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COMPTEL PLUS
Fall 2015 Business Expo

SHOW DAILY

Monday, October 19, 2015 **I** Marriott Marquis **I** San Francisco, CA

Transformation, Investment and Innovation Drive Opening Keynote Panel

By Tara Seals

Transformation was the theme of the evening as the COMPTEL PLUS Fall 2015 Business Expo kicked off last night.
Joe Eazor, CEO and president at EarthLink, and Kevin Laws, COO at AngelList, brought their unique and insightful perspectives to Sunday's keynote panel, "Competition and Investment: Building COMPTEL, Partnerships and Networks for the Future." Moderated by COMPTEL CEO Chip Pickering, the discussion revolved around the theme of taking care of the present, while focusing on the future and being prepared for the staggering pace of change that defines the communications industry.

(See Keynote, page 6)

COMPTEL's Chip Pickering, EarthLink's Joe Eazor and AngelList's Kevin Laws talk transformation.

The Internet of Things: Opportunity and Obstacles

By Tara Seals

The Internet of Things (IoT) has become one of the hottest buzzwords in the communications industry—but what does that mean for competitive telecom? Here today at the COMPTEL PLUS Fall 2015 Business Expo, a unique lunch-and-learn session will focus on several areas impacting the development of a robust IoT opportunity and marketplace.

Trey Hanbury and Mark Brennan, partners at law firm Hogan Lovells, will lead panelists from Ericsson and Yahoo in a discussion about legal implications and regulatory oversight, privacy, spectrum and engineering, business models and what the future holds.

The IoT, which includes everyday physical objects, such as actuators and sensors linked by networks to computing systems, is already being used in cities in transportation, public health and safety, resource management and service delivery, and is beginning to be adopted in connected homes and in enterprise applications. As a result, a McKinsey Global Institute report, "The Internet of Things: Mapping the Value Beyond the Hype," estimates that by 2025, IoT applications in cities alone could have an economic impact ranging from $930 billion to $1.66 trillion per year. Within the next decade, too, the IoT could have an overall economic impact of up to $11.1 trillion per year, with more than two-thirds of value created in business-to-business environments.

The panel will discuss both opportunities and risk. For instance, the very nature of the IoT places significant demand on networks because it represents an unprecedented proliferation of new devices and smart objects connecting to them. Ericsson famously predicted that there could be 50 billion new devices connecting to the Web and to each other by 2020; the actual number could prove to be much higher.

Addressing this, former Federal Communications Commission Chairman Julius Genachowski and FCC Commissioner Robert McDowell recently authored a joint op-ed piece for the *Wall Street Journal*, where they explained that Congress should instruct the FCC to bring additional spectrum to market to, among other things, power the budding IoT industry. In today's lunch panel, the panelists will discuss options for addressing this adoption hurdle.

Also on the regulatory front, FTC Commissioner Maureen Ohlhausen has espoused the value of applying "regulatory humility" in regards to the Internet of Things and using ex post facto enforcement tools to focus on actual consumer harm. The panelists will weigh whether such a framework is sufficient, or if there a need for ex ante regulation

Lunch Panel - Making the Market: Connecting the Internet of Things

Monday, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
Location: Golden Gate Ballroom
Sponsored by Hogan Lovells

Moderators:

Trey Hanbury, Partner, Hogan Lovells

Mark Brennan, Partner, Hogan Lovells

Panelists:

Bruce Gustafson, Vice President, Government & Industry Affairs, North America, Ericsson

Ghita Harris-Newton, Assistant General Counsel, Head of Global Privacy Law & Privacy Policy, Yahoo

in this space. Multiple federal regulatory agencies have some oversight over IoT, from the FCC and FTC to non-traditional agencies like the Food and Drug Administration and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Panelists will be asked if there is any value to centralizing some of that oversight to a single regulatory body, or is that diffusion is simply a side-effect of a new technology that touches consumers and businesses in so many various ways?

One of the findings from the McKinsey report is that a significant amount of the IoT's value is not being captured because most of the data being collected goes unused. It estimates that less than 1 percent of the data collected is being used to empower decisions—and Big Data analytics is one of IoT's biggest benefits. It also postulates that interoperability among IoT systems is required to capture 40 percent of the potential value.

The panelists will discuss how standardization and interoperability are playing out over the short- and long-term, and will discuss the best practice of "data minimization" – the recommendation that companies should not collect more information than they need. How are companies balancing their data collection practices between information they need right now to support existing business models, and information that could support future, unforeseen innovation?

Don't miss this compelling lunch panel discussion, as the IoT will be sure to affect you and your business, and sooner rather than later. ❏

COMPTEL PLUS 2015 Unveils an Innovative New Show Format

By Tara Seals

You already know that the COMPTEL PLUS Fall 2015 Business Expo is the go-to event for communications industry professionals looking to expand their networks and strengthen existing relationships. New for this year, the Expo Hall will provide unprecedented access to companies representing the wide range of industry suppliers, networking opportunities and cutting-edge, industry-relevant education program, in three platform zones – Data Center & Cloud, Over-The-Top, and Networks – and The Global Lounge.

These platform zones are designed to fully engage you with top-quality presenters in key areas of the industry. Grab a seat or mingle in the back to learn about industry trends, hear customer stories, and solutions for some of your key business challenges.

Also, don't miss being at the center of it all at

The Hub, sponsored by Twitter, offering thought leadership with must-see panel presentations and live interviews with industry newsmakers.

COMPTEL PLUS is also offering networking opportunities, where attendees, exhibitors and sponsors can get together and trade tips, tricks and knowledge in a casual environment. Every day, there will be receptions, parties and events where everyone can mingle. And, attendees can meet with prospective and current customers on the show floor and in the Deal Center.

Also, the COMPTEL Mobile App has everything you need to get the most out of COMPTEL PLUS. Get session information, see speaker bios, explore the exhibitors in the Expo Hall, get the latest show news - all at your fingertips. Simply download the app to your mobile device. ❏

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Competition and the Future of the Industry: Don't Miss the Kickoff Keynotes

The COMPTEL PLUS Fall 2015 Business Expo is focusing on the policy of competition and the future of the industry with its kick-off keynotes this morning. FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel will take the stage at 9 a.m. to discuss what's happening in Washington D.C., and its implications. Her conversation with COMPTEL CEO Chip Pickering will be followed by a CEO Roundtable Keynote entitled, "The Future of the Industry - Are You In?" This panel discussion will offer critical industry intelligence from those in charge of the high-level visions at their respective companies.

Commissioner Rosenworcel is expected to provide attendees with insights into the communications landscape and current priorities at the Federal Communications Commission.

"From her time with the FCC and on Capitol Hill, Commissioner Rosenworcel understands the importance of a competitive marketplace for fostering economic growth, enhancing educational opportunities and enriching our civic lives," said Pickering. "She is a tireless advocate for our children, the future of education and bringing the benefits of broadband and the digital age to schools and libraries through the E-rate program. No one has done more to raise the importance of the homework gap for low-income students. In addition, she has worked to ensure there is sufficient wireless spectrum to support telehealth and other core initiatives. We look forward to hearing from her about the topics taking precedence at the Commission and her vision for the future of the industry."

Commissioner Rosenworcel joined the FCC in May 2012, bringing a decade and a half of public and private sector communications law experience to her position on the Commission. Prior to joining the agency, she served as senior communications counsel for the United States Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation. In this position, she was responsible for legislation, hearings and policy development involving a wide range of communications issues, including spectrum auctions, public safety, broadband deployment and adoption, universal service, video programming, satellite television, local radio and digital television transition.

Before joining the staff of the Committee, she served as legal advisor to former FCC Commissioner Michael J. Copps and legal counsel to the Chief of the Wireline Competition Bureau, and practiced communications law at Drinker Biddle and Reath. She is a native of Hartford, Conn., and is a graduate of Wesleyan University and New York University School of Law.

During the CEO Roundtable Keynote, Pickering will host Chris Ancell, CEO of XO Communications; Randy Brouckman, CEO of EdgeConneX; and Laura Thomas, CEO of TNCI. This much-anticipated event will give industry CEOs an opportunity share their insights on the evolving communications marketplace. The panelists will discuss trends in the communications and technology market and technological developments on the horizon. Topics of discussion will include how to incent network deployment, the impact of market consolidation, and what actions are needed to promote continued innovation and competition. ❏

(Keynote, continued from page 1)

Thanks to explosive demand for bandwidth, largely created by the need to support over-the-top (OTT) and edge services, global network investment has accelerated—this in turn has fed back into a cycle of innovation and further transformation, the panelists noted, as cloud, over-the-top and mobile services have become the norm in a bandwidth-rich world.

For its part, EarthLink is evolving as a service provider to meet the demands of the market, Eazor said. Eazor, who before taking the helm at EarthLink, served in executive level positions EMC, Electronic Data Systems (EDS), HP Enterprise Services at Hewlett-Packard, McKinsey & Company and Springbow Solutions. He noted that he has focused on positioning EarthLink for continued success and future growth by responding to and anticipating future trends, focusing in on core areas of the business and most importantly by continuing to invest in its network—because the writing is on the wall when it comes to bandwidth's role in the future economy.

Meanwhile Laws drew from his deep experience with startups in the OTT arena, lending his perspective on how the investment landscape—and the competitive landscape—has transformed over time and continues to do so. Pickering noted that Laws "creates services he wants to exist and then hopes the rest of the world finds them useful. And so far the world has."

For COMPTEL too, transformation is a critical component of its continuing efforts as a trade association. Since coming on board as CEO, Pickering has focused on expanding COMPTEL's advocacy, membership and trade show events to better reflect all facets of the competitive communications ecosystem.

"In doing so, our membership has not only grown, but has also become more diverse by the addition of companies that provide content and OTT, and data center and cloud services," he explained. "It is because of members and partners, like EarthLink and AngelList, that we have been able to grow and better position COMPTEL for the future."

He added, "Each of us in our own way is investing in the future of the communications and technology market."

The COMPTEL PLUS Opening Night Reception & Wine Walk, sponsored by Netflix and supported by COMPTEL's Board of Director companies, followed the keynote. ❏

Networking Events

Monday, October 19 – 4:30-6 p.m.: Beers with Peers Networking Reception (Expo Hall)
Tuesday, October 20 – 5-8 p.m. Closing Party at Mezzanine (444 Jessie St) featuring entertainment by Pop Rocks, with special guest Mark McGrath of Sugar Ray

Program Highlights

All keynotes will take place in the Golden Gate Ballroom
Monday, October 19
8:30 - 9 a.m.: Welcome and special announcement by COMPTEL CEO Chip Pickering
9 - 9:30 a.m.: Morning keynote with FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
9:30 - 10:15 a.m.: CEO Roundtable: The Future of the Industry

Tuesday, October 20
9 - 10 a.m.: Keynote Panel on The Disruptive Impact of Technology on Traditional Video Delivery
(see preview story, page 8)

