



150 Fourth Avenue North, Suite 480, Nashville, TN 37219  
Phone 615-256-8005 Fax 615-244-4803 E-Mail [tta@dtccom.net](mailto:tta@dtccom.net)

---



## TELCOM TALK

April 7 2011

---

### Executive Directors Notes



For the past few months, the TTA staff, consultants and member companies have been consumed with opposing legislation put forward by AT&T and a coalition of long distance carriers to reduce the access charges they pay to Local Exchange Carriers (LECs) from about 7 cents a minute to 2 cents a minute. The bill they introduced wanted these reductions in TTA member revenues to take place over basically a four year period and for our companies to just pass along this expense to our end users.

We undertook substantial lobbying, legal and public relations efforts (and expense) to educate legislators and others about how this would affect the financial stability of TTA member companies, their employees and their communities. It was a very frustrating undertaking and was really a David and Goliath situation. In the end, we were able to negotiate a one year delay in implementation of the access charge reductions and then a phase in over a five year period. This basically gives our members a six year time period to put the 2 cent per minute rates into effect. This result is NOT what we hoped to achieve but believe me when I say that all of us involved with this fight did the best we could against overwhelming odds. Thanks to all of our Associate Members that participated in the effort both financially and in other ways. Many of our employees are

to be thanked as well for their many emails and calls to legislators as well as many of them making the trip to Nashville to participate in the committee hearings at the legislature. To me it really shows the resolve, respect and cohesiveness of the rural telecommunications industry.

---

## Spring Meeting

Well Spring is in the air again and that means it's time for the annual TTA Spring Meeting. This year it will be held on May 9 through May 11 at the Cool Springs Marriott in Franklin, Tennessee. We've held our Spring Meeting there for three years in a row now and that venue is a favorite with our members. You can go to this link: <http://www.tenntel.org/o3meetings.htm> to see the agenda and download the registration forms if you haven't already signed up. For newcomers to the Spring Meeting, I've been told by many of our Associate members that this is one of the better meetings and trade shows they attend. We've got some top notch speakers and breakout sessions leaders lined up so the educational value is good and the networking opportunities will be great

The golf tournament will be held back at the Vanderbilt Legends Golf Course. It is a five star facility and we all love playing there. We have been blessed every year with some really fine weather during this tournament and I hope that trend continues.

We have numerous opportunities for sponsorship of the various events at both the meeting and the golf tournament. By seeking sponsorships, we are trying to keep the registration costs steady so that companies can afford to send more attendees. Larger numbers of attendees benefits the networking as well as the "face time" with potential customers.



## Member News



### Telecom America Services, Inc. releases Broadband Express Fiber Design Tools

San Marcos, Texas. March 28, 2011 — After nearly 5 years of development and real-world use, Telecom America Service, Inc. (TAS) announces the release of their "**Broadband Express**" **Fiber Design Tools** via web-based deployment at [www.telecom-america.com](http://www.telecom-america.com).

**Broadband Express** is the only tool of its kind to deliver such a wide array of fiber planning and design tools and can help companies save time and money planning and engineering FTTX projects. Some advantages include automated fiber facility placement, built-in design calculations, staking sheets with tabulation and detailed reports supplying information such as material and labor costs, splicing hours, route miles, subscriber counts, and fiber loss budget.

“We are committed to saving our members money while offering them the latest services.” says Alan Link, Plant Manager for Hill Country Telephone Cooperative (Ingram, Texas). “With the help of TAS and the tools they have developed, we were able to see what effects numerous design alternatives would have on a project’s cost before committing.”

“We are excited to release Broadband Express as a new product offering to compliment our other Service Bureau offerings” said Nancy Stewart, TAS President. “We have seen such huge time savings designing FTTX projects using these tools that it only made sense to make them available to others.”



## **Communications Data Group Signs New CABS and MBS Client**

**CHAMPAIGN, IL** – Communications Data Group, Inc. (CDG) is pleased to announce the signing of another new client, Tri-County Telephone Membership Corporation, an ILEC service provider located in Belhaven, NC. Tri-County and CDG recently signed a multi-year contract for CDG’s CABS and MBS billing systems. CDG’s conversion and implementation teams are currently in the process of converting Tri-County’s data to CDG’s systems.

