



This Week's Headlines

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May 30, 2008

MTA UPDATE

Members Invited to Bid on MTA Phone System

MTA is giving its members the first opportunity to bid on a new telephone system and Internet connections for the alliance's office in St. Paul. All interested companies in the Twin Cities area should contact Randy Young, CEO and president, at 651-291-7311 or ryoung@mnta.org.

Great Response to Online Golf Registration

The signups for MTA Golf Day appear to be ahead of schedule compared to past years. To date, a third of the golf slots have been filled. The 35th 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.

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 or Glenn Miller 320.235-8881, glenm@mwd-inc.com by June 20 if you wish to donate prizes.

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](#)

More Companies Joining Centennial Club

Winnebago Cooperative Telephone Association and Lismore Cooperative Telephone Company are the latest members to join the MTA Centennial Club. Contributions to the 'Club' will be used to help the MTA properly observe its 100th anniversary. The Centennial Club is open to all MTA members. To date, more than 60 MTA members have joined. 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. (See list of Centennial Club members at the end of this publication.)

INDUSTRY CALENDAR

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 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 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](#).

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 7th St, Suite 1650, St. Paul, MN 55101.

Trauma Specialist to Speak at Next Week's MTA-U

William Maloney, a Certified Trauma Specialist, will speak at the next MTA-U on June 5th and 6th for managers and supervisors. Maloney's training session, entitled "De-Escalating Emotionally Charged People and Situations," is a three-hour program designed to give you a practical approach for managing disruptive, acting out or violent behavior with staff members, customers or strangers.

Maloney is an FBI trained hostage negotiator and a consultant for the Department of Justice/National Institute of Justice on stress management. 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.

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 5th or 6th in St Cloud. Go to the MTA website for details and to register today.

REGULATORY UPDATE

Commission Approves TAM Budget, Continues Surcharge

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) voted to accept the Telecommunications Access Minnesota (TAM) 2007 Annual Report as presented by the Department of Commerce (DOC) and retain the current surcharge at 6 cents per month for fiscal year 2008. In 2007, Minnesota Relay reported handling an average of 51, 500 traditional relay calls per month, 877 Speech-to-Speech calls per month and 24,400 Captioned Telephone calls per month. The TAM program expenses for 2007 were \$3.5 million, revenues were \$ 2.6 million. The surcharge was increased from 3 cents to 6 cents on July 1, 2007 and the increase in revenue is projected to create a fund balance of \$2.6 million at the end of fiscal year 2008. The DOC has projected the 6 cent surcharge will raise \$4.7 million in 2008.

PUC Votes to Raise TAP Fee

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

Weekly Bulletin editor:
Moses Dennis

The PUC voted 3-0 to accept the Telephone Assistance Plan (TAP) report for 2007 and increase the current TAP surcharge from 2 cents to 7 cents for fiscal year 2008. In 2007 the projected TAP expenses will be \$1.4 million and are projected to rise to \$1.8 million in 2008. This is due to an increase of 11, 932 TAP subscribers (or 19%) during the past year. Increasing the surcharge to 7 cents is expected to raise \$2.0 million. Additionally, as a part of eliminating the state's budget deficit the legislature this past legislative session authorized the governor to transfer \$4 million from the Tap Fund into the state's General Fund on June 30, 2008 thereby eliminating a surplus currently existing in the TAP Fund. The surcharge increase will be effective on August 1, 2008. ***Telcos are to increase the surcharge to 7 cents on their first billing cycle that occurs on or after August 1, 2008.***

INDUSTRY UPDATE

USDA Official Speaks At Paul Bunyan Cooperative Telephone's Annual Meeting

Steve Wenzel, Minnesota state director of the U.S Department of Agriculture's Rural Development agency, was the guest speaker at Paul Bunyan Telephone Cooperative's (PBT) annual meeting this week. He told the members that the state rural infrastructure has benefited from \$4.1 billion in federal funds from the 2002 Farm Bill, according to an article in the Bemidji Pioneer.

He lauded PBT for being a model in bringing high technology to rural areas. "PBT has brought "upgrades of high-speed Internet, digital television and other aspects of advanced technology to the people of northern Minnesota," Wenzel is quoted as having said in the Bemidji Pioneer.

