

OPASTCO 411

VITAL INFORMATION FOR OPASTCO MEMBERS ABOUT
THEIR INDUSTRY AND THEIR ORGANIZATION



OPASTCO

ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROMOTION
AND ADVANCEMENT OF SMALL
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANIES

House, Senate Conferees Approve Farm Bill, White House Responds

House and Senate conferees recently agreed on Farm Bill provisions to submit to President Bush for signature. The Senate Agriculture Committee recently released its report on the conference agreement. The report explains that the broadband section would shift federal assistance to deploy broadband to areas with very limited or no service. The provisions would also simplify the application requirements. To view the report's highlights, visit http://216.40.253.202/%7Eusscanf/images/stories/2008_farm_bill_highlights.pdf.

President Bush recently issued a statement recommending that Congress adopt a one-year extension of current agricultural and rural development programs instead of the Farm Bill. To view the statement, visit <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/05/20080509.html>.

Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) then issued a response to the White House. To view Harkin's statement, visit http://216.40.253.202/~usscanf/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1725&Itemid=2.

Conyers, Lofgren Introduce Bill On Broadband Network Management Practices

Reps John Conyers (D-Mich.) and Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.) recently introduced H.R. 5994, the Internet Freedom and Nondiscrimination Act. The legislation would mandate that broadband service providers offer reasonable, nondiscriminatory terms and conditions enabling any individual to provide content, applications and services in a manner that is equivalent to how the provider's own affiliates offer such items. The bill would require carriers to interconnect with each other under reasonable terms and conditions. The measure would prohibit broadband service providers from blocking, impairing or interfering with users' ability to use, send and receive lawful content, applications and services; from imposing additional charges on using, sending and receiving such items; from preventing users from attaching devices of their choice; and would require carriers to offer users accurate information about rates, terms, conditions and limitations regarding the services they purchase.

Under the bill, broadband service providers would be allowed to prioritize or offer enhanced service quality for data of a particular type, but would be required to offer the same privileges for all data of that type regardless of ownership or origin. Network management that does not result in discrimination among content, applications or services would be permitted. Carriers would be allowed to offer priority to emergency communications, prevent violations of federal and state laws, enable compliance with court orders, offer consumer protection if users can opt out, and offer special promotional pricing and marketing packages.

To view the bill text, visit http://thomas.loc.gov/home/gpoxmlc110/h5994_ih.xml.

Senators Introduce Calling Card Fee Disclosure Bill

Sens. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.), John Kerry (D-Mass.), Mel Martinez (R-Fla.) and Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) recently introduced S. 2998, the Prepaid Calling Card

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OPASTCO NEWS

OPASTCO'S QUEBEC CONVENTION OFFERS DYNAMIC WORKSHOPS

OPASTCO's Summer Convention, which will be held from July 12-16 in Quebec City, Canada, will feature workshops that enable participants to get ahead of the game by learning about key issues that will effect their companies in the future. The forums will include:

- **The Yin and Yang of ILEC Cost Recovery:** This session will examine the relationship between NECA settlements and high-cost loop support. As long-term USF reform is now underway, it is vital that rural ILECs understand and manage their cost recovery through settlements and universal service. Real-world examples will be covered that show how the two become one.
- **The Lobby Experience: Invigorate Your Real Estate:** Rural carriers can better leverage their existing products and services by showcasing them in new and exciting ways. Whether they have small lobbies or world-class showcases, participants in this workshop will gain new exciting ideas that will motivate them to present their product lines that appeal to existing and potential new customers alike.
- **Delivering Carrier Ethernet Services:** Wide-area Ethernet connectivity on both the access and transport sides of independent networks presents a challenge to rural providers. This workshop will cover the technologies and cost factors that help providers meet this challenge.

For the latest details on OPASTCO's Quebec Convention, visit <http://www.opastco.org/site/meetings/summer/>.

