



This Week's Headlines

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MTA Centennial Picture Book



November 21, 2008

MTA UPDATE

Now Accepting Registrations for Booth Space

Online Registration Open for Exhibitors

Online registration is now open for associate members who want to exhibit at the MTA Centennial Convention, March 2-4, 2009 in Minneapolis. The exhibitor prospectus has been distributed to associate members and is also available on the [MTA Web site](#). The theme for this historic event is, "Cherish the Past, Embrace the Future." The Centennial Planning Committee has been working for nearly two years to celebrate this once in a lifetime event. On schedule is a centennial museum filled with interesting items from telco members, a historical presentation that chronicles the growth of the telephone industry in the state, and the unveiling of the centennial picture book.

Associate members can obtain a copy of the prospectus by going to the MTA Web site. With online registration, associate members can register for the convention, select their booth space(s) and become an event sponsor all in a matter of minutes. There is also a link to the convention hotels on the site. To obtain a copy of the exhibitor prospectus and register online, [click here](#). The general registration brochure will be sent to all members in December. Watch this publication for more details.

You Can Now Reserve Your Room for the Convention

The MTA has reserved a block of rooms at the two convention hotels for the Centennial Convention. You can reserve your room online and receive the MTA room rate. For the Hyatt Regency Minneapolis Hotel, [click here](#). For the Millennium Minneapolis Hotel, [click here](#).

Deadline Today for Breakout Sessions Proposals

The deadline to submit ideas for breakout session topics for the MTA convention is today, November 21, 2008. This year associate members can go online to complete the form and submit electronically. A request for proposed topics for breakout sessions at the MTA Centennial Convention has been sent electronically to associate members. The 2009 convention is setup to have a total of nine breakout sessions. The sessions will be presented in three time periods with three topics being presented

To Order - [Click Here](#)

Web site Access?

If you need to reset your user name and password to access information in the "members only" section of the MTA Web site, [click here](#).

FCC & REGULATORY FILINGS

INDUSTRY CALENDAR

PEOPLE & COMPANIES

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

Stat of the Week

Consumer prices fell 1 percent last month, the biggest one-month decline on records that go back to February 1947. Source: U.S. Labor Department.

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@mmta.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](#).

concurrently on Tuesday, March 3 only. Topics selected will be presented once. The MTA Associate Members Convention Committee and the MTA Event Planning Committee will jointly review all entries and select those that will be included in the convention program. For more details and copy of the entry form, [click here](#). If you have any questions, contact [Mike Nowick](#) via email or call 651.288-3722.

Mark Your Calendar

MTA Day On the Hill is February 3rd

The 2009 *MTA Day on the Hill* has been set for Tuesday, February 3 and Wednesday, February 4. The event will be at the [Embassy Suites St. Paul](#) again this year. Because room availability is limited, make your room reservations now at 651-224-5400. Tuesday's briefing session will begin at 2:00 p.m. and appointments will be on Wednesday. More information on registration and assignments will be sent out in January.

EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

On Industry Topics

Next MTA-U Will Keep Employees Up to Date

This year's winter session of MTA-U will cover several key industry topics to help service representatives and technicians keep pace with industry developments and job expectations.

The session will also will feature a special seminar on *Designing and Servicing the Home Theatre*. This in-depth 4-hour session is designed for both front office staff and technicians to help them better understand the interrelation between your company network and your customer's home theatre as well as the sales opportunities that exist there. The course is taught by expert instructors from the Minnesota State Community and Technical College System who have already delivered this training to assist some of your neighboring telcos.

There are several options for attending: December 10 & 11 at the St. Cloud Kelly Inn; and December 12 at the Mankato Best Western. The agenda and registration form is available on the MTA Web site. To access, [click here](#).

Strong Agenda for Plant Managers Meeting

Plant managers and superintendents are gathering in St. Cloud in December for their annual meeting. Those with similar job functions are invited to the two-day event December 3-4, 2008 at the Holiday Inn. The agenda topics include a presentation from the Office of Pipeline Safety and conclude with an entertaining presentation by James Wedgwood, a comic ventriloquist. For more on the agenda and the registration information, [click here](#).

INDUSTRY UPDATE

Iowa Telecom to Purchase Sherburne Tele Systems

Sherburne Tele Systems, Inc., parent company of both Connections, Etc. and NorthStar Access, announced today that it has reached agreement to

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

Weekly Bulletin editor:
Moses Dennis

sell all of its business assets to Iowa Telecommunications Services, Inc. of Newton, Iowa.