In making this announcement, Bob LaBonté, CEO of CDG, said, “We are extremely pleased to add Tri-County to our growing list of billing clients. Tri-County has a long standing history of providing quality telecommunications, cable and Internet services to its subscribers and we look forward to helping them continue that tradition and grow their

### **ALSO**

Communications Data Group, Inc. is pleased to announce the signing of a multi-year contract and the implementation of its CABS and MBS billing systems at Moundville Telephone Company (MTC), an ILEC service provider located in Moundville, AL. CDG’s detailed and aggressive implementation not only successfully migrated Moundville’s data but also increased the transparency of MTC’s billing data between how package, bundle and charge information is entered into the application, how it is recorded within the billing system, and finally how it appears on customers’ invoices. Implementation was completed on time, and Moundville recently went live on their new billing systems and began producing invoices.

### **And Last But Not Least**

Communications Data Group, Inc. announces the promotion of PHILIP C. GOBLE to Chief Information Officer. Mr. Goble’s responsibilities include developing strategic plans and implementing the objectives of the information technology needs of the company. He will oversee the development, design, and implementation of new applications and changes to existing systems and software products to accomplish the company’s goals and objectives.

Philip Goble most recently served CDG as Vice President of Product Development for its subscriber billing system, MBS. Mr. Goble has 30 years of technical and management experience developing telecommunications billing and customer care solutions and once served as Vice President or Director of ITDS, CSC Intelicom and Bank Illinois Co. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Management from Eastern Illinois University.



Draka Communications Americas spotlighted a new family of fiber cables designed for wireless applications at the CTIA Wireless Show March 21-24 in Orlando, FL. Visitors to Draka’s booth

were able to inquire about Draka's comprehensive line of fiber cables designed for remote radio head, cellular backhaul, and distributed antenna system applications. Branded under the ezMOBILITY™ wireless cable solution, Draka offers features requested by installation teams and end users such as:

- 20 foot mid-span buffer tube storage capability, allowing for mid cable access
- Buffer tubes that are more flexible and craft friendly for easy routing in closures
- Blowing compatibility with 13 mm inside diameter micro ducts
- The option of Draka's BendBright® family of bend insensitive fibers
- Colorlock® fiber coating for long lasting fiber reliability and color vibrancy



Draka ezMICRODUCT Cable



In addition, Draka Communications is also launching a series of indoor blown fiber solutions meeting the stringent requirements for riser, plenum and low smoke performance.

"Microduct cable and blown fiber solutions are becoming key elements of the last mile and in-building fiber routes", states Jim Ryan, Product Manager at Draka Communications. "These new microduct cable features will make it significantly easier to create drop access points down the cable route. It is an exciting time to be a global leader in optical fiber and cable manufacturing."

Draka's ezMICRODUCT and blown fiber product lines span a wide variety of fiber cables for indoor, outdoor and enterprise applications. Fiber types include Draka's Enhanced Single-mode fiber, OM2-OM4 multimode fiber or Draka's BendBright family of bend insensitive fibers.

---

## FBI Alerts

### Internet Crime Complaint Center's (IC3) Scam Alerts

This report, which is based upon information from law enforcement and complaints submitted to the IC3, details recent cyber-crime trends and new twists to previously-existing cyber scams.

#### Automated Clearing House (ACH) Spam

The IC3 and National Cyber-Forensics and Training Alliance (NCFTA) were made aware of a spam campaign around February 24, 2011 using spoofed e-mail addresses to make it look like they are from legitimate payment organizations. The message in the spam e-mail had variations of the following example:

"The ACH transaction, recently initiated from your checking account (by you or any other person), was cancelled by the Electronic Payments Association. Click on the link to view details."

Electronic Payments Associations have frequently been used as a social engineering ploy by cyber criminals, according to open source information. Phishing alerts have been posted, and 20 June 2011

the organizations are aware that cyber criminals are using their name to deceive users into compromising their personally identifiable information.

According to analysis, this current use of the ACH organization is part of a new Zeus Botnet spam run intended to infect victims with malicious software. The links provided in the e-mails direct users to websites set up with HTML frame code to pull content from additional sources and deliver malware via JavaScript exploits.