Wednesday, October 21
8:30 a.m.-11:45 a.m.: Half-day workshop - The FCC's Open Internet Order: Key Issues for Carriers and ISPs (Nob Hill Meeting Room)
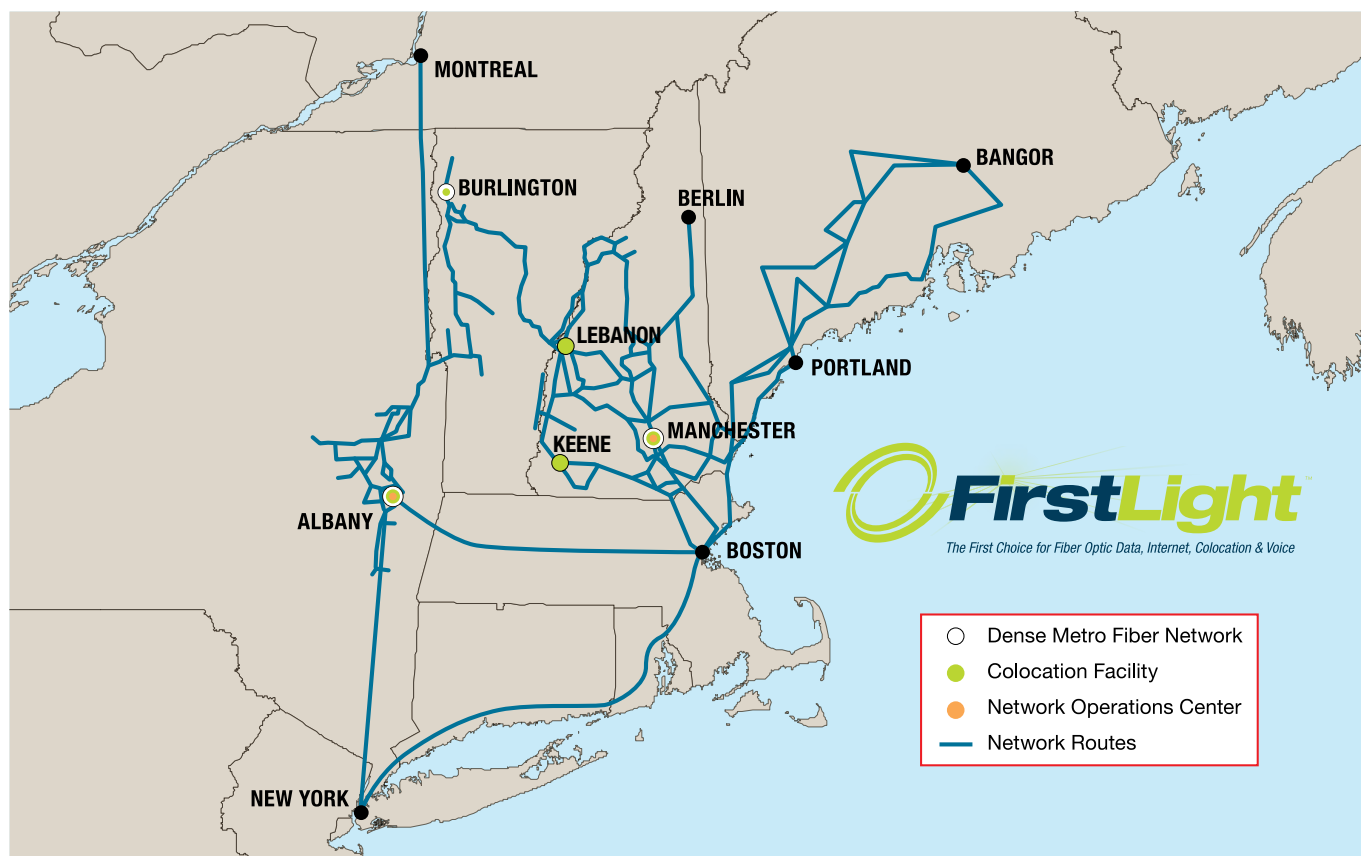
OTT, Cord-Cutting and 4K
It's a Brave New World for Video Delivery

By Tara Seals

The day is approaching when over-the-top (OTT) consumption becomes the majority of TV and video viewing. But the evolution to a new video marketplace won't happen without transformations in both service provider and home networking — dramatically changing the way broadcasters, media companies and brands operate. And in turn, the burgeoning interest by consumers in on-demand streaming video is putting an enormous strain on networks, which are struggling to cope with the growing demands on bandwidth.

On Tuesday, a keynote panel will examine "The Disruptive Impact of Technology on Traditional Video Delivery." Panelists from Google, NTCA, ITTA and Public Knowledge will discuss key issues facing last-mile providers in the era of OTT services, such as those offered by Amazon, Netflix and Hulu; Ultra HD 4K content and cord-cutting. Topics ranging from the future of linear TV content, to content delivery networks (CDNs), to challenges in content distribution agreements will be on the table. Along with, of course, questions as to what this means for network investment.

OTT AND CORD-CUTTING: ON THE RISE

There's no doubt that the traditional pay TV model is changing. A full 10 percent of U.S. broadband households are now cord-cutters, according to Parks Associates.

The research found that a quarter of these have cancelled their pay TV service in the past 12 months, and are instead using online video sources.

In addition, 7 percent of U.S. broadband households are recent cord-shavers - those who have downgraded their pay TV service within the past 12 months and use online video sources. Cord-nevers, or consumers who have never subscribed to a pay TV service, but do use online video sources, represent 3 percent of broadband households.

"Although pay TV adoption rates have held fairly steady over the past four years, the video industry is highly sensitive to these groups of consumers," said Brett Sappington, director of research at Parks Associates. "Cord-cutters, -shavers, and -nevers represent both the risk and opportunity facing the industry today. As viewing evolves, companies want to be sure that they are in a position to react to trends and adequately capture revenues. The massive influx of new OTT video services in 2015 is one example of video market players making moves to prepare for the new future of video entertainment."

VIDEO-FRIENDLY NETWORKS

More and more triple-play and ISP operators are looking to launch their own OTT video offerings to compete with the likes of Netflix and hang onto their TV dominance, allowing a lack of bandwidth to contribute to a poor quality of experience for the end user is out of the question. And as a result, operators are continuously trying to forecast and manage bandwidth requirements for the next-generation digital home.

A report from Rethink Research, and sponsored by MoCA, found that a home with three TVs (common in the U.S., though not necessarily in all other countries), each with 4K Ultra HD capability (the next generation of television technology), plus three additional video streams on smaller screens, will have a minimum requirements of 85Mbps.

The minimum requirement for a home network in this scenario is three Ultra HD streams at 25Mbps each, three portable device streams 2.5Mbps each, with the additional 5Mbps for "other" activity (think smart home services and the Internet of Things) — together this represents a "peak" home environment for Internet traffic.

In other words, operators should target 171Mbps per home for the Ultra HD age.

So perhaps it's no surprise that on the operator front, 1Gbps services to the home have become the new frontier of competition for triple-play providers looking to differentiate by providing the best experience for subscribers (for more on this, see our "Future of Fiber" panel preview, page 10).

HOME NETWORKS IMPLICATIONS

Taking advantage of all that speed requires that the network inside the home is up to the task. But today, there is no Wi-Fi router that's capable of supporting 1Gbps throughput.

"More and more people are choosing to opt out of traditional broadcast TV in favor of all-IP services," HomeGrid Forum president Donna Yasay said, speaking at a recent event. "And they generally no longer have just one entertainment point or Internet outlet in the home – it's more likely to be one in every room."

This, combined with the fact that there are more and more devices that provide streaming video, such as connected TVs and streaming media devices, game consoles and set-top boxes, is leading to a golden moment for technologies like HomePlug.

"Your in-home network [must be] up to the task of handling so much bandwidth and dispersing content to all four corners of your home," Yasay said. "And of course, if you live in a dense residential environment, such as an apartment block, you need to know that the network can handle the close proximity of other networks, something wireless often struggles with."

Yasay argues that the quality of experience these services require and the bandwidth block that can arise with so much going on in one small space, can only be handled in multi-room, multi-device homes and multi-dwelling units (MDUs) by mixing and matching the wireless and wireline networking to fit individual consumer's or family's needs.

"What makes most sense is to take the best of all the networking technologies and combine them," Yasay said. "Wireline technologies of any description, running at Gigabit speeds around the home with G.hn make a robust, reliable backbone, connecting static devices such as TVs, smart meters, desktops, whilst access to the Internet from individual mobile devices can piggyback with Wi-Fi onto the network." ❏

Keynote Panel - The Disruptive Impact of Technology on Traditional Video Delivery

Tuesday October 20, 9 – 10 a.m.
Location: Golden Gate Ballroom

Moderator:
Markham Erickson, Partner, Steptoe & Johnson

Panelists:
Milo Medin, Vice President, Access Services, Google

Jill Canfield, Vice President of Legal and Industry, Assistant General Counsel, NTCA

Genny Morelli, President, ITTA

John Bergmayer, Senior Staff Attorney, Public Knowledge

Gigabit Fiber: Driving Economic Benefit

By Tara Seals

The race for Gigabit fiber is on, shaping the last-mile industry in new ways. But looking ahead, what does the future hold and how will it impact customers and service providers' business?

These will be the core topics for Monday's panel discussion, "The Future of Fiber: Gigabit - What's Next?" at 10 a.m. in The Hub.

A key topic for panelists from the Fiber to the Home Council (FTTH Council), Google and FirstLight will be how new fiber networks foster economic growth for communities. And, also figuring into the discussion will be the economics of buildouts, deployment challenges, the expansion of fiber networks into rural markets and the need for content and video reform.

GIGABIT FIBER: IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT SUPER-FAST CONTENT

Gigabit services are the new frontier of competition for triple-play providers—and they turn out to have a measurable economic benefit. A study from the FTTH Council found that communities with widely-available gigabit access have per capita GDP that is higher than communities with little to no availability of Gigabit services.

The study examined 55 communities in nine states, finding a positive impact on economic activity in the 14 communities where gigabit services are widely available. That plays out in multiple ways, including through the direct effect of infrastructure investment and increased expenditures, as well as shifts in economic activity (e.g. job creation and occupational changes) and productivity gains.

"Gigabit communities are empowered communities," said FTTH Council president and session panelist Heather Gold. "The study results suggest that gigabit broadband communities exhibit a per capita GDP approximately 1.1 percent higher than the similar communities with little to no availability of gigabit services. In dollar terms, this suggests that the 14 gigabit broadband communities studied enjoyed approximately $1.4 billion in additional GDP when gigabit broadband became widely available. As we look at these study results, we can clearly conclude that every community should be a Gigabit community."

Panel Discussion - The Future of Fiber: Gigabit - What's Next?
Monday October 19, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Location: Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) - The Hub

Moderator:
Chip Pickering, CEO, COMPTEL

Panelists:
Heather Gold, President & CEO, Fiber to the Home Council

Kurt Van Wagenen, President & CEO, FirstLight Fiber

Chris Levendos, Head of Network Deployment and Operations, Google Fiber

Conversely, the 41 communities in the study that didn't have widely available Gigabit broadband likely experienced forgone GDP in 2012 of as much as $3.3 billion, the study found.

This impact can play out in many ways. "I anticipate that the increase in bandwidth will pave an easier pathway to various other infant technologies, like the Internet of Things, cloud computing and contextual machine learning technologies," said Alex Cho, a research analyst with Seeking Alpha.

Google itself seems to indicate that things are playing out as such. It has said that in Provo, Utah,

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Consolidated Communications Merges with Enventis

Consolidated Communications Holdings Inc. and Enventis Corp. (formerly known as HickoryTech) recently joined forces through a merger, thus increasing the size and scale of the Consolidated Communications fiber footprint.

The merger has significantly augmented the capabilities of Consolidated's carrier services team, which is responsible for the wholesale network and product portfolios. The strength of the combined resources will help the company to drive the expansion of access networks in all regions, thereby increasing the availability of lit buildings, near-net sites and Ethernet access in CLEC and ILEC territories.

The combined company also interconnects with many local, regional, national and global carriers, and leverages its advanced fiber-optic network

1Gbps has led to programmers from across the country to gather at DevMountain to develop new Web and mobile applications. In addition, the United Way of Utah County has promoted new digital literacy programs throughout the community; and one organization, called Now I Can, has used Google Fiber to remotely connect parents with their children undergoing intensive physical therapy in Provo.

KEY TRENDS SHAPING FIBER DEPLOYMENT

The panelists certainly bring plenty of perspective to the session. Google Fiber for instance arguably kicked off the 1Gbps competition for the home when it announced its plans to deploy it in Kansas City in 2011. Since then, several broadband providers have announced new deployments. In June, AT&T announced the expansion of its "Gigapower" service to 12 communities, including Charlotte, N.C. And in the cable sector, the DOCSIS3.1 rollout effort has been dubbed the "GigaSphere" initiative. Time Warner Cable notably has embraced the 1Gbps movement with a $25 million network investment to support the rollout in Los Angeles and other major markets.

And indeed, Google Fiber continues to expand into metro areas, including most recently Atlanta; Charlotte; Nashville, Tenn.; the Raleigh-Durham, N.C. area; and Salt Lake City. Google is already live in Austin, Texas; Kansas City, Mo.; and Provo, with its fiber-fed 1Gbps Internet and TV packages. For now, the five new cities are in the design phase, with service turn-ups to be announced. Pricing plans, if they follow other rollouts, should include a free basic Internet connection at 5Mbps following a $300 construction fee, a 1Gbps broadband available for $70 a month, and a broadband plus TV service for $120 a month. These are prices that are similar to European offerings and well below a typical cable subscription—meaning that the company is certainly shaking up future business models.

Meanwhile FirstLight continues to grow its fiber network throughout upstate New York and northern New England, and several large marketplace trends are guiding its decisions on network investment and the development of its portfolio. For instance, it has seen a demand for higher bandwidth, data-centric solutions, especially Ethernet. That's particularly true in the vertical markets, and especially in the financial and healthcare sectors.

