee

#### **Activity Committees**

Associate Convention Committee  
Associate Golf Committee  
Centennial Committee (terminates in 1 year)  
Events Planning Committee  
Fishing Committee

#### **Policy Committees**

Legislative Committee  
Regulatory, Tariffs & Services Committee

#### **Program Committee**

Safety Committee

#### **Peer Groups**

Customer Service Group  
Human Resources Group  
General Managers Group  
Information Technology Group  
Office Managers Group

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

### **Save The Date**

**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](mailto:info@mnta.org) and we'll add them to the list.

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[www.mnta.org](http://www.mnta.org)  
Tel: 651-291-7311  
Fax: 651-291-2795  
E-mail: [info@mnta.org](mailto:info@mnta.org)

MTA Officers: John Finke,

Plant Managers & Superintendents Group  
Telco Marketing Group  
Video Group

### **Still Accepting Membership in the 'Club'**

The MTA will continue to accept membership into the Centennial Club beyond the initial deadline of May 1. To date, more than 45 members have joined. The MTA Centennial Committee invites all member companies to join the '**Centennial Club**' to help the MTA properly observe its 100<sup>th</sup> 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. Questions about the Centennial Club may be directed to Mike Nowick at 651-291-7311. Send your contribution to the MTA office, 30 East 7<sup>th</sup> St, Suite 1650, St. Paul, MN 55101

The following companies have joined the Centennial Club.

### ***Centennial Club Members***

702 Communications

Ace Telephone Association

Albany Mutual Telephone Association

Alliance Communications Cooperative, Inc.

Arvig Communication Systems

- Callaway Telephone Company, Inc.
- East Otter Tail Telephone Company
- Midwest Telephone Company
- Osakis Telephone Company
- The Peoples Telephone Company of Big Fork
- Twin Valley-Ulen Telephone Company

Badger Communications Corporation

Benton Cooperative Telephone Company

BEVCOMM

Blackduck Telephone Company

Calix

CC & I Engineering, Inc.

Christensen Communications Company

CoBank

Consolidated Telephone Company

diversiCOM

- Mainstreet Communications, LLC
- Melrose Telephone Company

Dunnell Telephone Company

Farmers Mutual Telephone Company

Finley Engineering Company, Inc.

Federated Telephone Cooperative

Garden Valley Telephone Company

Halstad Telephone Company

HickoryTech

Interstate Telcom Consulting, Inc.

Chairman; Robert K. Eddy,  
Vice Chairman;  
Brent J. Christensen,  
Secretary-Treasurer;  
Randy Young,  
President/CEO

Weekly Bulletin editor:  
Moses Dennis

KM Telecom  
Lakedale Communications  
Lowry Telephone Company, LLC  
National Information Solution Cooperative  
NECA  
North Star Chapter Pioneer Club  
NU-Telecom  
Midwest Data, LLC  
MP Nexlevel, LLC  
MRV Communications  
Olsen Thielen & Company, Ltd.  
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.  
Spring Grove Communications  
Suttle  
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

### ***Latest HR Bulletin Now Online***

The April edition of the MTA HR Bulletin, which was distributed this week, includes articles on the new nursing mother law and the state's new e-verification requirements. Members are also urged to participate in the annual salary survey. To view the latest edition, [click here](#).

## **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

### **Governor Signs Bill**

### **Broadband Task Force Created**

Governor Tim Pawlenty has signed into law (SF 1918, Chapter 212) a bill creating a High-Speed Broadband Task Force. The purpose of the task force is to make recommendations to the governor and legislature regarding the creation of a high-speed broadband goal and a plan to implement that goal.

The task force appointed by the governor will consist of 21 members, including one representative each from higher education, regional public libraries, K-12 education, wireless service providers, labor and three separate state agencies. Two task force members, divided between the rural and metropolitan area each are to be appointed to represent cities,

counties, health care institutions and cable providers. Three members, divided between size and the rural and metropolitan area are to be appointed to represent telephone companies. Four citizen-at-large members equally divided between business and residential users are to be appointed to represent broadband/Internet users in general.

The task force report and recommendations are due to the legislature by November 1, 2009. The task force expires March 1, 2010. The task force report and recommendations at a minimum shall address the following broadband goals/issues;

- Identify the level of service and speeds for sending and receiving data citizens will need by 2015
- Description of the policies and actions necessary to achieve that goal, including obstacles to investment and identification of areas in the state that lack infrastructure to support broadband service
- Identify opportunities for the public and private sectors to cooperate in achieving goals
- Evaluate strategies, financing methods and incentives used in other states and countries to support the deployment of high-speed broadband
- An estimate of the costs of reaching a broadband goal, including capital costs, and identification of who will bear those costs
- An evaluation and recommendation of the actions necessary to ensure the reliability of high-speed broadband
- A description of economic opportunities made possible by the wide deployment of high-speed broadband
- An evaluation of how access to high-speed broadband can benefit public and private sector institutions

The governor's office will collect names for possible appointment to the task force through the Open Appointments process administered by the Secretary of State's Office. Application information for the task force will be found on the Secretary of State's website beginning May 5<sup>th</sup>. Applications will close May 27<sup>th</sup>.