The Zeus Botnet has historically been used by fraudsters perpetrating ACH fraud, so it is not surprising the ACH name is being exploited to direct users to websites propagating the Zeus malware.

### **Lottery Scammers Now Misusing Public Services**

The IC3 has received several complaints from victims who reported receiving telephone calls from a Jamaican subject claiming they were lottery winners. The subject told victims to first wire funds for various expenses, such as taxes and other handling fees, to collect the lottery winnings. The subject threatened many victims with physical violence if they refused to wire money. The subjects were identified as Jamaican through their accents and verification of numbers displayed on the victim's caller ID.

Though this scam is not new, the subjects continue to develop new methods to further their fraudulent scheme. For example, the IC3 received a complaint in which an elderly individual had fallen victim to the lottery scam. After the victim's family interceded and stopped the liquidation of the victim's funds, the subject sent a taxi cab to take the victim to a major retail establishment that offered wire transfer services, hoping the victim would wire the funds as requested.

In other instances, after elderly victims realized they were being defrauded and stopped participating in the lottery scam, the subjects asked local law enforcement to conduct a "well-being" check on the victims. However, during the courtesy checks, the victims told law enforcement about the lottery scams and avoided further victimization. Apparently, the fraudsters tried to use law enforcement to further coerce the victims into again communicating with, or sending funds to, the fraudsters.

### **Potassium Iodide Price Gouging**

In the wake of the recent disasters in Japan and the widespread fear of how radiation may impact health, the IC3 has received complaints related to potential price gouging of potassium iodide supplements. *Potassium iodide* is a salt of stable iodine that is an important chemical needed by the body to make thyroid hormones. Potassium iodide is normally absorbed through daily nutrition. Incapable of distinguishing iodine types, the thyroid readily absorbs both radioactive and stable iodine. Potassium iodide works by filling the thyroid with stable iodine so it cannot absorb any more iodine, including radioactive iodine, for 24 hours.

A variety of websites sell potassium iodide online, with the majority of the websites being vitamin retailers. Other websites are specifically dedicated to nuclear disaster preparation. Prices are generally under \$10 for a bottle of pills or a vial of liquid potassium iodide. However, some prices are in the \$20-\$50 range, and a few sellers on an on-line marketplace are selling tablets in the \$200-\$300 range. Quantities and strength of the tablets or liquid vary, so not all prices are equivalent.

Potassium iodide can be found in prescription and over-the-counter formats. Although it is available over the counter, users should consult with a physician regarding dosage amounts and any potential drug interactions or side effects.

For more information regarding online scams visit our [Press Room](#) page for the most current Public Service Announcements.

<http://www.ic3.gov/media/default.aspx>



## Government and Industry Affairs News

### RURAL TELECOM ASSOCIATIONS ADDRESS INTERCARRIER COMPENSATION WITH A UNIFIED VOICE

#### *Joint Comments Urge FCC to Confirm VoIP Services Subject to Same Rates as Other Traffic, Revise Rules to Prevent Phantom Traffic and Adopt Rules Regarding Rate Development and Access Stimulation*

WASHINGTON (April 1, 2011) – Today, the National Exchange Carrier Association (NECA), the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA), the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO), the Western Telecommunications Alliance (WTA), the Eastern Rural Telecom Association (ERTA), the Rural Alliance and the Rural Broadband Alliance filed comments with the Federal Communications Commission addressing near term intercarrier compensation reform issues.

The associations urge the Commission to:

- Confirm that under existing law, traffic originating from or terminating to interconnected VoIP services is subject to the same intercarrier compensation rates – including access charge obligations – as any other traffic originating from or terminating to the public switched telephone network (PSTN);
- Adopt rule revisions applying call signaling requirements, including mechanisms adequate to avoid fraud and ensure compliance with such requirements, to all forms of traffic originating or terminating on the PSTN and to all interconnected service providers, regardless of jurisdiction or technology;
- Adopt reasonable rules to address rate development and allowed levels of earnings in access stimulation situations; and
- Make clear interconnecting carriers must pay tariffed charges for legitimate traffic terminating on RLEC networks.