“The Eddy family has proudly served our communities for over 100 years,” said George Wallin, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Sherburne Tele Systems. “We selected Iowa Telecom due to their impressive track record of serving customers in similar communities, and due to the cultural fit between our companies. While this transaction ends the ownership by the Eddy family, we’re happy that we’ve found a new owner as committed to customer service as we have been.”

Connections, Etc., provides services to customers in four Minnesota exchanges, including Becker, Big Lake, Glendora-Santiago and Zimmerman. NorthStar Access serves customers Cambridge, Elk River, Mora, North Branch and Princeton. Iowa Telecom and its subsidiaries serve over 450 Iowa communities and six Minnesota communities and employ nearly 800 people.

Following receipt of regulatory approvals, the operations of Sherburne Tele Systems will transfer to a subsidiary of Iowa Telecom. The sale is expected to close in early 2009.

[For Approval of Alltel Deal](#)

[FCC Adds Five More Markets for Verizon to Divest](#)

The Federal Communications Commission has provided more details on the conditions it imposed on Verizon Wireless for approving its merger with Alltel. The FCC added five more markets where Verizon Wireless must divest its holdings because they overlap with Alltel's network. Verizon Wireless has 120 days after the deal closes to comply with the order. The order requires Verizon to sell off its entire spectrum, network assets and customers in the 105 markets. [Read More](#)

[Comcast Offering A lower Priced Triple Play Bundle](#)

In response to the economic downturn, Comcast has announced a lower price triple play bundle for \$20 less than its next highest option. The company now offers digital TV, high-speed Internet and VoIP for \$79.99 a month for a year. Some analysts speculate that the cable company is attempting to capture customers who want the triple play of services without all the extras before the transition to digital TV in February 2009.

[Read More](#)

[FCC May Fine Cable Companies Over Price Data](#)

The FCC is said to be disappointed in the responses from cable companies for pricing information and may decide to levy fines, according to media outlets. The Commission last month began investigating whether cable companies are using the transition to analog to raise prices. According to the Journal, the companies are reducing the number of channels on analog services as part of the transition to digital services. However, the prices for analog service aren't going down. The FCC last

month asked some cable companies and Verizon to provide information about their pricing and channel lineups. Comcast, according to various reports, sent a narrative instead of pricing data. [Read More](#)

Sprint Offering Voluntary Buyouts

Sprint Nextel is offering voluntary buyout packages for an undisclosed number of its 57,000 employees in order to reduce cost. Employees have until December 3 to take the option, according to the company [Read More](#)

In Case You Missed It

MTA Offering All Event Sponsorship Bundle

The MTA has established an additional sponsorship program that allows members to bundle their annual sponsorships rather than being solicited for each individual event. Information on the all events sponsorship program was sent electronically this week to associate members. The program covers all events, such as convention, Fall conference, golf day and various peer group events. The old sponsorship opportunities will continue to be available as well. MTA members will continue to have individual sponsorship opportunities at various levels throughout the year. *For more details and sponsorship form, [click here](#).*

FCC & REGULATORY FILINGS

DECEMBER 30: FCC FORM 507, Universal Service Quarterly Line Count Update

JANUARY 19: FCC FORM 497, Low Income Quarterly Report

FEBRUARY 2: FCC FORM 499Q, Telecommunications Reporting Worksheet

INDUSTRY CALENDAR

MTA & Industry Meetings/Events This Week

Nov. 18: MTA Safety Committee

Nov. 18- 19: MTA Video Forum

Upcoming MTA & Industry Meetings/Events

Nov. 24: MTA Scholarship Foundation, conference call, 10:00 a.m.

Nov. 27-28: MTA Offices Closed for the Thanksgiving Holiday

Dec. 1: Joint meeting of MTA Convention and Association Committees, 10:00 a.m.

Dec. 1: MTA Association Convention Committee, MTA office, 1:30 p.m.

Dec. 3-4: MTA Plant Managers Peer Group meeting, Holiday Inn, St. Cloud

Dec. 4: MTA GM Peer Group, Northland Inn, Brooklyn Park

PEOPLE & COMPANIES

[Martin Group](#) has announced its new Enhanced Services Platform (ESP), a collection of software applications enabling rapid development and delivery of revenue-generating products and services. ESP is comprised of network and lifestyle applications, a Web self-care portal, a master product catalog and a product workbench. Martin Group is a provider of BSS/OSS software solutions, next-generation engineering, and business services that address the operational and marketplace challenges faced by communications providers.

[HickoryTech Corporation](#) announced that it has purchased 93,000 shares of its own common stock for \$519,000 in a block transaction handled through a market maker. The Company has purchased a total of 393,000 shares of its common stock in November for a total purchase price of \$2,362,000.

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