

OPASTCO 411

VITAL INFORMATION FOR OPASTCO MEMBERS ABOUT
THEIR INDUSTRY AND THEIR ORGANIZATION



OPASTCO

ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROMOTION
AND ADVANCEMENT OF SMALL
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANIES

APRIL 25, 2008

Stevens, Inouye Introduce Phantom Traffic Bill, Rural Carrier Testifies at Hearing

On April 24, Sens. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) and Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii) introduced S. 2919, the Signaling Modernization Act. The legislation would mandate that all voice service providers, including voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) providers, transmit sufficient call signaling information to facilitate intercarrier billing. The bill would also require intermediate providers who transit traffic between originating and terminating providers to transmit this information. Under the measure, the FCC would be given one year to set the rules and would be required to take into account industry call signaling standards, technical limitations of current equipment, and potential costs of modifying existing equipment in order to comply. For more information about S. 2919, please visit http://commerce.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressReleases.Detail&PressRelease_id=1e08609b-1d4b-47c4-86b9-912a0d63d270&Month=4&Year=2008.

The House companion bill is expected to be introduced soon.

On behalf of OPASTCO, the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA) and the Western Telecommunications Alliance (WTA), Raymond Henagan of Rock Port Telephone Company testified at this week's Senate Commerce Committee hearing on phantom traffic. Henagan explained that phantom traffic occurs when originating service providers remove information necessary to know who to bill or what rate to bill for intercarrier calls, manipulate this information into an unreadable form, or outright refuse to pay for calls they send to another carrier's network. In other cases, it occurs when originating service providers fail to attach appropriate call signaling information to their traffic. Henagan cited many examples of small rural incumbent local exchange carriers (ILECs) who estimate that 20 to 30 percent of their incoming traffic fails to provide information necessary for intercarrier billing.

To address the problem, Henagan recommended that Congress enact legislation to require all service providers to transmit all of the traffic identifiers necessary for billing along with their traffic. He said that federal policy must hold those who fail to do so accountable for their actions. Finally, Henagan encouraged Congress to approve a tool that would enable rural ILECs to negotiate traffic factors for non-local, inter-MTA wireless calls with wireless carriers.

To view Henagan's testimony, visit <http://commerce.senate.gov/public/files/PhantomTrafficTestimonyHenaganApril232008final.pdf>.

OPASTCO, Allies Meet with FCC Chairman Martin's Staff On Integration of Navigation and Security in Set-Top Boxes

On April 22, representatives of OPASTCO, NTCA, and John Staurulakis, Inc., met with Elizabeth Andrion of FCC Chairman Kevin Martin's staff to discuss OPASTCO and NTCA's petition for a waiver of the Commission's rules requiring separation of navigation and security functions in set-top boxes (411, Dec. 12, 2006). The groups requested clarification regarding security requirements, as well as on how complying with the rule's commonly used interface requirements

OPASTCO NEWS

ECONOMIST TODD BUCHHOLZ TO KEYNOTE OPASTCO QUEBEC CONVENTION

Acclaimed economist and financial consultant Todd Buchholz will deliver the keynote address at OPASTCO's 45th Annual Summer Convention, which will be held from July 12-16 in Quebec. Buchholz has served as director of economic policy at the White House; managing director of the \$15 billion Tiger hedge fund; and as an award-winning economics teacher at Harvard. He has advised President Bush; is a frequent commentator on ABC News, PBS, and CBS; and recently hosted his own special on CNBC.

Buchholz is author of numerous books on cutting-edge economic and business finance issues. His books have been translated into a dozen languages and are used as college texts around the nation. They include "Market Shock: 9 Economic and Social Upheavals that Will Shake Our Financial Future," "New Ideas from Dead Economists," and "From Here to Economy."

Speakers and sessions for the Quebec Convention have been announced. General session speakers will include FCC Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein and Lorne Abugov of Osler Hoskin and Harcourt LLP.

For the latest updates on the Quebec Convention, as well as the listings of speakers and sessions, visit www.opastco.org/site/meetings/summer/.

could be fulfilled in an Internet protocol television (IPTV) environment.

For more information, contact Steve Pastorkovich, OPASTCO's business development director/senior policy analyst, at 202/659-5990 or sfp@opastco.org.

