



## 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 (651-291-2795) to MTA.

**Save The Date**

May 23, 2008

## MTA UPDATE

### MTA Files Comments in Scripting Docket

The MTA filed reply comments this week in the docket investigating scripting requirements for IntraLATA pre-subscription (Docket No. P999/CI-08-418). The comments ask the PUC to grant relief to all LECs in Minnesota from IntraLATA scripting requirements citing how the justifications for the requirement made 11 years ago no longer exist. Today, carriers offering bundles of service at a single rate have made the purchase of stand-alone long distance service obsolete. The FCC has found that the long distance market has become a "fringe market" with fewer and fewer providers and attempts to create and maintain competition is not dependent on scripting requirements. The MTA pointed out that all carriers should be treated alike as it relates to scripting requirements and the PUC should not exempt separate carriers, or require providers to seek exemption on a company-by-company petition basis.

### Prizes Needed for MTA Golf Day

Suppliers and telecom companies are asked to contribute prizes, gift certificates, or cash for the prize giveaways at this year's MTA Golf Day. Notify Tom Farm 651. 481-1786, [tfarm@otcpas.com](mailto:tfarm@otcpas.com) or Glenn Miller 320.235-8881, [glennm@mwd-inc.com](mailto:glennm@mwd-inc.com) by June 20 if you wish to donate prizes.

The 35<sup>th</sup> annual event is Monday, July 7, 2008 at Crow River Country Club in Hutchinson. The \$135 fee includes golf, cart, club house facilities, hors d'oeuvres, dinner and prizes. For non-golfers, a \$40 dinner-only option is available. MTA's online registration process allows members to register, choose which players they want in their group and sponsor a hole. The entire process only takes a few minutes.

The MTA Golf Committee is once again offering telcos and associate members the opportunity to sponsor a hole for \$125.00. There are 36 sponsorships (tees and greens) available on a first-come first-serve basis. Deadline for sponsorship of holes is Friday, June 6. To register or sponsor a hole, [click here](#)

**You Can Still Join the 'Club'**

**MTA Fishing Day**  
**June 10-11, 2008**

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

### **Stat of the Week**

Nearly 40 million Americans are expected to travel 50 miles or more this Memorial Day weekend, a one percent drop from previous years. Source: AAA

### **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;  
Brent J. Christensen,  
Secretary-Treasurer;  
Randy Young,  
President/CEO

The MTA is still accepting membership in the Centennial Club. Contributions to the 'Club' will be used to help the MTA properly observe its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Centennial Club is open to all MTA members. To date, more than 60 MTA members have joined ([See member list at end of this publication](#)).

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.

### **Trauma Specialist to Speak at Next MTA-U**

At MTA U on June 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, your company managers and supervisors have a rare opportunity to learn from Mr. William Maloney, a Certified Trauma Specialist, an FBI trained Hostage Negotiator and a consultant for Department of Justice/National Institute of Justice on stress management.

Mr. Maloney's MTA U for Managers and Supervisors training session entitled "De-Escalating Emotionally Charged People and Situations" is a 3-hour program designed to give you a practical approach for managing disruptive, acting out or violent behavior whether dealing with staff members, customers or strangers.

He will bring to the seminar his experiences from a broad range of situations in which he has provided services: on the ground in Oklahoma City, Littleton Colorado, World Trade Center Ground Zero, Senator Paul Wellstone's plane crash, and the Red Lake Indian Reservation incidents.

Mr. Maloney is also the Disaster Preparedness Emergency Management Behavioral Health Coordinator for NE Minnesota as assigned by the Governors Task Force.

Following Mr. Maloney's training, the afternoon session will include an industry/technology update and "Finance for Non-Accounting Professionals" presented by Pat Powers of Olsen-Thielen.

Register now to take advantage of this exceptional training opportunity June 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> in St Cloud. Go to the MTA website for details and to register today.

## **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

### **Governor Signs Telecom Bills**

Governor Pawlenty has signed into law an omnibus bill containing two telecom related proposals. The Omnibus Energy Finance & Policy bill (SF 3337) became the "home" for authorization of a state video franchising study and a broadband mapping project.

Weekly Bulletin editor:  
Moses Dennis

The video franchising study directs the Department of Commerce to contract with the University of Minnesota to study the impact of legislation enacted in at least three states requiring video franchises to be issued by a state agency. The study is to address a number of factors to determine what impact state authorized video franchising has had on competition, prices, communities and PEG programming. The report is due to the legislature by February 1, 2009 and will be funded by appropriating \$85,000 from the special revenue account of the Telecommunications Access Fund.