"Customer demand for Ethernet and IP data is absolutely one of our biggest drivers, especially from entities that are data centric but may have some voice service needs," CEO Kurt Van Wagenen said in an interview late last year. "Some smaller customers are okay with TDM. But increasingly, the larger enterprises and carriers are looking for IP."

A second trend that the company has seen is the fact that customers, particularly enterprise customers, are outsourcing more communications and applications into data centers.

"This is a trend that we expect to continue," Van Wagenen said. "Increasingly they have a need to ensure that equipment is in a highly secure, managed data center. And we will continue to ensure that we have sufficient data center inventory in all of our markets.

Meanwhile, very large customers, including wireless carriers and the largest enterprises, are increasingly interested in discussing dark fiber and leases, he added. On the wireless side, there has been a rapid shift from TDM based-backhaul from towers to Ethernet, and increased demand for dark fiber to macro cells. Also, as small-cell rollouts, which boost wireless density, are in the initial stages.

"How the network needs to be designed to support the demand that's driving long term evolution is shifting," Van Wagenen said. "They need to support not just bandwidth growth and the filling in of coverage, but also myriad small cell solutions. And they're looking for more predictability around costs in their own networks, which dark fiber can provide." ❏

and multiple data centers to offer a wide range of communications services, including Ethernet, TDM, wavelength, colocation and dark fiber.

"This merger combined two companies with similar strategies and cultures, resulting in a financially strong company with a robust balance sheet and attractive dividend payout ratio," said Bob Udell, Consolidated's president and CEO. "Enventis built a strong business delivering competitive business and broadband services over a 4,200 route mile fiber network. The combination and additional markets created a broader platform from which to grow and expand."

Formerly headquartered in Mankato, Minn., Enventis operates a next-generation fiber network that enabled facilities-based operations in its home state, as well as into Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin. The company has grown both revenue and EBITDA at a compound annual growth rate of approximately five percent since 2006.

Enventis serves more than 1,600 lit buildings, 12,000 near-net sites and 290 fiber-to-the tower sites, and operates six data centers. Enventis' network reach both complements and bolsters Consolidated's existing product portfolio and provides denser network coverage in its northern region.

"Our long-term stability combined with extensive colocations at LEC COs and carrier hotels in both rural and metro markets, customer-engineered solutions, dark-fiber availability and an agile, professional wholesale team allow us to operate a vast fiber network with unique reach in key service areas," said Brian Carr, vice president of carrier services at Consolidated.

Founded more than a century ago, Consolidated Communications provides advanced communications services to both residential and business customers in California, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Texas and Pennsylvania, and itself already offers a wide range of services over its IP-based network, including local and long distance telephone, digital phone, high-speed Internet access and digital TV. ❏

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What the FCC's Open Internet Order Means to Competition

By Tara Seals

The FCC's February 2015 Open Internet Order (OIO) has impacted the telecommunications industry landscape in profound ways: It is currently the subject of a concerted judicial challenge from multiple parties, with a decision expected next spring. On Wednesday, a can't-miss half-day workshop, sponsored by Davis Wright Tremaine LLP (DWT), will fill attendees in on the implications for their business from the outcomes of that decision, with a special emphasis on key changes and challenges for competitive providers.

Jim Smith, partner, Davis Wright Tremaine LLP

Entitled "The FCC's Open Internet Order: Key Issues for Carriers and ISPs," the workshop will cover what attendees need to know to understand, comply with and perhaps benefit from the new Open Internet rules. That includes significant changes to providers' privacy and security-related responsibilities, as well as the possible extension of universal service fund (USF) obligations to broadband providers. And, COMPTEL PLUS attendees can earn 3.25 CA General Credits by attending.

The workshop will consist of three modules. From 8:30 - 9:45 a.m., "Open Internet Order 101: Everything You Wanted to Know But were Afraid to Ask" will feature Chris Savage and Danielle Frappier from DWT and Joseph Cavender from Level 3 Communications.

The presenters will provide an overview of what the FCC's OIO did legally (impose Title II regulation, with forbearance) and as a regulatory/policy matter (impose certain specific bright-line rules and some general conduct standards; impose disclosure obligations and cover Internet interconnection).

The presenters also will explain the implications of the FCC's reclassification of broadband Internet access services for USF contribution obligations and the possible impact on the FCC's long-awaited contribution reform. The OIO means that because Internet is now a Title II service akin to a public utility, the Commission could more easily expand federal USF requirements to include broadband and Internet access, SMS messaging and non-connected VoIP services. It also means that ISP services could be made subject to local, state and

> ## 'No one agrees about the extent to which this regulation should be applied. This is probably the hottest issue today in telecom and information services.'
>
> — Jim Smith, Davis Wright Tremaine LLP

federal taxation, just as phone service is.

Next, from 9:45 - 11 a.m., "Privacy and Security Under the OIO: New Requirements and Challenges for Telecom Carriers and Broadband Internet Access Providers and Implications for Edge Providers," will be presented by Jim Smith and Christin McMeley of DWT, and will feature Dale Schmick, COO at YourTel America and TerraCom Inc. This discussion will focus on a largely overlooked, but extremely important, regulatory change that the FCC introduced in enforcement actions last year, and then formalized in the OIO: An expansion of the Commission's authority to regulate and police the privacy and security practices of both carriers and broadband Internet access service providers.

The OIO also launched a proceeding, now pending, to develop new privacy requirements for broadband providers. The session will cover what competitive providers need to know about the FCC's Section 222 jurisdiction and what they must do to avoid potential exposure to penalties for privacy, security and data breach violations.

Unsurprisingly for an order of its magnitude, the OIO has unleashed a torrent of litigation, including lawsuits (ultimately consolidated before the D.C. Circuit) from multiple petitioners, with more than 20 other parties lining up on both sides. The National Cable & Telecom Association (NCTA), CTIA – the Wireless Association, Internet access provider interests and many others are lined up against the OIO; COMPTEL and others are supporters.

The oral argument in the D.C. circuit is coming up on December 4. So from 11 - 11:45 a.m., "Reading the Tea Leaves: How Will the D.C. Circuit Decide the OIO Appeals?" will take a look at where that litigation sits at the moment, including looking into the crystal ball as to various prospects for success, and what providers might expect.

"As with all significant appeals of telecom matters, the court could reverse and strike down the entire order, or it could reject just part of it—our panel will delve into the different opinions that the judges might reach," Smith said.

This third module will be presented by Peter Karanjia of DWT and Markham Erickson from Steptoe and Johnson LLP. Karanjia is a former deputy general counsel at the FCC, and an expert in FCC litigation and appellate matters, while Erickson is handling the appeals on behalf of several of the parties. They will discuss how the Commission's new Title II framework for broadband may fare in the D.C. Circuit and whether a blockbuster telecom case before the Supreme Court is in the cards for 2016.

"The Open Internet Order is an extremely important decision that affects really every telecom and information services provider," said Smith. "A significant degree of regulation will be provided to Internet access providers to make sure that the Internet is open and that there is no paid priority or discrimination. That's the FCC's goal. And that's obviously a worthy goal, but no one agrees about the extent to which this regulation should be applied. This is probably the hottest issue today in telecom and information services." ❏

Half-Day Workshop - The FCC's Open Internet Order: Key Issues for Carriers and ISPs

Wednesday, 8:30 – 11:45 a.m.
Location: Nob Hill
Sponsored by Davis Wright Tremaine, LLP

8:30 - 9:45 a.m. Open Internet Order 101: Everything You Wanted to Know but Were Afraid to Ask

9:45 - 11:00 a.m. Privacy and Security Under the OIO: New Requirements and Challenges

11 - 11:45 a.m. Reading the Tea Leaves: How Will the D.C. Circuit Decide on the OIO Appeals?

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Operators Select Taqua for Class 4/5 Network Replacement

Taqua LLC (Booth 311) has announced that seven additional fixed-line operators have chosen the Taqua 7000 Intelligent Switching System to replace their legacy Class 5 networks.

The company said that it continues to see a trend of incumbent and competitive local exchange carriers (ILECs and CLECs) replacing their Class 4/5 legacy switching systems.

"We see a steady base of operators needing to replace their legacy Class 4/5 switching systems and deliver IP voice," said Todd Daniels, vice president of sales for Taqua. "In addition, many operators who made initial legacy replacement decisions, and others that choose costly front-end upgrades to their legacy systems, are now turning to Taqua because of our company and products have proven to be stable and diverse."

The new operators choosing the T7000 Intelligent Switching System include:

- Louisa Communications, a subsidiary of The Mutual Telephone Company of Morning Sun, providing a wide variety of communications solutions, including customized phone service and Internet access to cities in southeastern Iowa;
- Buckland Telephone Co., a local provider of telephone, cable and home security services to subscribers in and around Buckland, Ohio;
- Swayzee Communications Corp., an independent telephone services provider serving

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The T7000's VoIP capabilities enable small carriers to provide bundles of advanced services to their customers.

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north-central Indiana communities since 1903;
- Yeoman Telephone Co., serving local customers in Yeoman, Indiana for more than 100 years;
- Farmers and Merchants Mutual Telephone, serving local customers in the Wayland, Iowa, area;
- Oklatel, which has provided telephone services in East Central Oklahoma since 1973; and
- Sharon Telephone Company, which has been providing telephone service since 1900 to customers in Hills, Iowa, and its surrounding areas.

The T7000's VoIP capabilities enable small carriers to provide bundles of advanced services to their customers, with the flexibility to provide a host of new TDM and/or IP-based services in the future. The T7000 is based on a patented blade-based switching design in which all the functions of a switch or IP gateway are performed on a single circuit pack. The simplicity of the architecture enables the industry's lowest deployment and operational costs for many wireline and wireless switching applications, Taqua said.

The system also supports a variety of protocols including SS7, SIP, MGCP, GR-303, CAS, NCS, PRI, GSM/CDMA, 2G, 3G and 4G.

"Each card in the Taqua 7000 Switching System (T7000) is a full featured Class 4/5 next-generation switch capable of providing TDM and IP telephony services," Daniels added. ❑

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With this significant improvement to our size and scale, CCI has increased the availablility of Lit Buildings, Near-Net sites and Ethernet access in CLEC and ILEC territories. We interconnect with many local, regional, national, and global carriers to provide end-to-end solutions, enabling a wide range of communications services including Ethernet, TDM, wavelength, colocation and dark fiber.

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To learn more about our expanded fiber network and Wholesale services, please see the insert in your show bag or contact us by calling **888.547.3558** or visit **consolidated.com/wholesale.**

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COMPTEL Partners with NEF for Member-Only Discounts

COMPTEL recently announced a partnership with NEF (Booth 312), the data transport and data center professional services firm, in which the association's member companies can receive exclusive discounts on NEF's FiberLocator tool, the most up-to-date telecom network intelligence and maps platform currently available, along with specialized consulting services.

"As the data and connectivity needs of businesses and consumers increase exponentially, it is imperative that COMPTEL's member companies have accurate and detailed information in order to make important network investment decisions," said Alan Hill, COMPTEL's senior vice president for strategic business development. "By working with

NEF, COMPTEL is providing its members – particularly small and mid-sized companies – access to critical information and industry expertise."

NEF's FiberLocator tool provides users with a full understanding of who the fiber providers are within a given area, whether that's between two points or at a single location. Comprised of data from hundreds of CLECs and facilities-based carriers, as well as hundreds of thousands of lit buildings and data centers, FiberLocator is the tool for network planners looking to quickly and easily secure the most up-to-date industry information. FiberLocator is available as a subscription-based, software-as-a-service (SaaS) tool and as an API, enabling users to overlay fiber data in their own internal systems.

NEF also offers a combined century of industry experience and a proven methodology for providing its clients with the best networks, information and pricing available. NEF provides a broad spectrum of products from fiber mapping to consulting, to procurement and project management. Through our many partners and carrier relationships, NEF designs custom connectivity solutions and provides access to hundreds of fiber providers and thousands of lit buildings and data centers.

"NEF is extremely excited to work with COMPTEL and its member companies," said Steve McCarthy, NEF's COO. "We fully understand the challenges and opportunities facing small and mid-sized carriers, and look forward to developing strong relationships with these companies to assist them as they expand their network footprints."

NEF will also host a panel entitled "Fiber Infrastructure: Network Planning Strategies" here at the conference, on Tuesday at 11 a.m. in the Network Platform Zone of the exhibit hall. The panel will focus on network planning strategies that can be employed when determining whether to invest in new network construction, or maximize the value of existing infrastructure to gain market share and reach. Whether it is an indefeasible right of use (IRU), fiber swap, real estate lease for a new data center or backhaul services, network planners need to understand all the options that may be available in a given market.

