



## This Week's Headlines

Qwest Proposes Tariff Changes

Booth Space Available for Centennial Convention

Reserve Your Room Now for the Convention

Reminder: Submit Info for Broadband Mapping Project

Hotel Bock Open for MTA Day On the Hill

PUC Orders Qwest to Stop Charging for Transit Traffic

Commission Seeking Comments on Changes to TAP

FCC to Consider Free Wireless Internet Service

AT&T Cutting Jobs, Reducing Spending

Coalition Offering Input On Expanding Internet Access

New .tel Domain Tells them Where to Find You

**Taking Orders for MTA Centennial Picture Book**

December 5, 2008

## MTA UPDATE

### Qwest Proposes Tariff Changes

#### Modifying How Unidentified Terminating FGD Traffic is Jurisdictionalized

Qwest has recently filed changes to its state access tariffs throughout its 14-state area. The Qwest tariff change establishes a floor for the Percent of Interstate Usage (PIU) on unidentified Feature Group D (FGD) terminating traffic. The change allocates unidentified terminating traffic exceeding 6% as 50% intrastate and 50% interstate.

In Minnesota, the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) assigned Docket 08-1351 to address the tariff change, and established a comment period. Comments must be filed by Wednesday, December 10, 2008 and reply comments are due by Friday, January 9, 2008.

The MTA Inter-carrier Compensation Task Force (a subcommittee of the Regulatory Tariffs & Services Committee) discussed the issue on a conference call on November 20, 2008, and determined that the tariff changes were not adverse to MTA positions on traffic jurisdictionalization, or handling of unidentified traffic. The Task Force is recommending that MTA does not need to file comments on this tariff change.

#### [Early Registrations Ahead of Last Year](#)

### Booth Space Available for Centennial Convention

Online registration for associate members is going very well with signups well ahead of last year's pace at this time. The MTA Centennial Convention is 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.

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.

**Reserve Your Room Now for the Convention**



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](mailto:info@mmta.org)) or fax (651-291-2795) to MTA.

#### **Stat of the Week**

#### **HAPPYNESS SPREADS!**

When one person in the network became happy, the chances that a friend, sibling, spouse or next door neighbor would become happy increased 8 to 34 percent. Source: BMJ, a British medical journal.

#### **WEEKLY BULLETIN**

Is there someone in your

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](#).

#### **Reminder: Submit Info for Broadband Mapping Project**

Connect Minnesota has made considerable progress, thanks to local telcos, in obtaining data for developing a statewide digital map that displays where broadband is located in the state. According to Wes Kerr, senior manager for Connected Nation, the response from telcos in the state has been very good. "We have moved a long ways in a short period of time," he said. Kerr stressed, however, that in order to meet the deadline of producing the initial maps in February, 2009, telcos who haven't responded need to submit their data in the first week of January. To date, most companies have already submitted data, he reported.

Connected Nation and its newly created affiliate, Connect Minnesota, have been selected as the vendor that will be collecting the data and producing the maps. The MTA Board of Directors has reviewed the project and is encouraging our member companies to fully participate in the mapping project by providing Connect Minnesota with the data that they will be requesting. MTA looks forward to working with its members and Connect Minnesota in this project. If you have any questions, contact [Randy Young](#) via e-mail or call 651.288.3724.

#### **Reserve Room Now!**

#### **Hotel Bock Open for MTA Day On the Hill**

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 or for online reservation [click here](#). 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.

## **INDUSTRY UPDATE**

#### **PUC Orders Qwest to Stop Charging for Transit Traffic**

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission yesterday ruled in favor of Frontier Communications and Citizens Telecommunications in a dispute with Qwest over charges for Extended Areas Service transit traffic. The Commission ordered Qwest to handle transit traffic and to cease charging Frontier or other ILECs for transit traffic without prior Commission approval. The two companies filed a joint petition in September alleging that Qwest started, beginning in July, to unilaterally charge (at \$0.0045 per minute) Frontier for EAS transit traffic. In its filing with the Commission, Frontier opposed Qwest's proposed EAS transit charge and argued that there is in place a Commission-approved rate design to recover all of the costs associated with EAS traffic, including the transiting traffic.

#### **Commission Seeking Comments on Changes to TAP**

The PUC is requesting comments on possible rule changes governing the Telephone Assistance Plan. First the proposed rules would replace the

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Department of Human Services with the Department of Commerce as co-administrator of the program, along with the Commission. Second, the proposed rules require applicants to self-certify that they qualify for credits. The third proposal would make applicants eligible for credits if they are eligible for the federal Lifeline telephone service discount. The federal Lifeline discount authorizes credits for consumers who meet certain income limits or participate in a qualifying low-income assistance program. Comments on the amendments can be made in writing or orally until 4:30 p.m. December 19, 2008. All communications should include a reference to docket number U-999/R-08-1126. If you have any questions, contact [Kate Kahler](#), Commission Attorney, at 651-201-2239.

## REGULATORY UPDATE

### FCC to Consider Free Wireless Internet Service

A proposal for free wireless Internet service is expected to be on the agenda at the December 18 meeting of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Chairman Kevin Martin is pushing the free, no-porn wireless network as a condition of carriers to bid on a key piece of spectrum that has also been set aside for emergency services. T-Mobile, which reportedly spent \$4 billion for a spectrum that is near the one being auctioned, is one of the carriers that oppose the move because of potential interference. Also, some consumer groups object to filters that keep out pornography -- although the FCC might allow adults to "opt out" of that limitation. [Read more....](#)

### AT&T Cutting Jobs, Reducing Spending

AT&T, the nation's largest telecom company, is reducing its workforce by 12,000 employees or 4% of its workforce and plans to reduce capital spending next year from 2008 levels, the company announced this week. The reductions will take place this month and throughout next year. The company said the reductions were necessary due to economic pressures and a changing business mix as well as to streamline the organization. This action is in addition to the 4,600 positions the company announced in April that it planned to eliminate. [Read more....](#)

### Coalition Offering Input On Expanding Internet Access

President-elect Obama will get some input from a collection of telecom companies, consumer groups, labor unions and public interest groups, on how to achieve his goal of getting affordable high-speed Internet service to every home in the nation. According to media reports, the coalition of members who have had opposite views in the past have agreed to work together to provide a "roadmap to accomplish this objective while creating jobs, fueling economic growth and to spur innovation. The proposal is said to include tax breaks, low-interest loans, subsidies and public-private partnerships. Google and AT&T are among the group's members. [Read more...](#)

### New .tel Domain Tells them Where to Find You

.tel, as in tell them where to find you, is the new Internet domain that is intended to function as a virtual phone book to enable people to get in touch with the domain's owners, according to media reports. It became available on Wednesday, December 3. Site owners can register for a .tel

domain that will act as a universal contact point that users can access from mobile devices such as the iPhone or BlackBerry, according to Telnic, the company that will run the registry. [Read more...](#)

## In Case You Missed It

[Reprinted from Last Issue](#)

### **Sherburne Tele Systems Sold to Iowa Telecom**

Sherburne Tele Systems, Inc., parent company of both Connections, Etc. and NorthStar Access, has reached agreement to sell all of its business assets to Iowa Telecommunications Services, Inc. of Newton, Iowa.

Connections, Etc., provides services to customers in four Minnesota exchanges, including Becker, Big Lake, Glendorado-Santiago and Zimmerman. NorthStar Access serves customers in 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.

### **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**

**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

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

**Dec. 8:** mta Foundation Board of Directors conference call, 10:00 a.m.

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

**Dec. 11:** MTA Centennial Committee conference call, 9:30 a.m.

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