The broadband mapping project language directs the Department of Commerce to contract with a nonprofit having experience working with broadband providers developing geographical information system maps displaying levels of broadband service by speed and technology and integrating maps with demographic information to produce a statewide inventory and mapping of existing broadband service and capability. The maps are to show the areas served and un-served by broadband providers, the location of towers, upstream and downstream transmission speeds, and the types of technology used to provide broadband service down to the census block level. Data provided by broadband companies will be nonpublic. The initial maps are due by February 1, 2009. The mapping project will be funded by appropriating \$175,000 from the special revenue account of the Telecommunications Access Fund.

The governor also signed into law SF 2939 which modifies provisions of current law relating to alternative form of regulation (AFOR) plans. The bill allows telephone companies with over 50,000 subscribers to elect to be regulated under the terms of an existing AFOR of another larger company.

By opting in the telco must agree to operate under the plan for three years, or the original term of the plan, whichever is longer and cap rates for its services for three years at the levels in effect when the change is made. The bill takes effect immediately.

## **INDUSTRY UPDATE**

### **For Cellular Customers**

#### **Early Termination Fees May Be Eliminated**

Consumers may be able to avoid expensive fees when cancelling their cellular phone contract under a proposal being considered by the Federal Communications Commission. According to an Associated Press report, the Commission is considering a proposal that would give consumers the opportunity to cancel service without a penalty for up to 30 days after they sign a contract or until 10 days after they receive their first bill. Also, the proposal would cap the early termination fees and reduce them month by month over the course of a contract based on how long customers have left, the AP reported. The proposal was offered by Verizon Wireless.

For easing the contract terms, the agreement would grant wireless companies relief from lawsuits pending in state courts. In addition, states would lose the rights to regulate the termination fees, the Associated Press reported.

## **FCC Seeking Input On Re-auctioning of Spectrum**

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is requesting public comment on how to proceed with the re-auction and licensing of the 700 MHz D Block spectrum while maximizing the public safety and commercial benefits.

In July 2007, the FCC adopted rules for the 700 MHz Band spectrum that included the creation of a 10-megahertz license in the D Block to be part of a 700 MHz Public/Private Partnership with the adjacent 10 megahertz of spectrum dedicated to a Public Safety Broadband License. Because the D Block did not meet its \$1.3 billion reserve price in the 700 MHz Auction, the FCC intends to re-auction this spectrum under revised rules.

The FCC is asking for comments, ideas, and recommendations on how to revise the rules for the D Block. First, the Notice asks whether it remains in the public interest, following the 700 MHz Auction, to retain a Public/Private Partnership between the D Block licensee and the Public Safety Broadband Licensee. The Notice also seeks comment on various potential modifications to the current rules governing the Public/Private Partnership.

## **Consumers Gives Telcos High Marks**

Consumers continue to give high marks for local telco service, according to the latest University of Michigan consumer satisfaction survey. The traditional local and long distance service is up 4 percent to 73, reaching its highest score since 1999. AT&T, which recently merged with high customer-satisfaction provider BellSouth, improved 7 percent to lead the industry at 75 and Verizon's local telephone service slipped 3 percent to 70. In the cable industry, Cox Communications jumped 6 percent to 74 and Comcast improved 3 percent to 69 but remains at the bottom of the industry. A perfect score is 100.

During the first quarter of 2008, The University of Michigan's American Customer Satisfaction Index measured customer satisfaction in such industries as airlines, hotels, restaurants, telephone service, cable and satellite television, utilities and health care.

Customer satisfaction with wireless telephone service remains at an all-time high for the second straight year at 68, with Verizon Wireless topping the industry at 72. Two other industry giants are heading in opposite directions. AT&T Mobility (formerly Cingular) registered the biggest gain, improving 4 percent to 71. Sprint Nextel, still suffering from service problems and customer defections after the acquisition of Nextel, dropped 8 percent to 56.

Among the large cable companies, Comcast dropped the most, falling 4 percent to 54 and sharing the basement with Charter Communications (down 2 percent to 54). By contrast, satellite TV continues to do better than cable. DirecTV edged up 2 percent to 68, and while DISH Network slipped 3 percent to 65, it remains well ahead of the large cable TV providers.