FCC to Allow Carriers to Notify Lifeline Customers of DTV Transition via Separate Mailers, Seeks Comments on Expanding Program

The FCC recently issued an Order on Reconsideration of its DTV transition education bill insert mandates (411, Mar. 31). The Order allows all Universal Service Fund (USF) eligible telecommunications carriers (ETCs) to educate their Lifeline program customers of the upcoming DTV transition via monthly mailings instead of via bill inserts or notification on bills. Information that must be provided remains the same. The Order does not effect the mandate to include DTV transition education materials as part of ETCs' marketing and advertising of Lifeline program services.

The Commission also issued a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM) seeking comments on a proposal to require ETCs to provide monthly notices to all of their subscribers rather than only their Lifeline subscribers. The FNPRM also seeks comments on whether or not multichannel video programming distributors (MVPDs) should be required to provide on-air DTV transition education materials via their systems.

Comments on the FNPRM are due 30 days after publication in the *Federal Register*. Reply comments are due 15 days thereafter.

To view the Order and FNPRM, visit http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-08-119A1.pdf.

House Hearing on Markey Bill to Mandate that Disabled Individuals Be Able to Access IP Services Set for May 1

On May 1, the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet will hold a hearing on the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (411, Jan. 2). For more information, visit <http://energycommerce.house.gov/membios/schedule.shtml>.

In Memorium: TelAlaska's Jack Rhyner

Lifelong Alaskan, outdoorsman, and national telecommunications authority Jack H. Rhyner, 55, passed away on April 19 at home with his family after a six-month battle with cancer. His was a characteristically valiant and aggressive effort to combat the disease. Jack was the chairman and CEO of TelAlaska, an innovative technology company that serves rural and urban Alaska. The company was founded by his father, the late Richard Rhyner, in 1968, and Jack began his telephony career working at his father's side. He assumed leadership of Interior Telephone in 1982 and in subsequent years operated the TelAlaska companies in partnership with his wife Donna, TelAlaska's chief information officer and board secretary. Rhyner also served as a member of the FCC's Rural Task Force.

Jack leaves Donna, sons Ryan of Anchorage and Richard Rhyner II, daughter-in-law Andrea Rhyner, and grandchildren Victoria and Christian, all of Fairbanks. He is also survived by his sister Kym Morgan of Mount Shasta, Calif., and aunts Faye Brown of Grafton, Wis., and Kathy McGrath of Wilksboro, Penn., formerly of Anchorage. A celebration of Rhyner's life will take place from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on May 1 at the Quarter Deck of the Hotel Captain Cook. According to his wishes, his ashes will be spread at a favorite Cold Bay duck hunting retreat in the fall. The family suggests that memorial donations be sent to the Cold Bay chapter of Ducks Unlimited. The address is Cold Bay Ducks Unlimited, c/o Lillian Sager, P.O. Box 131, Cold Bay, Alaska 99571.

REMINDER: L&R CONFERENCE HOTEL RATE ENDS TODAY, SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE

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. Hotel reservations must be made by the end of the day in order to qualify for the special conference rate. Call 202/775-0800 and mention "OPASTCO." The rate is \$269 per night.

Join CoBank; ElectricCom, Inc.; GVNW Consulting, Inc.; John Staurulakis Inc. (JSI); Mapcom Systems; Mid-State Consultants; National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative (NRTC); and Rural Telephone Finance Cooperative (RTFC) and help sponsor the 2008 OPASTCO/WTA L&R Conference! Sponsorship options are available at the Contributor Level for \$1,000 or the Supporter Level for \$500.

For more information about the event, visit <http://www.opastco.org/site/meetings/legislative>.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD NOMINATIONS

OPASTCO is currently seeking nominations for the OPASTCO Lifetime Achievement Award. This award is presented to an individual who has distinguished themselves by outstanding contributions to further enhance the present well-being or future of the independent telephone industry, specifically on a local or state level.

Nominations are due May 16.

To view the nomination form, visit <http://www.opastco.org/site/about/awards/lifetime>.

ASSOCIATE MEMBER DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD NOMINATIONS

OPASTCO also is seeking nominations for the Associate Member Distinguished Service Award. This award honors associate members who have performed outstanding service for the benefit of the telecommunications industry in conjunction with their OPASTCO membership.

Nominations are due May 16.

To view the nomination form, visit <http://www.opastco.org/site/about/awards/associate>.