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CONNECTIONS

NEWSLETTER

4th Quarter Edition

2011

2011 Accounting Seminar Recap

Again at the Oregon Coast, the Accounting Seminar boasted a record attendance for this year's conference!

The one and a half day program began with a fun and informative journey from the days of the first computer to current broadband technology with **Neil Jones**. Jones, Network Administrator at **Hood Canal Communications** brought several "props" that were passed around the attendees so that everyone had a chance to see things up close. Neil's interesting presentation engaged the whole group.

Mark Novy, Manager-Demand Assurance, **NECA** joined us with "Access Arbitrage Issues Update," an overview of access arbitrage issues and efforts to mitigate their impact on member companies.

During lunch, **Carole Astley**, Industry Relations Manager for **Travel Oregon/Oregon Tourism Commission**, took the crowd on a visual and narrative tour of Oregon. Highlights and hidden gems from Oregon's seven geographic regions were shared.

Randy Trost, Senior Consultant, **GWN Consulting, Inc.** presented "Technology and the National Broadband Plan." Randy explored ways to plan and account for the upcoming National Broadband Plan and its effects on rural America. He discussed how



Neil Jones of Hood Canal Communications talks about the evolution of computers

this transition will affect technology planning for services you will be required to offer.

Betty Buckley, Executive Vice President of **WITA** and **Brant Wolf**, Executive Vice President of **OTA** teamed up for a "Legislative and Regulatory Overview." Betty and Brant discussed legislative and regulatory issues in both Washington and Oregon states affecting the telecommunications industry.

continued, see **ACCOUNTING**



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Suzanne Smith, Senior Utility Analyst-Cost Analysis, **OPUC** provided a session on “OPUC 101: An Overview of the Oregon Public Utility Commission – Telecom Division.” After starting with a brief overview of the OPUC, Suzanne focused on annual filings requirements, schedule of filings and upcoming changes to the forms. She also discussed open dockets and responded to questions from the group.

“The RLEC Business Model – Is It Broken?” with **Jim Rennard**, Senior Consultant, **GVNW Consulting, Inc.**, explored the many possibilities of merging, acquiring, consolidating and partnering.

The closing session of “The Economy.....Is Your Seatbelt Fastened?” with **Toby Daniels**, Principal, **Wealth Advisors, Inc.** was an insight into the challenging and unpredictable economic times we live in.

The OTA expresses warm thanks to the sponsors of this year's conference:

AKT LLP

GVNW Consulting, Inc.

Moss Adams LLP

Nehalem Tel – RTI

The Toledo Telephone Company

Western Independent Networks

While everyone missed Pat Lynch at this event, who was unable to attend in his usual role of conference concierge extraordinaire, the conference would not have been complete (nor nearly as much fun) without the very timely introduction of “Little Pat.” He seemed to enjoy every aspect of the conference. I’m sure we’ll be seeing more of the jolly little guy at future



Little Pat proudly wore his name badge at his very first OTA conference and took part in all the other activities and duties... at the Rogue River Brew Pub, maybe too much.

2011 Safety Seminar Recap...

This year the Safety Seminar was held at the Red Lion Hotel on the River at Jantzen Beach in Portland, Oregon.

A special thanks to the sponsors for their generous support of this year's event:

Telcom Insurance Group

UNITEL Insurance

Opening speaker for our event was **Jim Szpek**, Safety and Health Consultant for the **Washington Department of Labor and Industries**, Region 4m offering a session on “Fall Protection for the Telecommunications Industry.” Mr. Szpek addressed the specifics of fall protection, focusing on ladder safety, work on powered platforms and working from structures.

Sgt. Jason Vanmeter, **Salem Police Department & Major, US Marin Corp Reserves** provided a discussion on “Personal Safety and Protection.” Sgt. Vanmeter focused on personal and facility protection issues ranging from active threat assessment, anti-terrorism efforts, physical security, electronic monitoring, site security, crime prevention and personal safety.

“Earthquake and Tsunami Hazards in the Pacific Northwest” was the topic of **David Holton**, Architect, **David Holton Design**. He serves on the Oregon Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission. David discussed expected damages and threats to public and private infrastructure from the anticipated Cascadia event, sharing mitigation strategies that companies and individuals can employ to minimize the loss of life and property from such an event.

Chris Bading, Property Broker with **Alexander Morford & Woo** offered a session on “Insuring Earthquake and Natural Disaster Risks.” He discussed how insurance coverage is underwritten and priced for rare—but potentially very costly risks associated with natural disasters.



