

# OPASTCO 411

VITAL INFORMATION FOR OPASTCO MEMBERS ABOUT  
THEIR INDUSTRY AND THEIR ORGANIZATION

## Call to Action: Ask Your Representative to Attend Rural Telecom 101 Briefing on March 18

OPASTCO, the Independent Telephone and Telecommunications Alliance (ITTA), and the Western Telecommunications Alliance (WTA) will host a briefing for members of the House of Representatives and their staff members on the fundamentals of rural telecommunications networks. The briefing will cover efforts to deploy advanced services in high-cost areas, as well as the vital roles that the Universal Service Fund (USF) and intercarrier compensation system play in enabling small rural carriers to offer these services to their customers.

The briefing will be held on March 18 at 2:00 p.m. EST in room 2322 of the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, D.C.

OPASTCO strongly encourages rural carriers to contact their members of the House and ask them, or their staff, to attend.

For more information about the briefing, contact Randy Tyree, OPASTCO's director of legislative and industry affairs, at 202/659-5990 or [rxt@opastco.org](mailto:rxt@opastco.org).

## FCC Meeting to Address Advanced Services Deployment, Broadband Reporting Data

On March 19, the FCC will hold an open meeting at its headquarters in Washington, D.C. The meeting will address the status of initiatives to deploy advanced services to all Americans and developing a national set of broadband deployment statistics.

For more information, visit [http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/attachmatch/DOC-280783A1.pdf](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-280783A1.pdf).

## GAO Reports on FCC's Responsiveness to Consumer Complaints

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) today issued a report on the FCC's responsiveness to complaints filed by individual consumers. The report examines investigations that the FCC has conducted and enforcement actions taken against carriers who were found to have violated Commission rules. GAO determined that the FCC processes about 95 percent of the individual consumer complaints that it receives. The report determined that, among the cases in which the Commission launches investigations, enforcement actions are taken about 9 percent of the time. GAO found that some FCC investigations do not result in enforcement because no violations occurred or inadequate data was available. The report recommends that the FCC set measurable enforcement goals, refine its overall enforcement strategy, and set performance criteria to better address consumers' complaints.

To view the report, visit <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d08125.pdf>.

## Klobuchar Requests Updates on Prorating Wireless ETFs

Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) recently sent a letter to large national wireless carriers requesting an update on their policies regarding prorating early termination fees (ETFs). The letter asked carriers who have not yet prorated their



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ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROMOTION  
AND ADVANCEMENT OF SMALL  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANIES

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## OPASTCO NEWS

### REMINDER: QUEBEC CONVENTION CALL FOR TOPICS DUE TOMORROW

The OPASTCO Education Committee invites members to submit proposals for educational sessions, workshops and panels for OPASTCO's upcoming summer convention in Quebec City, Canada. Proposals are due tomorrow. Applicants will be notified of the status of their proposal by mid-April.

To submit your application online, visit [www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=hgLOBTB\\_2bSqnQmjxk\\_2fS\\_2fEEg\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=hgLOBTB_2bSqnQmjxk_2fS_2fEEg_3d_3d).

### IP POSSIBILITIES HOTEL SOLD OUT, ALTERNATE HOTELS AVAILABLE

The 2008 IP Possibilities Conference, cosponsored by OPASTCO and NTCA, will be held April 7-11 at Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers in Chicago, Ill.

Although the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers is now sold out, alternate hotels are available. They include Embassy Suites at 312/836-5900, the Fairmont Chicago at 312/565-8000, the InterContinental Chicago at 312/944-4100, and the Westin at 312/943-9200.

To register for the event, please visit the IP Possibilities Website at <http://www.buildipnow.com>.

### QUEBEC CONVENTION BROCHURE AVAILABLE

OPASTCO's 45th Annual Summer Convention and Tradeshow will be held July 12-16, 2008, at the Hilton Quebec in Quebec City, Canada.

For more information, visit <http://www.opastco.org/site/meetings/summer>.

fees to offer an explanation. Klobuchar said that failure to prorate fees impedes freedom of choice for consumers whose needs are not being met by their current wireless service providers.