## **EarthLink Shutting Down Philly Wi-Fi Network**

EarthLink announced this week that it is terminating its Philadelphia Wi-Fi service. The Atlanta based company said it is providing its customers a

thirty-day transition period through June 12, 2008.

EarthLink said it offered to transfer to either the City or to a non-profit – for free – the entire \$17 million Wi-Fi network, as well as pay cash and donate new Wi-Fi equipment. The transfer unraveled due to unresolved issues among the City, Wireless Philadelphia and the non-profit, according to a EarthLink news release.

EarthLink has also filed today a proceeding in federal court seeking a declaration that EarthLink may remove its equipment from the City's street lights and that EarthLink's total potential liability may not exceed \$1 million.

## **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**

**May 22:** MTA Video Group

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

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

**May 28:** MTA Regulatory, Tariffs & Services Committee, MTA office, 9:30 a.m.

**June 3:** Onvoy Golf Day, Stonebrooke, Shakopee

**June 5:** MTA-U, Radisson Hotel , St. Cloud

**June 6:** MTA-U, Radisson Hotel , St. Cloud

**June 9:** MTA Legislative Committee conference call, 2:00 p.m.

**June 10-11:** MTA Fishing, Northwest Angle Resort

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

## **PEOPLE & COMPANIES**

### ***In Memorial***

**George O. Nustad** passed away May 19 at his home in Owatonna. He was 83. His funeral service was Thursday, May 22 at United Methodist Church in Owatonna.

George was an active employee of the telecommunications industry for over 50 years, working for Northwestern Bell Telephone Company and then Melrose Telephone Company. He began his telephone career after serving in the U.S. Army during WW II in the European theater and participating in the D-Day invasion at Normandy. He received two Purple Hearts and the Bronze Star. Like many, he started installing and repairing telephones in Park Rapids and worked his way up from there. He held

positions in Braham, Detroit Lakes and Willmar before making his way to Minneapolis. George eventually became the manager of Bell-Independent company relations. During this time he served as President of the Minnesota Telephone Association in 1983. In the fall of 1983 he retired from the Bell System after 38 years of service.

George went on to have a second telephone career industry becoming the operations manager for Melrose Telephone Company. He retired from Melrose Tel in 1998. George was a member of the MTA's Board of Directors, Legislative Committee and EAS Committee during this time.

George is survived by his loving wife of 60 years, Ardelle, their son, Rob, their daughter, Nancy, and families. Condolences may be sent to Ardelle at 1506 East Rose Street, Owantonna, MN 55060-2654.

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

### **Centennial Club Members**

Thanks to the following companies for joining the MTA Centennial Club.

702 Communications

Ace Telephone Association

Albany Mutual Telephone Association

Alexicon, Inc.

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

Cannon Valley Telecom, Scott & Loretta Johnson

CC & I Engineering, Inc.

Christensen Communications Company

CoBank

Consolidated Telephone Company

diversiCOM

- Mainstreet Communications, LLC
- Melrose Telephone Company

Dunnell Telephone Company

Embarq

Farmers Mutual Telephone Company

Finley Engineering Company, Inc.

Federated Telephone Cooperative

Garden Valley Telephone Company

Halstad Telephone Company

Hanson Communications, Inc.

- Clara City Telephone Company
- Sacred Heart Telephone Company
- Starbuck Telephone Company
- Zumbrota Telephone Company

Hector Communications, Inc.

- Arrowhead Communications
- Eagle Valley Telephone Company
- Felton Telephone Company
- Loretel Systems
- Pine Island Telephone Company
- Sleepy Eye Telephone Company

Home Telephone Company  
Interstate Telcom Consulting, Inc.  
KM Telecom  
Lakedale Communications  
Larson Utilities

- Minnesota Valley Telephone Company
- Winthrop Telephone Company

Lowry Telephone Company, LLC  
Martin Group  
Midwest Data, LLC  
Moss & Barnett  
MP Nexlevel, LLC  
MRV Communications  
National Information Solution Cooperative  
NECA  
North Star Chapter Pioneer Club  
NU-Telecom  
Onvoy Voice Services  
Olsen Thielen & Company, Ltd.  
Park Region Mutual Telephone Company

- Otter Tail Telcom
- Valley Telephone Company

Paul Bunyan Rural Telephone Cooperative  
PCS Technologies, Inc.  
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  
Wikstrom Telephone Company  
Windstream Supply  
Woodstock Telephone Company

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