Mike Hetzel, Farmers Union Insurance address the group on driver safety.

Mike Hetzel, Loss Control Consultant with **QBE Farmers Union Insurance** rounded out the seminar with “Driver Risk Index Driver Evaluation Program.” Mike discussed how the DRI Program is designed to evaluate a driver’s risk recognition and decision-making skills and how DRI utilizes more than a decade of research, crash evaluation, video technology and field testing to develop an informative and entertaining driver safety education program — a simple method for determining the driver’s ability to identify and control traffic-related risks, and thereby become a safe driver.

continued, see **SAFETY**



Erik Hoefer, SCTC, 2011 Safety Award Recipient Emil Nelson, SCTC and Mitch Johnson, SMTA

SAFETY continued

The 2011 Safety Award was presented to **Emil Nelson** of **Stayton Cooperative Telephone Company**. Emil has been deeply involved in every aspect of the SCTC Safety Committee since its inception. Over the past thirty-some years, Emil has attended safety training seminars, OSHA certification classes and overseen the SCTC safety committee as its chairperson. Emil has also served on the OTA Safety Committee for a number of years. Emil cares about safety for SCTC's employees. He has continually kept up with the latest OSHA regulations and makes sure that everyone who is affected by these rules is informed of the changes and the need for protecting the employees and the company. Emil was instrumental in getting SCTC compliant in the MSDS world and on board with the CRIS program. Emil cares about safety because he cares about people.

Please join the OTA in congratulating Emil for his exemplary dedication & service to the world of safety!

2011 Consumer Services & Marketing Seminar Recap

Once again the beautiful Oregon Coast was the venue for this year's seminar for the Consumer Services and Marketing folks. Professional Speaker and Trainer, **Howard Baker Jr.** started the event off with "Understanding and Dealing with Difficult People" --- something we all have to deal with from time to time! Howard rounded out the morning with a session on "Consultative Selling."

"Dealing with Customer's Questions About the Internet" was presented by **Gene de Vore**, Technology Manager for **Canby Telcom**. Gene shared his highly developed ability to explain the mysteries of the internet in a way that even non-technical people could understand.

Andrea Crosby, Project Manager and **Ghassan Ammar**, Communications Coordinator of **CUB Connects** offered a session entitled "An Overview of the CUB Connects and 211info Programs." They were joined by **Emily Berndt**, Agency Relations Coordinator of **211info**. This presentation provided a thorough overview of the project, as well as a step-by-step explanation for accessing the site and making changes to individual company's residential plan information. For further information you can access their website at www.cubconnects.org.

The "Legislative Overview and Regulatory Update" was given by **Barb Young**, Director of Government Affairs, **CenturyLink**; Chair, OTA Legislative Committee. Barb provided an overview of the recent sessions and shared her thoughts on the upcoming "interim session" and discussed OPUC activities and Federal level developments relative to telecommunications issues.

Mike Reding of **Stayton Telephone Company** facilitated "Roundtable Discussions" during a session that provided attendees the opportunity to participate in small group discussions with their fellow consumer services and marketing colleagues on five different



Group of attendees.

Attendees participating in the roundtable discussions.

Gene de Vore, Technology Manager, Canby Telcom.

Howard Baker, Jr., Professional Speaker and Trainer.

topics. Each topic repeated five times at the same table during the course of the sessions, in 15-minute intervals. Individuals were able to move from table to table and participate in all five topic discussions.

The five topic areas selected for discussion were:

- Differentiating Your Company and Services
- Internet Marketing
- Employee Recognition and Incentives
- How to Do More with Less

Closing out the conference, **Dave Nieuwstraten**, Managing Principal, **Pivot Group LLC** shared his insights into current competitive pressures and issues confronting the rural telecom industry with his presentation "Telecommunications Industry Overview."

2012 OTA EVENT CALENDAR

ITA Showcase • March 6-7

Come help us celebrate our Silver Anniversary – Partnering with Telco's for 25 years!
Holiday Inn – Portland Airport Hotel - Portland, OR.

Outside Plant Seminar • April 19-20

Best Western Agate Beach - Newport, OR.

2012 OTA-WITA Joint Annual Meeting • May 21-23

Skamania Lodge - Stevenson, WA.

2012 Central Office & Information Technologies Seminar • September 27-28

Best Western Agate Beach - Newport, OR.