For more information, visit [http://klobuchar.senate.gov/newsreleases\\_detail.cfm?id=294637&](http://klobuchar.senate.gov/newsreleases_detail.cfm?id=294637&).

## Revised Slamming Rules to Take Effect on April 11

The FCC recently published in the *Federal Register* its Order revising its rules governing third party verification of a consumer's intent to switch long distance carriers (411, Jan. 10). The new rules require that each verification include the date, expand verifiers' disclosure obligations when consumers have questions, and clarify verifiers' disclosure requirements to help consumers better understand what services they will receive.

The new requirements take effect on April 11.

To view the *Federal Register* notice, visit <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-4976.pdf>.

## RUS/ACE Joint Broadband Summit Set for May 7 in Tennessee

On May 7, the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) and Association of Communication Engineers (ACE) will host a joint broadband summit in Memphis, Tenn. Presentations will address RUS broadband grant and loan programs, the transition from the public switched telephone network (PSTN) to the IP network, fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) inside wiring, and barriers to deploying video services.

For more information, visit <http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/documents/2008-ACE-Conference.pdf>.

## Comments on Intrado Interconnection Preemption Request Due March 24

The FCC is seeking comments on a petition filed by Intrado Communications to preempt the Virginia State Corporation Commission's jurisdiction in order to arbitrate Intrado's interconnection agreement with two other carriers.

Comments are due March 24. Reply comments are due March 31.

For more information, visit [http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/attachmatch/DA-08-544A1.pdf](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-08-544A1.pdf).

## Senate to Hold FTC Oversight Hearing on April 8

On April 8, the Senate Commerce Committee will hold an oversight hearing on the Federal Trade Commission.

For more information, visit [http://commerce.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing\\_ID=1938](http://commerce.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing_ID=1938).

## Senate Holds Hearing on Estate Tax Reform Proposals

On March 12, the Senate Finance Committee held a hearing on estate tax reform proposals. Estate tax relief is currently scheduled to expire in 2010-2011. Witnesses at the hearing suggested that a tax credit be issued for prior estate taxes paid, that estate taxes be deferred until assets are sold, or that the estate tax be replaced by an income inclusion system that would classify inherited assets as income and subject them to income taxes instead.

For more information, visit <http://finance.senate.gov/press/Bpress/2008press/prb031208a.pdf>.

## L&R CONFERENCE ONLINE REGISTRATION NOW AVAILABLE

OPASTCO and WTA's Joint L&R Conference will be held in Washington, D.C., from May 19-21. Join fellow rural carriers as they make themselves heard to policymakers and share the rural perspective on the telecom industry. Attendees will learn about OPASTCO's policy agenda and legislative and regulatory positions; hear the latest industry, state, FCC, and congressional perspectives toward current issues; and learn effective tips for lobbying Congress.

To register for the event online, visit <http://www.opastco.org/site/meetings/legislative>.

## FRED STUDENTS TO BE ON TV TOMORROW NIGHT!

This week, 14 students are in Washington, D.C., participating in FRED's Leadership Through Learning program, sponsored by the National Exchange Carrier Association (NECA). This morning, they participated in the Close Up Foundation's program that will air on C-SPAN 2 tomorrow night at 7:00 p.m. EST. Three of the 14 FRED students had the opportunity to ask questions while the others will more than likely be in audience shots taken throughout the show. Students who asked questions were: Kurt Berning, Mt. Angel, Ore., (Mt. Angel Telephone Company); Sarah Lamoureux, Schoharie, N.Y., (The Middleburgh Telephone Company) and Bethany Gamble, Chapel Hill, Tenn., (United Telephone Company). If you do not have C-SPAN 2, you can log on to the live broadcast at <http://www.c-span.org/watch/index.asp?Cat=TV&Code=CS>.

Other highlights of the week include meetings with senators from Vermont and Minnesota and visits to the Saudi Arabian Embassy, the yet-to-open-to-the-public Newseum, and many of the city's monuments. Their week concludes tomorrow with a visit to the OPASTCO office for a telecommunications and leadership seminar in the morning and touring in the afternoon. For a list of all of the FRED students, or for more information on how your company can take part in 2009, please visit <http://www.fred.org/ftl.html>.