INDATEL DATA ADDED TO FIBERLOCATOR

NEF separately announced that new data from INDATEL (Booth 813) is now being added to FiberLocator. INDATEL's nationwide fiber footprint and current lit building maps are now searchable through FiberLocator's online subscription service. The database now has more than 300 carriers, nearly 400,000 lit building records and more than 6,800 data centers.

"We are excited to be able to provide these 27 independent, rural telecommunications carriers with an equal playing field to other nationally-known providers," said Steve McCarthy, COO at NEF. "FiberLocator provides INDATEL's member companies with visibility on a national scale, allowing them to be seen by audiences that may have never known of these local providers

Added Mel Wagner, vice president of business development and sales for INDATEL services, "Before our partnership with NEF, INDATEL member companies' network maps and lit building data had never before been compiled into one searchable database. Agents, enterprises and other carriers can benefit from greater visibility into their fiber footprints and have another avenue through which to procure their services." ❏
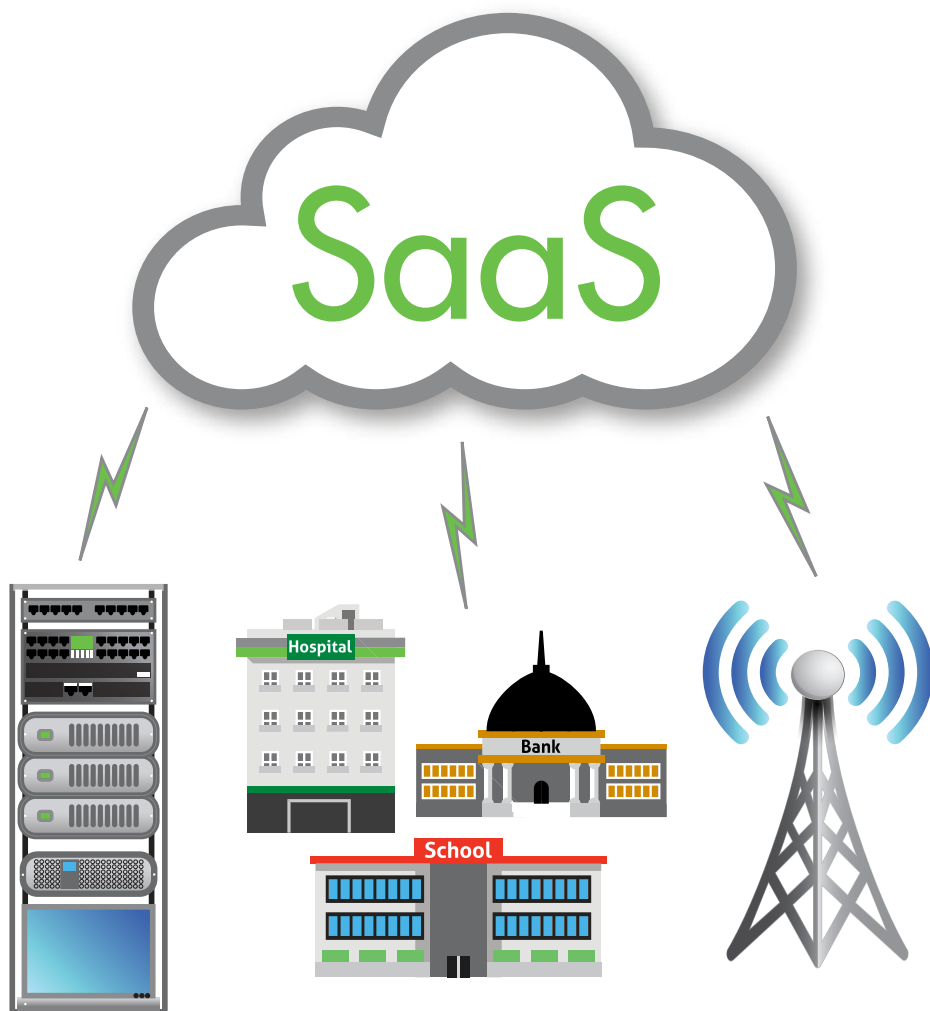
FairPoint Taps Equinox for Usage Analytics

FairPoint Communications, which provides communications technology in northern New England, has expanded licensing for the TeleLink usage analytics solution from Nashville, Tenn.-based Equinox Information Systems (Booth 703).

FairPoint's use of the platform will now include reports to comply with the FCC's requirements for rural call completion reporting.

'We knew Equinox turned out cost-effective solutions that produced results.'

— Tom Nolting, FairPoint

The TeleLink platform gives carriers access to their usage data in an actionable way, allowing them to perform in-depth analysis of individual events, as well as network traffic trends for a wide variety of business decisions. FairPoint has been using TeleLink to generate a variety of ad hoc reports, including requested subpoena data, since originally licensing the system in 2013. They will now also be able to collate and output the FCC-required rural call report template directly from TeleLink.

Equinox has been a vendor to FairPoint Communications since 2008, when it first began using Equinox's fraud management system, Protector. Based on their existing relationship and support during the initial Protector project, FairPoint contacted Equinox when looking to replace a reporting system in 2013. At that time, the company licensed the TeleLink solution for its ability to retrieve, aggregate, summarize and report upon usage data historically and in real time, using the built-in reporting tools and centralized data warehouse.

When the need for FCC compliance arose, FairPoint turned once again to Equinox to create the required summary and detail reports on rural completion statistics.

"Based on the Protector implementation, we knew Equinox turned out cost-effective solutions that produced results," said Tom Nolting, vice president of financial operations at FairPoint. "More importantly, we experienced just how serious the entire Equinox team took their commitment to customers. As a result, we turned to their team first for an advanced reporting solution to meet our initial subpoena and subsequent compliance requirements."

"At Equinox, we take great pride in our reputation, which is built on a foundation of repeatedly exceeding customer expectations," added Equinox executive vice president David West. "Every member of the Equinox team is hardworking and dedicated to helping our customer's businesses succeed. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve FairPoint once again." ❏

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SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18

2:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Registration Open
Yerba Buena Foyer

5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Welcome Address and Keynote
Golden Gate Ballroom

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
**Wine Walk Welcome Reception
sponsored by Netflix**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall)

MONDAY, OCTOBER 19

7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Registration Open
Yerba Buena Foyer

7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.
Attendee Breakfast
Golden Gate Pre-Function

8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
Welcome Address and Announcement
Golden Gate Ballroom

9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
**Keynote Conversation with FCC
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel**
Golden Gate Ballroom

9:30 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.
**CEO Roundtable Keynote: The
Future of the Industry – Are You In?**
Golden Gate Ballroom

10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
**Refreshment Break sponsored by
NTT Communications**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall)

10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Expo Hall and Deal Center Open
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall)

10:30 a.m. –11:30 a.m.
**The Future of Fiber: Gigabit -
What's Next?**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) -
The Hub

11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.   [OTT]
**Leveraging New and Innovative
Payment Technologies to Help
Grow Your Business**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) –
Over-the-Top Platform Zone
Sponsored by EFS

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
**Lunch Panel
Making the Market: Connecting
the Internet of Things**
Golden Gate Ballroom
Sponsored by Hogan Lovells

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
**Attendee Lunch sponsored
by Neustar**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall)

1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.   [Data Center icon]
**Simplifying Cloud Connectivity
for Enterprises and SMBs**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) –
Data Center & Cloud Platform Zone

1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
**Ice Cream Break sponsored
by Verizon**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall)

1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.   [Network icon]
**Bridging the Gap: Bringing Large
Bandwidth to Underserved Areas**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) –
Networks Platform Zone

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.   [OTT]
What You Will Be Wearing Tomorrow
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) –
Over-the-Top Platform Zone

3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
**Refreshment Break sponsored
by Time Warner**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall)

3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.   [Data Center icon]
**Enabling Small Cells and Cloud-RAN
for Metro Market Connectivity
with the New All-Access**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) –
Data Center & Cloud Platform Zone

3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
**Trends in Technology:
The Customer Perspective**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) –
The Hub

3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.   [Network icon]
**SDN/NFV-enabled Networks:
The Dawn of Self-Actualized
Communications**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) –
Networks Platform Zone

4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
**Beers with Peers Networking
Reception**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall)

5:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
ATLANTIC-ACM Awards
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) –
The Hub

5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
PAC Reception (Invitation Only)

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20

7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Registration Open
Yerba Buena Foyer

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
CEO Breakfast
(Open to C-Level executives at COMPTEL
member companies); limited seating
available and pre-registration is required
The View at the Marriott Marquis

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.
Attendee Breakfast
Golden Gate Pre-Function

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
**Keynote Panel - The Disruptive
Impact of Technology on Traditional
Video Delivery**
Golden Gate Ballroom

10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
**Refreshment Break sponsored
by Lumos**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall)

10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Expo Hall and Deal Center Open
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall)

10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.   [Data Center icon]
**Changes in Telephone Number
Administration: The FCC's VoIP
Direct Access Order**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) –
Data Center & Cloud Platform Zone
Sponsored by Neustar

10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
**Looking Ahead: The Future
of Content**
Golden Gate Ballroom

11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.   [OTT]
**Sensors to Software – the IoT
Value Chain**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) –
Over-the-Top Platform Zone

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.   [Network icon]
**Fiber Infrastructure: Network
Planning Strategies**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) –
Networks Platform Zone

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Attendee Lunch
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) –

11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.
**Networks for Competition and
Choice Press Briefing on Video
Programming Reform**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) –
The Hub

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
**Funding Strategies for All Stages
of Your Business**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) –
The Hub

1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
**Optimizing Infrastructure to Meet the
Challenges of the New World Order**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) –
Global Lounge

1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.   [Network icon]
**Cyber Exposures: What You Can
Expect during a Cyber Incursion, and
How to Trim Exposures to Loss**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) –
Networks Platform Zone

1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.   [OTT]
**Network Performance and Over-
The-Top Services**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) –
Over-the-Top Platform Zone

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
**Beyond the CRM - New Advanced
Tools to Improve Your Sales Team**
Golden Gate Ballroom

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.   [Data Center icon]
What's Happening at the Edge
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) –
Data Center & Cloud Platform Zone

3:00 p.m.
Expo Drawings
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall) –
The Hub
*Sponsored by GeoResults, Opt
Teleservices, Sales Tax Associates, Inc.,
and Sandy Beaches Software*

3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
**Refreshment Break sponsored
by Neustar**
Yerba Buena Ballroom (Expo Hall)