Consumer Protection Act. The legislation would mandate the Federal Trade Commission to require all prepaid calling card providers to disclose all of their rates and fees in language used on the card itself, as well as associated advertising, at the time of sale. Distributors would be mandated to disclose interstate per-minute rates, international preferred destination rates, and fees and surcharges. Calling card service providers would be required to honor cards for at least one year after initial use unless a different expiration date is clearly displayed.

For more information, visit <http://kerry.senate.gov/cfm/record.cfm?id=297616>.

FTC Issues New Regulations on Unsolicited Commercial E-Mail

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recently issued new regulations under the Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act of 2003 (CAN-SPAM Act). The new rules prohibit senders of unsolicited commercial e-mail from requiring recipients to pay a fee, provide information other than their e-mail addresses, or to take steps other than sending an e-mail or visiting a single Website to opt out of future e-mails. For e-mails containing advertisements featuring multiple companies, the definition of sender was updated to make it easier to determine which company is responsible for complying with opt-out requests. The rules explain that senders can use registered post office boxes to comply with requirements to display their valid postal addresses. The new regulations also updated the definition of the term "person" to clarify that CAN-SPAM Act rules are not limited to natural persons.

For more information, visit <http://www.ftc.gov/opa/2008/05/canspam.shtm>.

House Committee Reports Bill To Donate Federal Computers to Rural Schools

The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform recently reported H.R. 752 to the full House body to be scheduled for a vote. The legislation, introduced by Rep. G.K. Butterfield (D-N.C.), would require federal agencies to donate excess computers, monitors, printers, modems, routers, servers, software and other telecom equipment to schools. Priority would be given to schools located in towns with populations of 25,000 or less where 20 percent or more of the residents earn less than the federal poverty threshold. The federal government would be mandated to notify schools of equipment availability through newspapers, community announcements, and via the Internet.

To view the bill text, visit http://thomas.loc.gov/home/gpoxmlc110/h752_rh.xml.

Tyree Addresses KTIA Spring Meeting

OPASTCO Director of Legislative and Industry Affairs Randy Tyree addressed the Kansas Telecommunications Industry Association's Spring Meeting today in Wichita, Kan. He addressed current activities in Washington, D.C., and previewed issues to be discussed at the upcoming OPASTCO and WTA Legislative and Regulatory Conference.

McHugh Discusses Interoperability at TTA Spring Meeting

On May 7, OPASTCO Technical Director John McHugh delivered a speech at the Tennessee Telecommunications Association's Spring Meeting in Franklin, Tenn. His presentation focused on interoperability concerns and how to mitigate them when deploying a multi-vendor network.

L&R CONFERENCE SCHEDULE ANNOUNCED

OPASTCO and WTA's Legislative and Regulatory Conference will be held from May 19-21 at the Renaissance M Street Hotel in Washington, D.C. On May 19, a special reception will be held to welcome attendees. On May 20, participants will be briefed on issues including universal service reform, intercarrier compensation reform, broadband and network access, and affordable access to video content in preparation for their meetings downtown. On May 21, a breakfast Q&A will give attendees an opportunity to compare notes before their next round of meetings.

For more information about the event, including online registration, please visit www.opastco.org/site/meetings/legislative.

FRED BOARD MEMBERS WANTED

OPASTCO telcos are invited to submit a nomination for the FRED Board of Directors. One position is currently available and another will open up in January 2009. Candidates must be willing to participate in six board meetings each year, four via conference call and two during the OPASTCO conventions. No experience needed.

If you are interested, please call Melissa Korzuch, FRED Director, at 703/680-7528.

FRED COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS REPORT PRE-ORDERS NOW AVAILABLE

FRED is now accepting advanced orders for its 2008 Compensation and Benefits Survey. This publication, which will be available in June, will include information on more than 65 jobs and a number of benefits areas.

To pre-order yours today, visit http://www.fred.org/pdfs/2008_SalarySurvey_orderform.pdf.