2012 Consumer Services & Marketing Seminar Date/Location TBA

2012 Accounting Seminar • October 23-24

Red Lion on the River, Jantzen Beach, Portland, OR

2012 Safety Seminar • Date/Location TBA



OTA Scholarship Applications Now Being Accepted

**** Submission Deadline: Friday, March 16 ****

Applications for scholarship awards for the 2012-2013 scholastic year are now being accepted. Packets were mailed to each OTA member company in mid-January for distribution to all employees. Application materials are also available on the OTA website at www.ota-telecom.org. Completed application packets must be received in the OTA Office in Salem no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 16, 2012. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. Any questions should be directed to the OTA Office at 503.581.7430.

Notification of OTA President of Any Antitrust Concerns

OTA members, representatives and attendees should promptly bring any antitrust concerns to the attention of OTA President. Because antitrust law and policy is legally complex (especially in view of the heavily regulated nature of the telecommunications industry), all OTA members, representatives and attendees are expected and instructed to seek promptly the advice of counsel for OTA in the event that there is any question as to whether any contemplated action, activity, proposal, or other course of action may be in conflict with applicable law.

OTA members, representatives and attendees should terminate any discussion, seek legal counsel's advice, or, if necessary, leave any meeting or discussion where improper subjects are being discussed and explain the reasons for departure to those still in attendance.

For a copy of OTA's Antitrust Policy in its entirety, please contact the OTA office.

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FTTH Council Workshop

March 28, 2012 • 7:00am – 6:00pm

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Portland

FTTH Broadband and Best Practices Workshop - A Future of Unlimited Bandwidth: Experiences from the Pacific Northwest

Sponsored by:



Join the Fiber-to-the-Home Council in Portland on March 28 for a day-long session of best practices, case studies and other learning opportunities – with a special focus on the high-bandwidth, all-fiber networks that are being deployed in the Pacific Northwest region of the country. Registration fee of \$195 includes continental breakfast, breaks, lunch and networking reception at the end of the day.

Topics will include...

- The Economic Impact of FTTH on Pacific Northwest Communities
- Deploying FTTH Networks from an Operations Perspective
- Review of Regulatory and Legislative Activities Affecting FTTH
- RUS and ARRA Funding: Preparing for and Surviving a Government Audit
- North America's FTTH Build-Out: A Status Update

To view complete agenda, for hotel information and to register for this workshop, visit www.ftthcouncil.org and select "Workshops" from the drop down menu under the "Events" tab on the top navigation menu.

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OTA COMMITTEE MEETINGS CALENDAR

Please keep in mind the possibility that these dates could change, so be sure to watch your email for meeting confirmation and details that are sent to all committee members the week prior to the scheduled meeting date.

FEBRUARY 2012

23rd OPUC Meeting To discuss the FCC Transformation Order
Thursday afternoon at PUC Office

MARCH 2012

- 6th Outside Plant Committee Meeting**
Tuesday - 12:30 p.m. at ITA Showcase, Holiday Inn – Portland Airport Hotel
- 7th Assoc. Member Committee Breakfast Meeting**
Wednesday - 6:30 a.m. at ITA Showcase, Holiday Inn – Portland Airport Hotel
- 15th Safety Committee Meeting**
Thursday - 2:00 p.m. at Scio Mutual Telephone Association
- 28th Consumer Services & Marketing Committee Meeting**
Wednesday - 10:00 a.m. at Stayton Telephone Company
- 29th Board of Directors & Small Company Committee Meeting**
Thursday - 10:00 a.m. at OTA Office, Salem

APRIL 2012

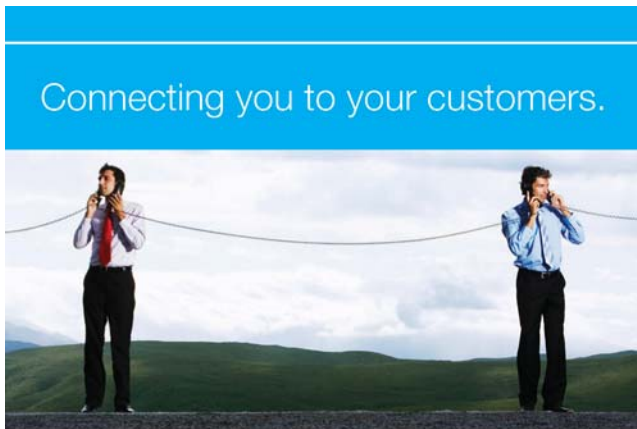
- 5th Central Office & Information Technologies Committee Meeting**
Thursday - 10:00 a.m. at OTA Office, Salem
- 10th Emergency Preparedness & Network Security Committee Meeting**
Tuesday - 10:00 a.m. at OTA Office, Salem
- 18th Outside Plant Pre-Seminar Committee Meeting**
Wednesday - Time TBA at Best Western Agate Beach Inn, Newport, OR
- 24th Scholarship Foundation Board Meeting**
Tuesday - 9:00 a.m. at OTA Office, Salem
- 26th Accounting Committee Meeting**
Thursday - 10:00 a.m. at Scio Mutual Telephone Association

New Members

The OTA would like to welcome the following companies who have recently joined the association. For contact info and links to their websites, please visit the OTA website.