5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Closing Party
Sponsored by Google Fiber
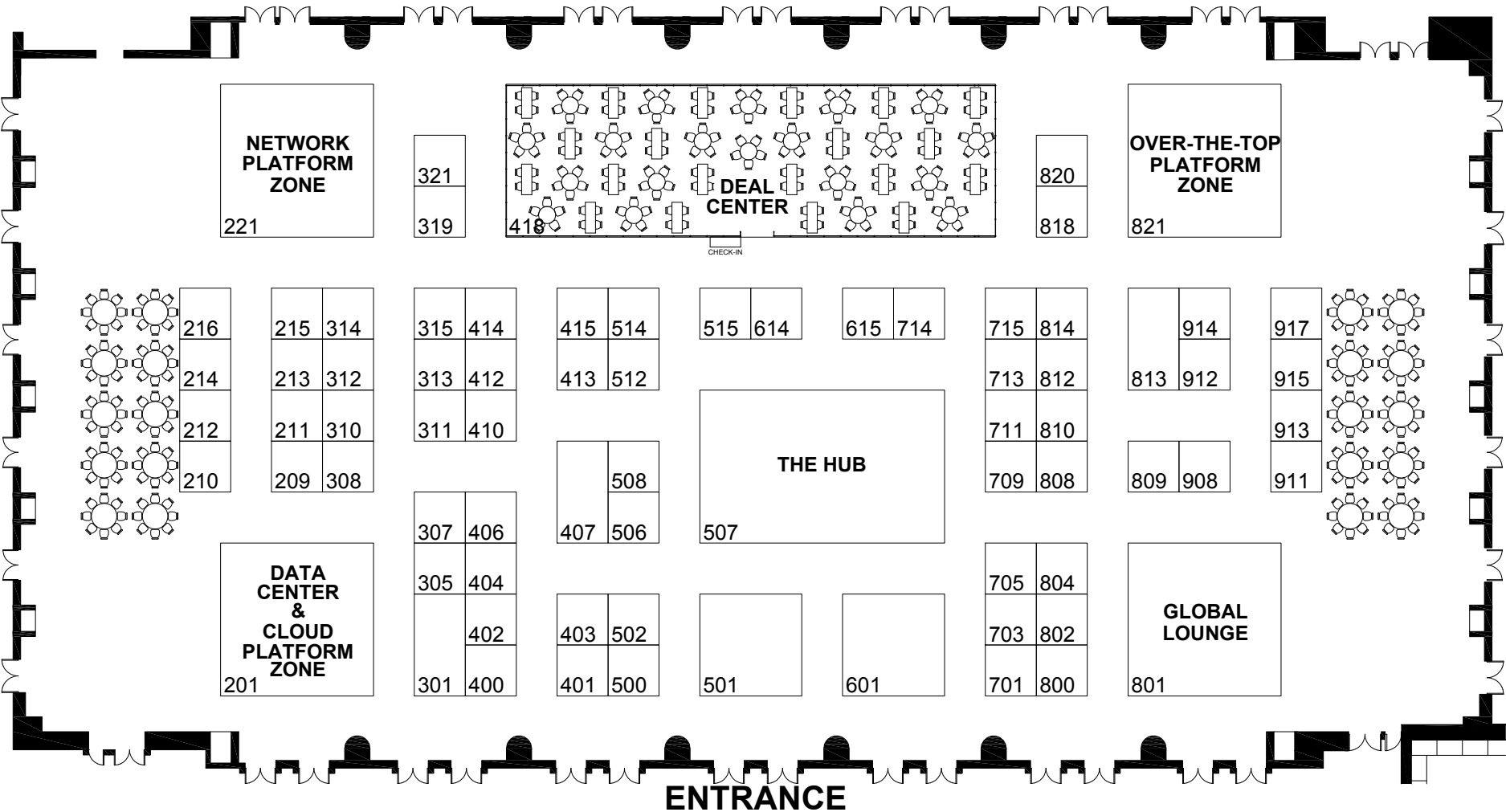Mezzanine
444 Jessie Street (in Mint Plaza)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21

8:30 a.m – 11:45 a.m.
**The FCC's Open Internet Order:
Key Issues for Carriers and ISPs**
Attendees Can Earn 3.25 CA
General Credits
Nob Hill
Sponsored by Davis Wright Tremaine, LLP

[Network icon] = Network Platform   [OTT] = Over-the-Top Platform   [Data Center icon] = Data Center & Cloud Platform

COMPTEL PLUS EXPO FLOOR PLAN

NETWORK PLATFORM ZONE — 221

321 / 319

DEAL CENTER — 418 / CHECK-IN

OVER-THE-TOP PLATFORM ZONE — 821

820 / 818

216 / 214 / 212 / 210

215 314 / 213 312 / 211 310 / 209 308

315 414 / 313 412 / 311 410

415 514 / 413 512

515 614 / 615 714

508 / 507 — **THE HUB**

407 506

715 814 / 713 812 / 711 810 / 709 808

914 / 813 912 / 809 908

917 / 915 / 913 / 911

DATA CENTER & CLOUD PLATFORM ZONE — 201

307 406 / 305 404 / 402 / 301 400

403 502 / 401 500

501

601

705 804 / 703 802 / 701 800

GLOBAL LOUNGE — 801

ENTRANCE

EXHIBITOR LISTING

COMPANY	BOOTH #
1st Point Communications	908
Accedian Networks	210
Actelis Networks, Inc.	305
ADTRAN	508
ADVA Optical Networking	810
Alcatel-Lucent USA, Inc	412
Axcent Networks	800
ChannelVision	913
CHR Solutions	615
Ciena	301
Communications Data Group	400
Compliance Solutions, Inc.	414
CSF Corporation	502
Equinox Information Systems	703
FISPA	915
Freeside Internet Services	802
Fujitsu Network Communications, Inc.	818
GeoResults	403
Granite Telecommunications LLC	514

COMPANY	BOOTH #
GSAssociates	713
H2O Overgroup	402
Huawei Technologies USA	308
INDATEL	813
Inteliquent	812
Iowa Network Services	209
LightRiver Technologies, Inc.	512
Lightspeed Technologies	404
LinuxMagic	911
LSN	814
Magic Telecom	413
MRV Communications, Inc.	809
NEF	312
NetSapiens	415
Onvoy, Inc.	307
OPT Teleservices	406
Orca Wave	314
PEG Bandwidth	808

COMPANY	BOOTH #
RAD	705
Sales Tax Associates, Inc.	401
Sandy Beaches Software	701
Sonus Networks, Inc.	709
Spirit Communications	715
SRP	407
Sunesys, LLC	515
Taqua	311
Technologies Management, Inc.	614
Telecom Reseller	313
TelePacific Communications	601
TeleSphere Software	506
Telispire	714
Thermo Credit, LLC	711
TimelyBill	501
TransNexus, Inc.	410
Unite Private Networks	315
Wolfe	319

TeleQuality Offers Computer Network Solutions to Rural Healthcare Providers

TeleQuality Communications Inc. (TQCI) and its subsidiary, Rural Health Telecom, have developed a program to provide top-tier computer network solutions to rural healthcare providers (HCPs) across the country.

"The last couple of years have provided TeleQuality with new opportunities, as our quality of service and growth in technology resources continue to open doors," said Tim Koxlien, CEO of TeleQuality, a COMPTEL member. "We have been fielding growing requests from our rural healthcare partners to gain access to our advanced IT managed services and technical support capabilities, which are normally only available to the healthcare facilities in larger metropolitan markets."

The health and well-being of the rural HCP's local IT environment is imperative for providing quality care to patients. Healthcare providers must proactively manage, monitor and support their IT infrastructure, but limited resources continue to be a hindrance. TQCI is tackling this with computer network solutions that will help prevent disruptions and maintain the day-to-day operations of the computer network—thus allowing healthcare personnel to focus on the patients.

"Healthcare providers are under increasing pressure to maintain high-quality patient care, while being faced with ever-decreasing budgets and stricter regulations," said Koxlien. "Loss of customer data and Internet connectivity issues can have long-lasting effects on healthcare organizations: Compliance violations of federal data-handling regulations such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), tarnished reputation culminating from an inability to treat patients, revenue loss and data recovery costs."

The stakes are extremely high for rural HCPs that are already financially struggling to keep their doors open. According to the National Rural Health Association (NRHA), 58 rural hospitals out of 2,322 have shut their doors since 2010.

> ## 'The health and well-being of the rural HCP's local IT environment is imperative for providing quality care to patients.'

Diane Calmus, government affairs and policy manager at NRHA, said there's not one specific reason for the closings, but rather, a culmination of events. "The rural population tends to be older, sicker and poorer than their urban counterparts and are much more reliant on Medicaid and Medicare. So cuts to those programs, along with regulatory burdens on rural hospitals are hitting these hospitals hard," she told Healthcare Dive.

With so many rural hospitals on the brink of closing, they simply cannot afford any network disruptions that would lead to an added financial burden.

"TQCI understands how critical it is for rural healthcare providers to maintain local computer network connectivity to prevent patient care interruptions," said Koxlien. "We will perform a complete assessment of the entire network and develop a comprehensive report that identifies areas that need to be addressed, such as disc-space availability, hardware replacement needs, device status and security monitoring, to name a few services."

While telecom companies can provide the fiber and other modalities that can fulfill the broadband requirements necessary to transfer large amounts of data and high-resolution images, healthcare providers must still engage in IT environment monitoring and management to prevent IT network failures, whether it be outsourced or conducted internally. In addition, HCPs must be able to rely on a data center partner that can protect patient data as required by government regulations, and guarantee the uptime and availability needed to access patient files when needed.

There's also an economic issue to consider: According to the findings of a recent Ponemon Institute/Emerson Network Power report, healthcare organizations face average costs of $690,000 per outage incident.

The most significant cost organizations incurred after data center outages were business disruption costs, pegged at an average of $238,717; lost revenue costs, averaging $183,724; and end-user productivity, an average of $140,543 lost per incident, according to the report.

"This increase in cost underscores the importance for organizations to make it a priority to minimize the risk of downtime that can potentially cost thousands of dollars per minute," said Larry Ponemon, chairman and founder of the Ponemon Institute.

The report included responses from 450 data center professionals on the root causes and frequency of data center downtimes. Respondents experienced an average of two complete data center outages over the past two years, while partial outages occurred six times in the same timeframe.

"Whether you are a telecom company or a data center provider, healthcare providers are counting on you to provide real-time coordination and information exchange to ensure reliable, secure and compliant infrastructure for mission-critical applications and sensitive patient data," TeleQuallity said. ❏

Telispire Now Offers 4G LTE Service on Three Major Wireless Networks

Telispire (Booth 714), a mobile virtual network enabler (MVNE), has announced that 4G LTE service is now available from three of its major network partners.

The news means that Telispire is one of the first MVNEs to offer 4G LTE service nationwide on both CDMA and GSM networks.

"We are very excited to offer 4G LTE options to our mobile virtual network operator (MVNO) partners on three major US wireless carriers," said Nicholas Aldi, COO and CFO at Telispire. "Offering 4G LTE carrier service allows our resellers to provide their subscribers with state-of-the-art devices as well as 4G data speeds. This enables our resellers to bundle this service with their current telecom and video services."

Telispire's MVNO services support both prepaid and postpaid services on both the CDMA and GSM networks. It offers a turn-key solution for operators wanting to enter the wireless marketplace with a low capital expenditure, a customized offering and a flexible back office system. Telispire also offers Tier 1 customer care and a turn-key e-commerce platform, including device fulfillment services.

"Telispire is all about helping companies grow their revenue and profits by expanding their reach and exposure, and we are very excited that having 4G LTE on three major Tier 1 carriers will be very impactful," added Curtis Knobloch, CEO at Telispire. ❏

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FirstLight Fiber Signs One Connect as a VAR in Upstate New York

FirstLight Fiber, a facilities-based telecom service provider operating in Upstate New York and Northern New England, has announced that One Connect, a telecommunications and technology consulting firm based in Clifton Park, N.Y., has joined FirstLight's partner program as a value added reseller (VAR).

Since signing on as a FirstLight agent a few months ago, One Connect has partnered with FirstLight on approximately 20 customer projects, which the company said speaks to the power of this relationship.

"One Connect has partnerships with leading global, national and regional telecommunications and cloud companies," said John Smack, president of One Connect. "Having a strong working relationship with FirstLight enables us to leverage FirstLight's impressive fiber network throughout the Capital Region. Throughout our relationship, FirstLight has proven its ability to deliver reliable services to customers in remarkably fast time frames."

FirstLight's partner program provides channel partners access to a set of customized communications services that include data connectivity, Internet access, data center services and voice services, along with locally-based service and support. FirstLight Fiber is headquartered in Albany, N.Y., and provides fiber-based services to enterprise and carrier customers in Upstate New York and Northern New England, with connectivity to Canada. Its facilities-based network spans more than 225,000 fiber miles, connecting in excess of 1,700 lit locations. Offerings include dedicated Internet access, Ethernet, traditional TDM solutions, SIP trunks, virtual PBX, audio conferencing, managed commercial wireless systems and data center colocation.

"One Connect has been an exciting addition to our partner program and has demonstrated they are true experts in telecommunications with more than a decade of experience," said Mark Ayotte, senior director of alternate channels at FirstLight. "Their strong relationships and understanding of communications provides a solid platform for attracting an impressive set of clients seeking high-performance solutions. We look forward to the mutual success our partnership will bring." ❏

Tax Workshop Offered by GSA and BeQuick

Telecommunications regulatory and tax compliance specialist General Solutions Associates LLC (GSAssociates, Booth 713), along with BeQuick, a provider of cloud-powered billing and fulfillment software for wireless and MVNO carriers, will offer a tax workshop focused on the MVNO.

Topics offered at this seminar include:
• Choosing the right billing and rating platform;
• Licensing the MVNO at all levels, including federal, state and local;
• Choosing the best packages and services offering for your market and strategy;
• Taxation and regulatory pass-throughs for MVNOs;
• Tax optimizations and audit support;
• Bill presentation; and
• Seamless remittance strategies.

"This workshop will provide strategic and relevant topics to the MVNO industry," said Samantha Maqueo, vice president of regulatory for GSAssociates.