Additionally, the associations urge the Commission to take immediate action to address the ongoing regulatory uncertainty that intercarrier compensation arbitrage has caused and to

20 June 2011

reduce the pressures on universal service funding and end user rates created as a result of this arbitrage.

“We are committed to working with the Commission to gain fair and equitable intercarrier compensation and USF reforms. Putting the brakes on VoIP providers’ free ride on the PSTN, along with adopting rules to address phantom traffic and access stimulation, is a necessary step in restoring the confidence of small rural carriers to continue investing in their networks for the future,” NECA President Bill Hegmann stated.

“Reforms that correct anomalies in today’s complex and untenable intercarrier compensation system—and that ensure *all* users of the network share equal responsibility for it—will create a stable regime, help to keep end user costs affordable and allow the entire industry to focus on important tasks like delivering high-quality broadband services” stated NTCA CEO Shirley Bloomfield.

“By adopting rules to address the arbitraging of the current intercarrier compensation system, the Commission will make it possible for rural carriers to collect revenues due to them and reinvest those funds in robust broadband networks that serve rural customers and stimulate rural economic development,” OPASTCO President John Rose stated.

"These proposed near term reforms should be adopted immediately by the FCC because they are fair and reasonable," said Kelly Worthington, Executive Vice President for the Western Telecommunications Alliance. "Rural carriers rely a great deal on intercarrier compensation to help them deploy high quality broadband networks, and it is important that the integrity of the intercarrier compensation regime is restored. This requires payment by all whose traffic goes over them."

“The telecommunications companies that provide services to rural America take seriously the obligation to serve all customers with reliable and high quality services. If the FCC’s rule changes will help telecommunications companies to receive compensation for traffic they terminate then these small businesses and their rural communities will benefit.” ERTA Executive Director Carole Woodward stated.

"The adoption of the positions and proposals set out in the Rural Telecom Association comments by the FCC will be a vital and long-needed first step in addressing changes in inter-carrier compensation rules that will foster continued infrastructure investment in broadband networks in rural America," stated Steve Kraskin, counsel to the Rural Broadband Alliance.

## **ATIS: Carrier Regulation Threatens IP Transformation**

April 4, 2011 | Carol Wilson : *Light Reading*.

A new report from the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions (ATIS) says current regulations need a major overhaul if incumbent telcos are to reap the financial benefits of IP transformation and meet the goals of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)'s National Broadband Plan.

Making a pitch for much lighter regulations, the ATIS Consolidation & Convergence Task Force notes that regulatory rules could require incumbents to maintain some existing infrastructure after it’s no longer useful or cost-effective to do so. It also says that existing regulations, based on arcane things such as LATAs -- local access and transport areas -- make little sense in an era where it matters little where a call starts or ends.

"The U.S. government's goal of universal access to broadband may not be met in a timely or efficient manner if providers are forced to continue to provide basic exchange service in compliance with legacy federal and state regulatory regimes," the report states. "Such an outcome would require ongoing investment in 'old technology' and maintenance of two networks."

Moving to IP technology enables incumbents to replace large digital circuit-switches with smaller and more energy-efficient soft switches and gateways, and to consolidate central offices, eliminating some CO buildings and cutting costs significantly.

But that kind of major restructuring can run afoul of things such as existing collocation requirements, which allow competitive carriers to put their equipment in a CO, and rules that require incumbents to be "carriers of last resort (COLRs)." That COLR status was associated with an exclusive local franchise, but while that exclusivity no longer exists, the requirements for serving all customers does, and that could force incumbents to maintain copper lines and some COs even when their IP networks have moved on, the report states.

"Because these state requirements are not uniformly imposed on all service providers, the migration to broadband and IP-based services cannot occur successfully for COLRs without transitioning away from the legacy state regulatory requirements," the report states.

There are key current FCC proceedings that will affect how incumbents can manage the transformation to all-IP networks including the FCC's plan for changing the current Universal Service Fund into a mechanism for funding broadband, the revision of Inter-carrier Compensation and the FCC's net-neutrality rules, now facing a court challenge.

The report deals with many other of the challenges and opportunities that service providers face in trying to migrate from today's hybrid world of multiple technologies to an all-IP and mostly fiber optic network.