## **EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Next MTA-U Focuses On Finances, Handling People**

Attendees at the next MTA-U will come away with a better understanding 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](http://www.mnta.org)

## **INDUSTRY UPDATE**

### **FCC Caps USF**

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on Thursday approved a temporary cap on payments to wireless carriers from the Universal Service Fund. The Commission said this action was a crucial first step toward comprehensive reform of Universal Service and intercarrier compensation, two carrier compensation regimes that are directly interrelated. Such comprehensive reform is critical to ensuring the continued provision of affordable telecommunications for all Americans.

Because competitive eligible telecommunications carriers (ETC) currently receive support based not on their own costs and revenues, but on the costs and revenues of the incumbent rural carriers, universal service support to competitive ETCs would increase dramatically in the event intercarrier compensation rates declined. Until the Commission took the necessary first step of capping support to those competitive ETCs, any attempt to reform intercarrier compensation would have resulted in even more explosive growth of the Fund. "Capping support for competitive ETCs was a critical first step," stated the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau Chief Dana Shaffer. "It will control the growth of the Fund while the Commission considers options for more fundamental reform."

The temporary cap will be imposed on a state-by-state basis, according to media reports. Each state's share will be frozen as of March 31, 2008. While states may continue to approve new wireless companies to apply for money from the fund, the state's share won't go up, meaning it is possible some existing carriers will actually see a reduction in their funding, the Associated Press reported.

The Commission's action to cap competitive ETC support, as proposed by Chairman Martin six months ago, will stabilize the Fund, enabling the Commission to now move forward expeditiously on comprehensive reform of both the universal service program and intercarrier compensation, according to a release on the FCC Web site.

The fund has grown rapidly over the past years reaching \$7.2 billion from \$5.2 billion in 2002. An increase in the number of cellular carriers receiving USF funding is one factor contributing to the increase.

### **Qwest's Fastest Internet Speeds Available In Metro**

Qwest is now offering two faster DSL services in certain parts of the Twin Cities metro area, including Minneapolis, Eagan, Woodbury, Burnsville, St. Louis Park, Maplewood and Minnetonka, according to media reports. St. Paul and the surrounding areas will get the service later. The new DSL service has speeds of 12 and 20 megabits per second for \$47 and \$100 a month respectively. The company's previous fastest speed was 7 Mbps. The move by Qwest is seen as a response to Comcast rollout last month of a 50 Mbps service for \$150 a month.

### **OIG Finds No Wrong-Doings In Auction**

After a thorough investigation, the Office of Inspector General concluded that a number of factors contributed to a lack of bids for the D Block spectrum, which was to be a private network that emergency service agencies could use. FCC Chairman Kevin Martin requested the investigation after several groups complained that the bidders may have been turned off by the process. Media outlets reported that the Public

Safety Spectrum Trust, charged with managing the process, and its consultant, Cyren Call, were demanding payments from potential bidders. The scope of the investigation focused on Cyren Call's meetings with potential bidders and whether the information provided at these meetings affected potential bidders'

### **Broadband Sales Helps Boost Embarq Profits**

Despite a decrease in access lines, Embarq reported a 33% increase in net profit for the first quarter. According to a company release, a gain of 63,000 broadband customers and lower expenses were responsible for the increased profits. The company also reported that its quarterly operating revenue fell to \$1.57 billion, down from \$1.59 billion last year, while access lines dropped by 7.3 percent. The company said the revenue decrease was offset by the improvements in operating efficiency and lower expenses.

### **Local Content 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

## **FCC & REGULATORY FILINGS**

**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 31<sup>st</sup> filing.

## **INDUSTRY CALENDAR**

### **MTA & Industry Meetings/Events This Week**

**April 29:** MTA Golf Committee, Crow River, Hutchinson

**April 29:** Retransmission Consent Agreement Workshop

**May 1:** General Managers Group

### **Upcoming MTA & Industry Meetings/Events**

**May 8:** MTA Centennial Committee, MTA office, 9:30 a.m.

**May 9:** MTA Human Resources Group, Benton Cooperative Telephone Company, 10:00 a.m.

**May 28:** MTA Board of Directors, PT. Douglas, 2:00 p.m.

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

## **PEOPLE & COMPANIES**

### **In Memoriam**

The MTA sends its condolences to the Jeffery Carlson family and the staff

at associate member **J. Carlson & Associates** on the recent passing of **Deborah Kaye Carlson**, Jeffrey's wife. A memorial service will be held at 2:00 p.m. on May 3 at Grace Chapel, south of Bagley. Visitation will be held from 8-8 p.m. May 2 at Grace Chapel. In addition to her husband, she is survived by her parents, a son, Zachary, daughter Marye and five brothers and a sister. In lieu of flowers, memorials maybe directed to the Deb Carlson Memorial Scholarship Fund, c/o Jeffrey A. Carlson, 646 1<sup>st</sup> St. Shevlin, MN 56676.

### **In Memoriam**

The MTA would like to express its deepest sympathy to the Eddy family and Eric R. Morales, as Eric's wife, Sadie Hutchison Morales, passed away suddenly on April 23. Eric, part owner and a member of the Sherburne Tele Systems board of directors, is the great-grandson of Cecil and Ruth Eddy, grandson of Rolland and Donna Eddy, son of Jane Eddy Shiota, and nephew of Robert K. Eddy. Cards and condolences may be sent to: Eric Morales, c/o Sherburne Tele Systems, Inc., PO Box 440, Big Lake, MN 55309

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