As for the bona fides of the speakers, GSAssociates is a telecommunications industry specialist in regulatory requirements consulting, compliance outsourcing and tax processing; and BeQuick is 100 percent devoted to the future of MVNO enablement. Designed for mobile from the ground up, the BeQuick Cloud BSS/OSS for Mobile is a hosted back-office service that enables the management and monetization of the subscriber lifecycle.

"We are confident that MVNOs developing or enhancing their business will benefit from this workshop," said Steve McIntosh, COO of BeQuick.

The workshop will be held Nov. 17, 2015. ❏

HyperCube CTO Doug Davis Appointed to North American Numbering Council

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has appointed Doug Davis, CTO of HyperCube, to serve on the commission's North American Numbering Council (NANC).

NANC is the federal advisory committee established to advise the FCC on the efficient and impartial administration of the North American Numbering Plan, as well as on policy and technical issues involving numbering resources. Davis will serve on the council for a two-year term.

"We congratulate Doug on his most recent FCC appointment," said HyperCube president and CEO Ron Beaumont. "Aside from being a co-founder of HyperCube, Doug lends his expertise to several industry groups, including the Communications Security, Reliability and Interoperability Council. Doug's contributions are an integral part of our growth here at HyperCube."

The appointment comes as HyperCube prepares for a new chapter. It has announced that it will be changing its name to West Telecom Services in the fourth quarter of this year as part of a branding strategy by its parent, West Corp. The company is a wholesale provider of voice origination and termination services for other carriers and service providers. Operating a nationwide facilities-based network, HyperCube provides competitive tandem switching, toll-free services, DID services and carrier termination interconnections for all types of service providers. HyperCube is also a licensed CLEC in 48 states. Davis will be critical to the company's growth strategy going forward.

"Doug's knowledge base and leadership has been a major contributing factor to our success thus far, and with his acumen there's no limit to what we can accomplish," Beaumont said. ❏

Onvoy Finalizes Broadvox Acquisition

Telecom wholesaler Onvoy (Booth 307) has finalized the acquisition of Broadvox, a CLEC that provides wholesale VoIP services.

The transaction makes Onvoy the third-largest CLEC in the United States by rate center coverage. The combined customer base includes more than 1,000 major wireless, cable, telecom, next generation VoIP and enhanced service providers. All customers will soon have access to the coast-to-coast network, the company said.

"Onvoy is known for our exceptional engineering and solid infrastructure," said Onvoy President Fritz Hendricks. "The quality and strength of Broadvox's network is an ideal match for our systems and our customers."

Onvoy will continue to build its network through strategic mergers and acquisitions, as well as organic growth, it said.

"Our companies are stronger together. Now, customers will benefit from an even broader range of services that can be tailored to meet the unique needs of any carrier, large or small," said Andre Temnorod, founder and CEO of Broadvox. ❏

CDG Integrates with PenguinData for Intermountain Cable

Communications Data Group (CDG, Booth 400) has integrated its MBS consumer billing system with the PenguinData Workflow Management G3 Emperor Suite of Modules. The effort was a project for one of the companies' joint operator clients, Intermountain Cable.

Intermountain Cable is a subsidiary of Gearheart Communications, located in Harold, Ky. Because it's one of a family of interconnected companies under the Gearheart umbrella, Intermountain Cable needed an advanced workflow management solution that could help unify task management across its different companies.

As part of that, it also needed to be able to communicate with its CDG billing systems.

"Integration with third-party workflow and CRM systems is crucial in today's market," noted Mike Chalk, CDG's vice president of product development. "When we researched PenguinData's solutions and saw the benefits they would bring the client, we knew working together to connect these two systems would be valuable to all parties."

The PenguinData platform offers mobile workforce management software for field service, so one of those benefits is holistic visibility across the back office.

"Having the ability to see all of their data in real-time across the entire organization, and knowing that data would also be integrated with their billing system, was a primary driving force behind Intermountain Cable becoming a PenguinData client," said Doug Simmons, PenguinData's senior vice president of sales. "PenguinData was able to bring true automation to Intermountain Cable's mobile work orders and streamline its entire warehouse process with full accountability, while providing for single-entry and update capabilities with real-time data synchronization across all modules." ❏

ANPI Expands Direct Connections in Rural America

ANPI, a COMPTEL member, has accelerated the growth of its Voice Application Peering (VAP) initiative. It is now adding direct connections every other week, and plans to turn up an additional 20 to 25 endpoints by the end of the year.

The VAP initiative provides ILECs with the purest direct interconnection to destinations within the ANPI footprint and a network efficiency ratio above 98 percent. This effort to boost call quality and call completion will have a particular impact on calls to rural America, where the company has a 20-year history of partnering with rural carriers.

"At ANPI, our business has always been about partnering with carriers to create greater scale," said Randy Lemmo, ANPI's executive vice president of strategic business. "The VAP initiative is no different. By working together to form one large network, carriers can connect to ANPI's switching network and reach 60+ rural optical circuit networks (OCNs)."

Many of these direct trunks are already established, and ANPI simply builds the two-way functionality at no additional expense.

ANPI VAP is also providing improved access billing, and ANPI said that VAP members have been reporting fewer trouble tickets (thanks to fewer moving parts) and a lack of headaches around revenue conciliation.

"The point of our VAP initiative is to simplify everything for our partners," said Lemmo. ❏

NTT Com Highlights IP Services, Innovation

NTT Com is focusing on new infrastructure, technology and customer service for its IP services at COMPTEL PLUS, targeted to communications service providers, CLECs, ISPs, network operators and Internet-centric businesses.

The company operates one of the world's most extensive Tier 1 IP backbones, linking more than 90 points-of-presence (PoPs) and data centers. In addition to launching new 100G-enabled PoPs and upgrading submarine assets to 100G speeds, NTT Com has been a pioneer in IPv6, software-defined networking (SDN) and a number of green initiatives. One of the first global carriers to transition from 1G to 10G, NTT Com has been offering 100G ports to customers for more than two years. The company also recently broke new ground when it became the first carrier to deploy 100G technologies on its PC-1 subsea cable system – a 13,000-mile network linking the U.S. and Japan. The move effectively bolstered capacity on the route by 2.5 times.

Last year, the company opened a PoP in Luxembourg built exclusively on 100G network links, the first 100G connected PoP anywhere in the NTT Com's European network.

"Strengthening our IP backbone helps our customers enhance their own networks as well," said Brent Duncan, vice president of sales and marketing of the NTT Communications Global IP Network at NTT America. "By increasing performance overall and continuing to expand our content-rich IP network, we're empowering companies to provide the best service possible and deliver an exceptional customer experience to their end users, which we believe differentiates them from their competitors."

NTT Com is also talking up a video win: During the FIFA World Cup 2014, its network facilitated a low-latency connection between Tokyo Broadcasting System Television (TBS) in Japan and the Japanese national team's training camp in Brazil, some 12,500 miles away. TBS broadcasted high-quality, low-latency news—both live and pre-recorded—of Japan's national soccer team.

The connection enabled near-real-time live conversations with voice delays of less than one second between Japan and Brazil.

So far, the company said that it has achieved a 99.8 percent customer retention rate among North American customers, and was named best global wholesale carrier for data and best North American wholesale carrier at the Carrier Global Awards. ❏

Great Plains Extends Network to Des Moines

Great Plains Communications, owner and operator of the largest fiber network in Nebraska (and the largest privately owned telecommunications company in the state) has announced the addition of a diverse network route expansion from Nebraska to Des Moines, Iowa.

"We are proud to be expanding our fiber footprint yet again by entering into the Iowa market," said Lynn Mead, head of carrier and wholesale services. "This latest expansion gives us the ability to serve new customers and provides greater opportunity for our current clients to broaden their business as well."

The Des Moines route will provide capability ranging from low-end Ethernet to 100G, both within the market and throughout the Plains Region. The route will extend from Nebraska into the Des Moines carrier hotel, connecting with regional and national carriers. The Iowa expansion, along with the entire 5,000+ mile network, is monitored around the clock by the company's network operations center, which recently became the first Tier III Organization to become fully TL9000-certified.

"Our company has set our network apart by providing unique routes to meet customers' demands for the greatest security, diversity and redundancy," said Todd Foje, CEO of Great Plains. "Iowa is the latest addition to our ongoing expansion plans that most recently included Kansas, Minneapolis, Missouri, South Dakota and Wyoming."

Great Plains offers last-mile and middle-mile solutions in Nebraska, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota,

Missouri, South Dakota and Wyoming, to regional and national telecommunications carriers, LECs, ISPs, wireless carriers and other service providers. ❏

Wilcon to Provide Fiber for eSports Arena's Live Event Space

As the video game industry's live competition format continues to explode, West Coast telecom provider Wilcon and live event space eSports Arena have partnered on connectivity for the space, kicking off with a live video game tournament.

High-speed Internet streaming and fiber-optic infrastructure was provided by Wilcon for the event.

"The gaming industry is thriving and expanding in new ways every day," said Jon DeLuca, CEO of Wilcon. "We believe eSports Arena is at the forefront of live event gaming, and we know that an extremely high level of ultra-broadband access is needed for its business to run at optimum speed. This partnership with Wilcon is sure to help both eSports Arena and, subsequently, the local economic vitality of Santa Ana."

Competitive video game events are the focal point of eSports Arena's 15,000 square-foot space, with 64 gaming consoles, 120 gaming PC stations and occupancy for nearly 1,000 people. The community space offers opportunities for amateur and professional gamers to create teams and join leagues, or for programming developers to test new products. An in-house production facility is also onsite.

"Nowhere else will you be able to get the type of Internet we have, thanks to Wilcon," said Tyler Endres, co-founder and COO of eSports Arena. "We are set up as a turn-key operation, an entertainment complex for any style of event. So if there's one word describing our technology needs, it's reliability. No gamer likes Internet lag during a streaming tournament, and Wilcon is making sure nothing interferes with our bandwidth."

This first location for eSports Arena may be joined by others; it has expansion plans targeting Northern California and Austin, Texas, potentially happening in 2016.

Los Angeles-based Wilcon, with 3,000 miles of fiber and access to 55 data centers across Southern California, has seen strong growth in Orange County, most recently partnering with Chapman University to create a fiber-optic highway among the University's multiple campuses. Wilcon's collaboration with eSports Arena continues the trend as the company focuses on delivering its data services to businesses in the Southland.

The deal is timely. eSports, or organized, multi-player video gaming competitions, are rapidly expanding in popularity on a global scale. eSports video, live and on-demand programming that presents organized gaming competitions, is also on the rise. The market also includes content directly related to those events, such as highlights and pre-game shows.

According to data provided by NewZoo, global eSports viewership stands at more than 226 million people, with the total expected to climb to 323 million by 2018. A cross platform growth report from IHS calculates that viewers watched 2.4 billion hours of eSports video in 2013, almost double the figure for 2012. The analyst predicts this figure will rise to 6.6 billion in 2018, with online video viewership key to growth.

"Several factors are contributing to the surge in eSports viewing," IHS noted in the report. "These include the fact that key game titles have reached maturity, and game publishers are taking a major role in promoting eSports competitions. Furthermore, eSports viewing has been boosted by the emergence of online video platforms that are capable of handling large-scale live audiences." ❏

The Key to Crafting Employee Benefits Packages

By Iowa Network Services

An organization's employee benefits package is, not surprisingly, a critical piece of that company's ability to recruit, retain and engage top talent. An employee benefits package should be strategically designed to support the objectives of the organization and offer the most effective benefits within a dedicated budget, while at the same time sending the right message to employees and employment candidates: "We want you to work here and we want you to stay!"

WHAT IS AN EMPLOYEE BENEFITS PACKAGE?

Benefits can include both tangible and intangible offerings, and it will be important to consider each type of benefit as a company evaluates the gamut of components that make up its unique package. Some elements to consider include:

- Medical, dental and vision insurance
- Flexible spending, health reimbursement arrangements, health savings accounts
- Life and disability insurance
- Retirement plans
- Bonus and incentive programs
- Employee assistance programs (EAP)
- Education assistance programs and professional development opportunities
- Mentor programs
- Other insurance benefits (critical illness, legal insurance, pet insurance, etc.)
- Paid time off (including holidays, bereavement leave, sick leave and vacation)
- Leaves of absence (paid or unpaid leave options, length of leave granted)
- Workplace flexibility (flexible schedules, accommodations for family or personal obligations, working remotely)
- Workplace services (dry cleaning, chair massage, grocery delivery, onsite oil changes, meal service)
- Employee discounts
- Technology (availability of updated or cutting-edge technology, company-issued devices)

It's also important to consider company culture. Organizations should think about what makes their work environments appealing and what message they send by how they do things, how employees feel when they're at work, and the company values, mission and vision.