One recommendation likely to draw fire from competitive carriers involves allowing incumbents that have deployed fiber optics in their local loop plant to decommission the copper lines still there, to eliminate the cost of operating two networks. Competitive service providers have fought to keep copper networks in place as their means of accessing customers, saying that cutting the copper cord effectively locks in that customer to an incumbent.

---

## Technical Information

### Internet number registry reiterates availability of IPv4 addresses

April 1, 2011, Susana Schwartz; *Connected Planet*

The American Registry for Internet Numbers (ARIN) issued a press release recently stating that IPv4 address space still exists for organizations that have documented need, even though last month marked the official exhaustion of the free pool of IPv4 addresses. Address blocks still exist for companies whose run rates and needs dictate they need more IPv4 addresses to grow and keep up, but more awareness is needed of what actions and technologies are needed to make the transition to IPv6.

In a conversation with John Curran, president and CEO of ARIN, it became apparent that “awareness” by network and broadband providers is “not enough” in and of itself. “Many have known since 1999 about the issue, and many have IPv6 services in production, but it was surprising to see how many contacted us last month when it was announced that the final allocation of IPv4 addresses was imminent; they were surprised the time had come,” noted Curran.

Of course, with 7 billion people on the planet (many of whom have more than one address for home, work, game consoles and smartphones), the 4.3 billion IPv4 addresses were inadequate, but will the transition to IPv6 be smooth? Most carriers are cognizant of the issue and well prepared, but what about the businesses they serve? How diligent are CIOs and VPs in different businesses in getting prepared so that there isn’t a hit on performance and quality for their employees?

“The transition to IPv6 will be unlike anything ever done before; it is the largest decentralized project in the world, as you have to take the entire internet—all content and Web sites—and move them all to IPv6,” explained Curran, who notes that the lack of “direct’ backward compatibility” between v4 and v6 addresses could translate into issues with the quality of experience for people engaging in research, communication and commerce on the Internet.

“While mail systems, Web browsers, servers and PCs may support IPv6, the addresses exist as two separate languages. Customers expect they will be able to reach all v4 and v6 Web sites when they buy a service from a broadband provider, so there have to be gateways and translators in place to ensure that broadband customers connecting to IPv4 Web sites do not experience degradations in things like audio, video, ad plug-ins or geo-location capabilities. Will it all work or will there be issues?” asked Curran.

Although June 8 is the Internet Society’s “world IPv6 day,” designated as the date for service providers to voluntarily test compatibility, some issues may not be apparent right away—especially among smaller players. While companies like Yahoo!, Google and Facebook will do what they can to ensure their sites have the best performance possible, it’s the broadband companies selling services to subscribers that have to ensure customers get what they pay for. “Like a company that relies solely on fax rather than allowing for email or digital communication, it may take a while to notice there is a drop off of business resulting from the limited experience offered to existing or potential customers; the same is true with IPv4 sites, where the ‘experience’ encountered may not be known by the owner of the home Web page until problems arise in large numbers.”

While he acknowledges most technical people in the telecom space are aware and working on the issue, he believes those companies to which Internet connectivity is sold have to learn more about gateways and translators to ensure they can access all pieces of the Internet to which they are accustomed. “It’s up to the broadband providers to ensure their customers know their options, as those customers will not know what to do if things do not work,” added Curran.

---

## Industry News

### Key Telecom Trends *Seeking Alpha*

The world is seeing a move to on-demand information and mobile computing, evident by the explosion of smartphones in recent years. Furthermore, bandwidth demand has increased drastically as more people are emailing, texting, downloading applications and watching YouTube on their cell phones, thus requiring networks to be upgraded accordingly. Mobile networks have been upgraded both domestically and internationally to 3G and will eventually be revamped up to 4G. In the home, cable networks have been upgraded from coaxial cables to fiber optics by companies like AT&T and Verizon to gain access to more HD channels and faster, more reliable internet connections. There has also been a shift on the consumer front as wireless companies have been rolling out unlimited prepaid plans favoring consumers looking to trade down and cut costs in this tumultuous economic environment. I'll give a brief overview of two recent trends in Telecom:

1. 3G to 4G/LTE
2. Fiber Optics

### 3G to 4G/LTE

3G has been rolled out domestically for several years and received substantial hype last summer when Apple released the new 3G iPhone. Internationally, 3G has begun to take shape with substantial growth potential in China with telecom giant China Mobile leading the way with the largest wireless subscriber base of 415 million subscribers as of 2008; that's more people than the whole U.S. population of 306 million people! Even though China Mobile has such a large subscriber base, it has huge growth potential in rural China, which the Chinese stimulus plan should help. The Chinese government has allocated \$40 billion to build out the wireless network into rural areas as well as upgrade to 3G.