For Cellular Customers

Martin: FCC Should Regulate Termination Fees

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Kevin Martin said last week that he supports a proposal that would give the FCC, rather than state regulators, oversight of rules governing early termination fees assessed on consumers for breaking their cell phone contracts, while also imposing more limits on those charges. Martin said Verizon, which originated the proposal, consumer groups and the agency had made "substantial progress" in reaching an agreement on a new framework to regulate wireless companies,

Wireless carriers say the fees compensate them for upfront costs, as well as losses for subsidizing handset prices and offering consumers rate discounts.

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.

Sony, Cable Agreement May Eliminate Set-top Boxes

Sony Corp. and the nation's six largest cable television companies have announced plans to produce digital TV sets that can receive digital-cable service without going through set-top boxes. That would enable cable subscribers to receive digital-cable channels as well as advanced services such as video on demand, according to media outlets.

According to the NCTA, customers will still be able to attach their own devices, such as TiVo digital recorders.

This negotiated industry agreement establishes the fundamentals for a competitive retail market for "two-way" digital cable-ready devices. It addresses how such products will be brought to market with interactive services like video-on-demand, digital video recording and interactive programming guides. Other electronic manufacturers are urged to agree to the same technology. The participants hope the agreement will give the FCC reason to hold off on adopting two-way industry standards

Business Travel Giving Way to Online Meetings

The downturn in the economy has corporations rethinking the travel plans for executives. The high cost of gas and airline flights in particular are driving corporations to look for more alternatives to business travel. The alternative that is getting the most attention is videoconferencing, Web-enabled meeting and online collaboration tools, according to an article on BusinessWeek Online. Because of the investment companies are making to provide these services, business travel may never be the same even when the economy improves. [Read more...](#)

[Reprinted From Last Week](#)

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.

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 31st filing.

JUNE 30: ANNUAL ICLS USE CERTIFICATION: Rate of return carriers and CETCs must file a self-certification with the FCC and USAC stating that all Interstate Common Line Support (ICLS) and Long Term Support (LTS) will be used only for the provision, maintenance and upgrading of facilities and services for which their support is intended. Failure to file this self-certification will preclude the carrier from receiving ICLS support.

INDUSTRY CALENDAR

MTA & Industry Meetings/Events This Week

May 28: MTA Board of Directors

May 28: MTA Regulatory, Tariffs & Services Committee

Upcoming MTA & Industry Meetings/Events

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

The MTA would like to express its deepest sympathy to **Dave Flies** and family on the passing this week of his wife, **Marlys**. She passed away on May 29 from complications related to cancer. Dave is a maintenance and installation supervisor for **Embarq**. He and Marlys were very active in the North Star Pioneer Chapter. Dave is a past president and currently serves on the Pioneer Chapter's board of directors. Visitation is Sunday, June 1, from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Johnson Funeral Home, 141E. First Street, Waconia, MN. The funeral service is Monday, June 2, 10:30 a.m. at St. Joseph's Catholic church, 41 First St. E., Waconia. Visitation is one hour prior to the service. Cards may be set to: Dave Flies, 101 Carver Square, Waconia, MN. 55387

Zumbrota Telephone Company this month gave the public a tour of its newly remodeled historic building in the heart of the city. This is the new location for customers to pay their bills or discuss service with one of two customer service employees. The building is located at 411 Main Street, Zumbrota.

Associate Members News

Within the first 12 months of market deployment, **Innovative Systems** has orders for 100 of their new APMAX Application Servers shipping to service providers in the rural telecom market. [Read more...](#)

Editor's note: The MTA Bulletin invites associate members to submit their company's news release for publication. Due to space consideration, we will run the first paragraph and provide a link to the entire release. A link to the story must accompany the news release. If possible, submit in word format for easy editing. Send submissions to mdenns@mta.org.

Do you have an announcement for *People & Companies*? Send an e-mail (info@mta.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

HickoryTech

- Enventis

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

- Minnesota Valley Telephone Company
- Winthrop Telephone Company

Lismore Cooperative 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
Red River Rural Telephone Association
Rothsay Telephone Company
Runestone Telecom Association
Sherburne Tele-Systems, Inc.

- Connections, Etc.
- NorthStar Access, LLC

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
Warinner, Gesinger & Associates, LLC
West Central Telephone Association

Wikstrom Telephone Company
Winnebago Cooperative Telecom Association
Windstream Supply
Woodstock Telephone Company