The list doesn't end there, either. An employee benefits package will be a unique mix of offerings that an organization can leverage to recruit and retain talent. With the tightening labor market, employers are finding that employee benefits can be a deciding factor in recruiting and retaining talent. As a result, they are looking for ways to differentiate their workplace and consciously fashion their employer brand.

Because there's no magic formula for creating the most effective employer brand and benefit package design, it's important to evaluate and adjust employee benefits to best support the strategic objectives of an organization.

Benefits can include both tangible and intangible offerings.

ANALYZE YOUR STRATEGY

Naturally, the first step in evaluating the effectiveness of an employee benefits package is to gather information regarding whether the current strategy and design is effective. Here are several questions companies should ask themselves as they perform their analysis:
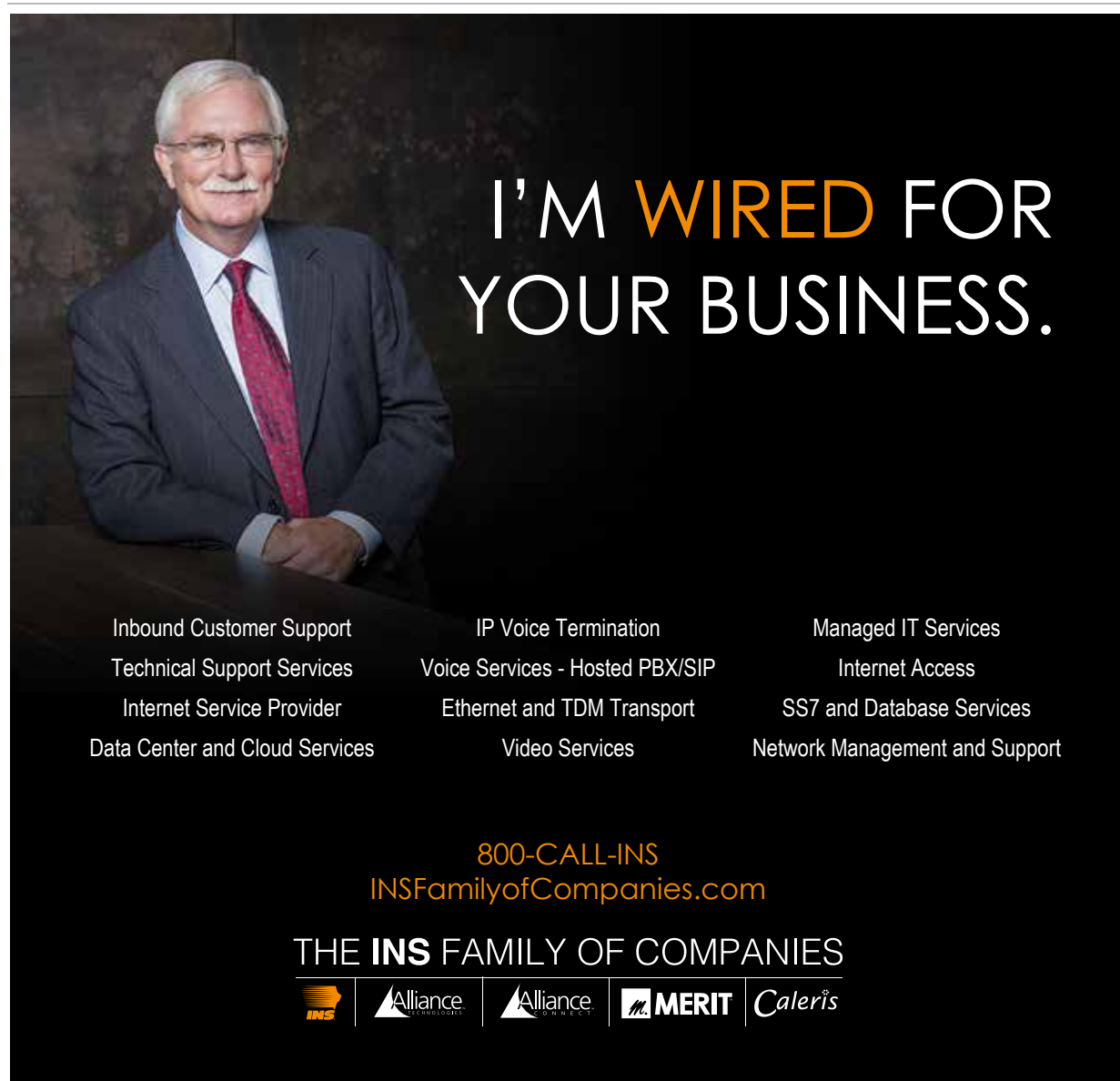
- Who are you trying to attract, recruit and retain?
- What is important to them? Are you meeting that need?
- What do your current employees say about your benefit package?
- What do exiting employees say about your benefit package?
- How do you feel about your current benefit offerings?
- How much of your budget do you dedicate to employee benefits? How much are you willing to dedicate?
- How important is it for your organization to have a competitive benefit package? What is the competition offering that appears to be effective?
- Does the design and philosophy of your benefit package align with your organization's culture and values – both stated and implied?

Is the design of your benefit package facilitating or impeding your organization's strategic talent management initiatives?

DEFINE A PHILOSOPHY

An organization's culture and values will have an enormous impact on both the company benefits package design and its ability to retain talent. If company values do not align with the design of the benefits package, employees and candidates will

absolutely notice the gap. Here are some examples of values or philosophies that can be directly aligned with employee benefit package design:

Cash is King: Focus remains on compensation, bonus and incentive plans with lower contributions to benefit plans and fewer options in the overall benefit package. Employees have more cash available to purchase benefits and services at their own discretion.

Work-Life Balance: More emphasis is placed on flexible schedules, remote work, time off, fitness-related benefits, and benefits. These can include EAPs and workplace services designed to save employees time, such as dry cleaning or grocery delivery.

Family Focus: Organizations that highly value and support family time may prioritize benefits, such as time off, flexible schedules, paid or unpaid maternity, paternity and family caregiver leave and flexibility around supporting employees' ability to attend school activities.

Big Heart, Limited Budget: Nonprofits often fall in this category. Benefits that have less impact on the budget are emphasized here, such as time off, flexible schedules and mentor programs. One of the most important and rewarding benefits of working for an organization with this philosophy can be the cause of the organization and serving a higher purpose.

Industry Benchmarking: Some organizations focus on keeping up with the competition and benchmark their benefit offerings and contributions against what other companies are offering.

Fiercely Competitive: Competition is brutal in some industries, and some organizations put extensive effort and resources behind offering bigger, better and cooler benefits than others in their industry. Focus and priority may be dependent on trends, demands and competitor packages.

Growth and Development: Companies valuing growth and development will emphasize training, education assistance, professional development, mentor programs and time off benefits, such as brief sabbaticals.

Health and Wellness: Putting resources behind health and wellness initiatives can have significant impact on an organization's bottom line. Benefits emphasizing health and wellness can include higher contributions to medical and insurance benefits, wellness programs, fitness membership subsidies, smoking cessation programs, healthy meal or snack offerings, financial wellness initiatives, safety aware-ness and resources, and EAP services.

An organization's HR team should be thinking: What is our philosophy? What does our organization value? Organizational values and philosophy may align with one or a combination of the above examples, or a company may have its own unique set of values and philosophies. Whichever a company chooses, it should embrace it and use it to guide not only benefits strategies, but also workplace culture and recruitment and retention efforts.

CREATE A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CHANGE

Now that a company has identified a strategy that supports a short- and long-term business strategy, it's time to take action.

Next steps to consider:

1. **Gain buy-in and agreement with the philosophy and strategy from executive staff and/or the Board of Directors.** The strategy reflects the culture, and key stakeholders must be in agreement to ensure consistent messaging and strategic decision making.

2. **Determine what benefits the company would like to add, change or remove from the current offerings to best support the strategy.** It is usually difficult to remove benefits from a package, but a benefit which does not support the current culture or strategy cannot be fully leveraged in recruitment and retention initiatives.

3. **Make a long-term plan for the changes that have been identified.** It may take several years before the culture or budget support some of the benefits that a company would like to offer. Organizations should plan to make necessary financial, cultural and resource requirements available over time. ❏

1st Point Communications Extends SMS Network, Adds Hosted SMSC Service

New Jersey-based CLEC 1st Point Communications (Booth 908) is expanding its existing short message service (SMS) network, adding hosted SMS Center (SMSC) to its suite of services.

Based on its existing voice routing technology, 1st Point has added SMS to the mix for mobile operators, supporting short-code and long-code message origination and termination, as well as both person-to-person and bulk message delivery. The hosted SMSC meanwhile supports a full suite of messaging capabilities, including message termination and origination capabilities, and flexibility in message routing and delivery. The hosted SMSC also can be deployed in an on-premise configuration for larger service providers, and has full multitenancy capability.

"We are very pleased with both the capabilities and the reliability of the platform," said Erik Levitt, 1stPoint's CEO. "Our hosted platform leverages our nationwide, facilities-based network, data centers and points of presence (PoPs), and has network elements across multiple data centers to provide very strong SLAs."

In addition to supporting SMS-enabled DIDs, 1st Point's routing network can intelligently route messages based on source, destination, cost or even content, and has an API and portal for simple provisioning.

"In messaging interoperability is key, and our SMSC has a wide variety of support for APIs (and adheres to the SMPP 3.4 specification)," said Levitt. "Because of that interoperability and ease of configuration, our hosted customers can build a complete SMS platform in days, choosing from a wide variety of carriers." ❏

INDATEL Advances Its Footprint

INDATEL (Booth 813) has announced that it has reached a membership of 500 RLECS, which together offer 90,000 route miles of fiber, more than 1,100+ POPs and 40,000+ on-net and near-net fiber-fed buildings.

"I am excited about the team and tools in place to meet Ethernet access, content delivery and Internet access needs of our service provider customers," said INDATEL COO Max Huffman.

INDATEL is a team of wholesale carriers dedicated to providing transport connectivity via fiber optic network routes; its members, which are primarily independent rural telecom service providers, focus on rural and underserved markets. The company said that this uniquely positions INDATEL to provide a rural exchange connection to many places other providers cannot.

INDATEL's data and Internet aggregation points-of-presence (PoPs) in Chicago, Dallas, Denver and Minneapolis serve as places for traditional carriers and emerging content/service providers to access the group's MEF 2.0-compliant Ethernet network via a single ENNI.

"One of our core objectives is to help service providers deliver multi-location Ethernet access solutions via INDATEL as a single point of contact," said Mel Wagner, INDATEL's vice president of business development and sales.

Added Huffman, "For us at INDATEL, it's all about the power of scale. It's exciting to be a part of a growing organization delivering innovative solutions to a previously unmet need." ❏

NGN's President and CEO Named President of Fiber Network Owners Alliance (FNA)

NGN, a member-owned telecom cooperative in North Georgia, has announced that president and CEO Paul Belk has been named the president of Fiber Network Owners Alliance (FNA). FNA is a strategic alliance of organizations focused on aligning their fiber network resources for the purpose of providing a unified platform to create business and operational advantages for its members.

FNA connects 29 charter members resulting in more than 70,000 combined network miles, spanning 28 states. With the majority of its charter members made up of small to mid-sized networks, FNA provides a "checks and balances" competitive effect to larger organizations within the industry. FNA charter members strive to provide the residents in the areas they serve with reliable service, local jobs and other economic benefits that would not otherwise exist.

NGN was one of the founding members of FNA. Belk explained that NGN saw the value that FNA and the connection to its members would bring in terms of potential partnerships with other fiber networks.

"Since its inception, FNA has made great strides in supporting regional networks across the country, and I am honored to have the opportunity to further the organization's continued growth," said Belk. "FNA is unique because it offers alternative broadband delivery into areas where there are few options for broadband solutions. Members have access to fiber infrastructure that can provide excellent service delivery for carriers into these areas."

> *'FNA connects 29 charter members, resulting in more than 70,000 combined network miles, spanning 28 states.'*

NGN is a member-owned cooperative founded in 2009 and operating more than 1,600 miles of fiber optic infrastructure from its headquarters in Clarkesville, Ga. Its digital optical network provides solutions to carriers, service providers, and technology reliant businesses and organizations across the Southeast. NGN is unlike most telecommunications corporations, as it is a corporation of cooperatives, owned by its members, including Habersham Electric Membership Corporation (HEMC), Blue Ridge Mountain Electrical Membership Corporation (BRMEMC) and NGN Connect.