The new hyped up technology is Long-Term-Evolution (LTE), which is in direct competition with WiMax to become the universal 4G network. An upgrade to 4G is essential in the next half decade as consumers demand videos and high-tech games on their cell phones. Also, enterprise users will require lightning fast speed and high carrying capacity to access corporate data centers full of information to work on the go. Domestically, WiMax is supported by Sprint-Nextel and a fairly new company called Clearwire, which is backed by IT bellwethers like Google, Cisco and Intel

WiMax has already been deployed ahead of LTE, but has had dismal results thus far. WiMax has been tested in the U.S. Northwest and feedback stated it was slow and ineffective. However, Clearwire maintains its goal of WiMax availability to 120 million people by the end of 2011. On the other hand, LTE has shown more support from GSM network carriers, both domestic (AT&T) and internationally (Vodafone); and according to Gartner research, GSM carriers will make up 89% of all global wireless networks by 2011.

"LTE is the natural upgrade path for GSM, and that leads me to conclude that LTE will be one tough cookie for WiMax to beat."

-Craig Mathias, Farpoint Group analyst and *Computerworld* columnist

Another reason why LTE is more sustainable than WiMax is that LTE operates on a lower frequency of 700 MHz, thus providing further signal range and building/obstacle penetration. To invest in LTE, Verizon is the best play as they have significantly more space (seven of ten total licenses) in the wireless spectrum where LTE will be rolled out. They also plan to roll it out in 2010, a year ahead of AT&T. Alcatel-Lucent and Ericsson were selected by Verizon as its primary infrastructure vendors to build out its LTE network.

## Fiber Optics

Fiber Optics are replacing the traditional copper coaxial cables in Telecom thus revolutionizing signal transmission communications with numerous advantages as the world pushes further into a digital world. First and foremost, optical fibers can be strung thinner, thus more fibers can be bundled together for *greater bandwidth* capacity. For the consumer, this means more phone lines strung over the same cable line as well as more channels, including more HD channels which require more information to be sent over the network. This new technology also allows for *better transmission quality* through clearer voice and television picture quality coupled with less dropped signals.

Furthermore, the high quality signals can now travel greater distances with more resistance to outside interference such as radios and other cables. Next up is *faster speeds*: Verizon's fiber optic network called "FiOS" offers internet speeds of 50 Mbps to download and 20 Mbps to upload. Comparatively, Comcast's high-speed "Performance tier" package can only provide internet download speeds of 18 Mbps. However, Comcast announced in late 2008 that it will invest in "Wideband," their next-generation fiber-optic network which will have equivalent speeds to FiOS. Other advantages of fiber optics over copper cables are their significantly lower usage of power and maintenance costs, thus saving money for your service provider and ultimately more cash in your pocket.

---

## New Members

### New Tier I Members:

#### Skyline Membership Corporation



### New Associate Members:

ASSIA, Inc.  
Carolina Technologies  
ServIT, Inc.  
Scott Haile & Company  
The Data Center, Inc.  
Welbell Asset Recovery Center

### Name Changes:

NFU – Aronov Insurance, Inc.  
Thomas & Betts – Belden  
Tyco Electronics – TE Connectivity

### Welcome Back –

Bodamer Consulting LLC

**Welcome aboard folks. Having you as members makes our association even stronger!**

*The content of this publication is prepared by the Tennessee Telecommunications Association for its member companies. This document is produced and distributed to appropriate persons via*

20 June 2011

*email. A copy will also be posted on the TTA website  
<http://www.tenntel.org> Questions or comments should be directed  
to Larry Drake, TTA Executive Director at 615-256-8006 or  
tta2@dtccom.net*