New Telecom Provider Members:

Warm Springs Telecom



As the nation's largest telecom insurer, we've earned the trust and respect of more rural companies than any other provider.

Learn how we can help keep you connected to your customers.

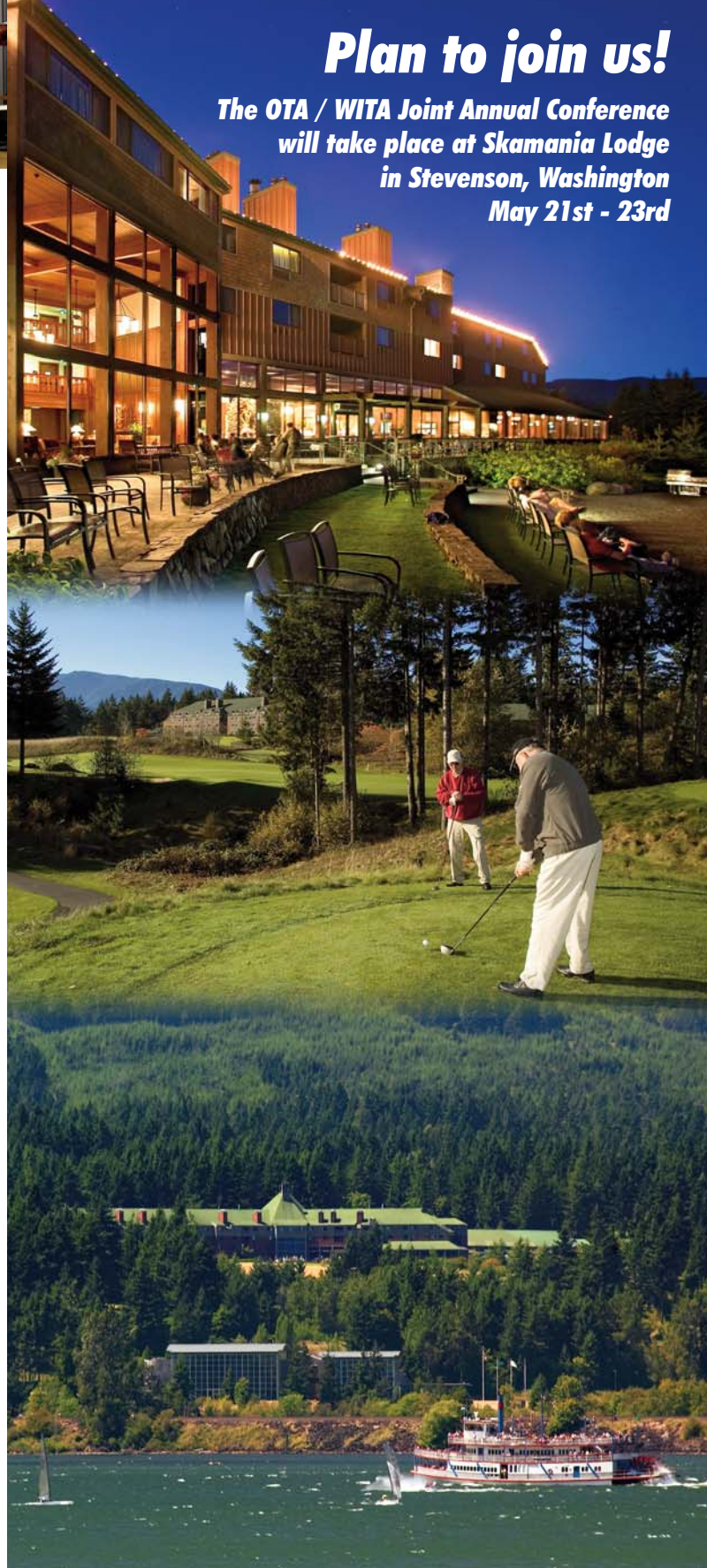
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Plan to join us!

**The OTA / WITA Joint Annual Conference
will take place at Skamania Lodge
in Stevenson, Washington
May 21st - 23rd**



Need to contact the Oregon Telecommunications Association?

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