Belk joined NGN as president and CEO in 2011 and has since grown the initial 1,100-mile fiber network into the 1,600-mile network it is today. Belk also played a pivotal role in the creation and launch of the Education Exchange, Georgia's only regional 10-gigabit private cloud for exclusive use by school systems. In 2014, he was recognized by the Association of Telecommunications Professionals (ATP) with the Technology Service Provider Leadership award. ❏

Lightower Expands Network with MRV

Lightower Fiber Networks has expanded its footprint with OptiSwitch Carrier Ethernet 2.0 (CE 2.0) service demarcation and first-mile aggregation platform from MRV Communications (Booth 809).

This was done to support an increased number of fiber connections and bandwidth-rich services as Lightower grows its service footprint. Lightower has used the MRV solution for several years to deliver premium Carrier Ethernet services.

"The OptiSwitch platform offers the efficiency, intelligence and reliability that Lightower requires as a leading service provider to thousands of enterprises, including financial institutions, data centers and carriers in some of the nation's largest cities," the companies said. "The OptiSwitch portfolio offers carrier-grade solutions to business enterprise customers by supporting business-critical applications."

Lightower utilizes the OptiSwitch platform at the customer premises for the delivery of scalable Carrier Ethernet and metro-area transport services. When Lightower looked to expand its network throughout the Northeast, mid-Atlantic and Chicago metro regions, it selected the MRV solution because it features a compact, high-density, low-power design to fit the needs of high-capacity metro networks, and enables automated service provisioning and SLA verification capabilities to guarantee quicker deployment times.

"Lightower is committed to supporting the strict requirements from organizations like financial institutions, healthcare organizations, and cloud and content distributors," said Damon Fortune, senior vice president of engineering for Lightower. "As we grow our network, we will continue to make value and operational excellence a priority, while we help our customers ensure optimal application and network performance. Strategic partners allow us to leverage the right network solutions at a competitive price. And, with MRV solutions at the customer premises, we can ensure our customers' critical data is delivered without latency and at the highest quality."

MRV's OptiSwitch platform also helps Lightower optimize its network infrastructure with support for multi-dimensional E-Line, E-Tree and E-Access services, and enables Lightower's flexible External Network to Network Interface (ENNI) with multiple virtual connections over physical interfaces. The flexibility streamlines connectivity options to critical regional and international landing points and makes interconnection more seamless.

"MRV solutions are built to enable service providers, network operators, cloud providers and data centers to do more with less and extend the value of their networks," said Scott St. John, senior vice president of global sales and service for MRV. "The intelligent OptiSwitch platform makes it easier for network providers, like Lightower, to expand the reach of their metro fiber and accelerate service deployments, while ensuring an outstanding customer experience." ❏

Data Tech: Make CABS Work for You

There are still intercarrier compensation options for smaller LECs and CLECs as the ICC Reform glide path marches on, according to Data Tech. Not only is the revenue still important for smaller customers, but "we at Data Tech, champions of our customers' carrier access billing system (CABS) revenue dollars for almost 30 years, hate to see IXCs get the benefit of 'free' access when a CLEC gives in to the cost/benefit crunch of CABS and related services," the company said.

Terminating access revenues continue to decline, yet transport services still need to be billed and compensated for. Originating access is still around, and while it's only a fraction of CABS traffic, it is still incrementally valuable, especially toll-free traffic. Reciprocal compensation rates shrink with terminating end office rate reductions, but costs for processing CABS stays static, whether providers keep it in-house or outsource it. Smaller LECs and CLECs, and soon larger ones, will start to wonder if switched CABS is even still worth doing. Unless every carrier decides to stop billing, and unless the costs of long-distance origination and tandem transit also become zero, well, just not billing CABS really isn't an option. "In answer to this growing issue, we have tailored a unique product that benefits small and even mid-sized carriers and can give new or extended beneficial life to CABS," the company said. "Think in terms of lifecycle CDR management, of which CABS is only one internal customer, where the nested expenses of other CDR outputs like retail billing, compliance (CALEA), data warehousing and business intelligence, and revenue assurance bear the expense or partial expense of generating CABS."

There's also the nested cost of regulatory and tariff consulting, disputes and collections, access cost management, circuit billing (TDM, Metro Ethernet and backhaul) and inventory, wholesale billing and contract management, and revenue assurance and fraud management, all of which still must take place and can be bundled into a service which spreads and reduces cost across all.

Data Tech's product offers these options and can carry out CABS billing less than monthly – bimonthly or even quarterly.

"Think repurposing seasoned key staff who have supported CABS and related services and in whom your company also has a great investment and high equity and wants/needs to keep around," the company said. "When you think of those things, think ROI...think experience....think Data Tech. We continue to grow while others shrink, our competencies are broad enough to weather the impacts of ICC reform and our partners are great and strong. We will be here tomorrow."

Customers of all sizes use the company.

"It was important to choose a company to work with from our inception to guide us through the complexities of being a CLEC," said Neil Rosenblit, CEO at Local Access Telecom. "After many interviews and careful consideration, it was clear after talking with Jon Jones and Data Tech, they were the right company for us. Jon and his team have assisted Local Access in a wide variety of projects from billing, strategic planning and collections, and has always been responsive and professional throughout our years together. I would highly recommend any company looking to improve their efficiencies to consider Jon and his highly skilled team, and utilize the services Data Tech provides."

Meanwhile, Mickey Henry, senior counsel at EarthLink Business, added, "We hired Jon/Data Tech to help us get our CLEC CABS billings in order after several years of relative neglect. He has been very creative, has a deep understanding of the CABS Billing industry, and has been great to work with." ❏

Unite Private Networks Partners with Enseva

In a deal that provides it with greater access state-of-the-art fiber-optic networking, Unite Private Networks (UPN, Booth 315) has announced a partnership with Enseva, a Hiawatha, Iowa-based data center.

The partnership will support UPN's expanding statewide network footprint, which in its entirety covers nearly 900 miles. Specifically, the data-center location facilitates UPN's service for local customers in the Cedar Rapids-to-Iowa City business corridor, as well as regional transport service to locations on the UPN Iowa Transport Ring. The ring includes Ames, Cedar Falls/Waterloo, Cedar Rapids, Davenport, Des Moines, Iowa City and Grinnell.

"We are thrilled to be bringing advanced fiber-optic infrastructure to the area," said Jason Adkins, president at UPN. "This partnership will bring new opportunities to area businesses, government entities and school districts, and we expect customers to benefit from our advanced fiber-optic network alongside Enseva's suite of services."

Kansas City, Mo.-based UPN provides high-bandwidth, fiber-based communications networks and services to schools, governments, carriers, data centers, hospitals and enterprise business customers across a 20-state service area. Service offerings include dark and lit fiber, private line, optical Ethernet, Internet access, data center services and other customized solutions. The Enseva deal will allow it to reach additional customers.

"We are very excited about Unite's network expansion into Iowa," said Chris Sevey, CTO of Enseva. "The business need for high-speed communications is growing at an astounding rate. UPN clearly recognizes that robust fiber-optic infrastructure is, and will continue to be the foundation by which information is accessed and shared. Coupling a suite of high-performance connectivity options from UPN with Enseva's next-generation data-center and cloud services catalog, there's no doubt that major changes are coming to Iowa. It's an absolute privilege to have them as a partner." ❏

COMPTEL CEO Chip Pickering takes the stage for opening remarks ahead of Sunday's opening keynote.

Time Warner Cable Launches Carrier Portal for Discovering Connected Locations

Time Warner Cable Business Class (TWCBC) has announced a new online tool that will make it easier for carrier customers to discover its connected locations.

The Carrier Serviceability Portal enables service providers to search nearly 1 million on-net and near-net TWCBC-wired buildings. The service provider can enter the address of a business location, and within seconds the portal will respond with serviceability information, including fiber or DOCSIS availability in equipped buildings.

"This tool enables carrier customers to understand our network availability in a building for both our fiber and DOCSIS-based services," said Marc Dyman, vice president of carrier services. "The portal allows customers to easily determine service availability at a single location or submit a bulk request. This eliminates the need for manual intervention."

TWCBC has a 150,000-fiber-route-mile network infrastructure that serves 31 major metro areas nationwide with more than 43,000 multi-tenant, fiber-lit buildings, nearly 1 million DOCSIS-equipped buildings and connectivity into 64 data centers across the nation. In all, it serves more than 675,000 business customers throughout its service areas;

but the carrier services line of business is meant to extend service providers' U.S. networks with the additions of Carrier E-Access, transport, wholesale IP, wholesale business Internet and cell-tower backhaul.

Earlier this year, TWCBC announced enhancements to its Carrier Ethernet solutions, with updates to Carrier E-Access and E-Transport offerings. In 2014, TWCBC became the first North American service provider to achieve certifications for all eight Metro Ethernet Forum CE2.0 Services.

Through its NaviSite subsidiary, TWCBS also offers scalable managed services, including application services, enterprise hosting and managed cloud services primarily in the U.S. and U.K. ❏

Sunesys Adds 16,000+ Miles of Fiber to Footprint

Sunesys LLC (Booth 515) has announced that its recent acquisition by Crown Castle has effectively doubled its fiber footprint.

The acquisition has enhanced its fiber network portfolio to include more than 16,000 route miles. Sunesys services are now available in more than 31 states—a fact that has opened up several new markets for the company, it said.

Also, it now has approximately 40,000 towers and 15,000 small cell nodes supported by the network (Crown Castle is the nation's largest provider of shared wireless infrastructure, with a significant presence in the top 100 U.S. markets).

"We are very excited to bring Sunesys to new metro markets we haven't previously served," said Larry Coleman, president of Sunesys. "The reach of the network provides new opportunities across each of our current verticals."

Highlights of the combined network include a contiguous network throughout the Mid-Atlantic region, denser footprints in Atlanta, Chicago and Southern California, and the addition of metro markets, such as Baltimore, Washington D.C. and New York City.

Sunesys is headquartered in Pennsylvania. ❏

Amid a Thriving Threat Landscape, Carriers Should Consider Cyber-Liability Insurance

Cyber-risk continues to escalate, and service providers and other businesses utilizing technology to produce and deliver products and services need to recognize and take precautions against the unique business risks that this presents.

Specifically, companies should consider taking on technology professional liability coverage, also referred to cyber-liability coverage, which addresses a lack of protection in commercial general liability policies. General liability typically doesn't cover claims of third-party financial harm.

"Cyber-threats are real, growing in both number and sophistication," said Joe Weipert, vice president of UNITEL, a COMPTEL partner. Weipert, who will speak at the Networks Platform on Tuesday at 1 p.m. at the conference, added, "There is an increased potential for errors and omissions, copyright or trademark infringement, and breaches of private information."

He noted that "technology businesses today are driven by data. With that comes the profound responsibility to protect customers' private information, to prevent the inadvertent transmission of computer viruses and to ensure that authorized users are able to securely access your website or computer network. The theft or misuse of private or confidential customer information occurs daily."

Any communications company engaged in providing computer services, Internet services or those companies using the Internet in its everyday course of business can use cyber-liability coverage. It protects businesses in the event that a third party suffers a financial loss due to one's product or service not performing as it was intended or expected, including the event of an error or omission. These policies also cover defense costs in the event of litigation.

For instance, if a mistake were made and an error made it into the code of a website or program one's company produced, and it isn't found before it is implemented hackers could exploit that to gain access to corporate networks. If a third party depends on this product or service to operate its business and its operations are stalled due to a hack, causing them a financial loss, they have grounds to litigate.

Commercial general liability coverage would not cover a claim or any costs of litigation because of the presence of an error.

Weipert added that cyber-liability policies usually exclude product recall, but some will accept damages for loss of use of a failed product. They also generally exclude non-financial losses and intentional or dishonest acts.

"A lot can be done to reduce or eliminate exposures through better understanding of the coverage's you currently have and do not have," he said. "Not all exposures require an insurance policy to control or avoid a loss. Contracts can also have a dramatic impact on your exposure to liability as a result of the acceptance or transfer of risk. However, some exposures are best solved by a technology errors and omissions policy (cyber-liability)."

It is also essential to conduct a risk analysis to identify what exposures exist in the first place.

"Purchasing a cyber-liability policy may not meet your needs at all," said Weipert. "In fact, without a thorough analysis of risk and coverage, you may end up buying a cyber-liability policy that only partially meets your needs." ❏

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