

# The Connection

**Kennebec Telephone Co., Inc.**

*Volume 8 Issue 5  
May 2013*

## Manager's Moment

Recently, newspaper reports started to appear in various papers across the state and indicated that the state Attorney General was investigating possible campaign finance violations by the "South Dakota Telecommunications PAC" and its chairman, Scott Swier.

As most people associated with SDTA know, Mr. Swier is the legal counsel that has been engaged to represent Native American Telecom in the various actions that NAT has currently pending before the Public Utilities Commission.

When these stories began to appear, Rich Coit, Greg Dean and myself became concerned about the possible confusion that might be created as people possibly associate the "South Dakota Telecommunications" PAC with the South Dakota Telecommunications Association.

In order to help alleviate some of the possible confusion, a letter was drafted and sent to all 105 legislators, the three Public Utilities Commissioners and the Gover-

nor clearly stating that the "South Dakota Telecommunications" PAC is not associated with SDTA, that neither NAT nor Free Conferencing Corporation are members of SDTA, and that Mr. Swier is not associated with any SDTA member company in any capacity.

Our intent in sending the letter was to help maintain the good standing that you and your company, along with SDTA, have worked so hard to attain. Reputations take years to build and seconds to destroy.

We will continue to follow this story as it unfolds and work hard to make sure that we represent and defend SDTA's good name in every way possible.

SDTA President  
Rod Bowar

*Re-printed from the  
South Dakota Telecommunication Association Newsletter*



Spring is just around the Corner (we hope)  
It's time to turn on the waterworks!  
Call Kennebec Telephone Construction  
to install or service your system!



## May Dates to Remember



Cinco de Mayo..... May 5  
Mother's Day.....May 12  
Armed Forces Day.....May 18  
Lyman Graduation.....May 19  
Memorial Day.....May 27



## Participation of local providers pays off for South Dakota

High speed Internet access is, or soon will be, available at more public locations in South Dakota, thanks in part to the member companies of the South Dakota Telecommunications Association.

Representatives from the South Dakota Bureau of Information and Telecommunications (SDBIT) credited the state's local Internet providers with savings that allowed \$180,000 to be moved from the Broadband Mapping Project budget to the Technology Planning and Computer Ownership (TPCO) program. The TCPO program works with Community Anchor Institutions to provide equipment solutions that will allow expanded access to broadband in public locations.

### A complicated, challenging process

When the National Broadband Plan was announced three years ago, the SDBIT applied for and received a federal grant to collect information on the availability and use of broadband services in South Dakota under the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) State Broadband Data and Development Program. With the recent April 2013 data submission to NTIA, the South Dakota BIT continues to make great progress towards simplifying this complicated and challenging process.

In the earliest days of the project, the South Dakota team engaged four local personnel for the mapping work, and a contractor, BroadMap, had nearly ten personnel engaged. Within a year, those personnel requirements were cut by a third. Today, the effort requires two state personnel on a part-time basis, and four contractor personnel, also on a part-time basis, according to Andy Ogan, State Broadband Mapping Manager for BIT.

### Mapping expenses under budget

"Obviously, being more familiar with the project and refining our processes has made an impact on those time requirements," Ogan said. "But make no mistake, the outstanding year-round participation of the SDTA member companies has made just as big an impact on our project as having 3+ years of experience."

During the third year of the project, BIT discovered as they reviewed their budgets, that the mapping project

expenses were coming in lower than expected. About that time, the NTIA reminded all state/territories that there was a process to amend their budgets to better fit with each state's experiences, as long as all original project efforts would still be completed.

"Knowing that our SDTA members would continue to be great partners in the mapping efforts helped the South Dakota team to submit and have approved a revised budget for our entire broadband effort that shifted over \$180,000 from broadband mapping into our Technology Planning and Computer Ownership program," Ogan said.

### A partnership to be proud of

In fact, Ogan says, his colleagues in other states are openly envious of the solid working relationship between the South Dakota BIT and the South Dakota broadband providers.

"I visit with representatives from the other states/territories tasked with mapping out their state's broadband infrastructure by phone, email, and at conferences. Many states are approaching our level of participation and success, but very few could equal it.," said Ogan. "When I inform others that many South Dakota providers are using our tools year-round, do not need to be prompted to send in their updates, and truly act as a partner in the project, I've seen a few shocked faces, open mouths, and heard 'I'm quite jealous of you...' on more than one occasion."

"We are quite proud to say that the great participation and partnerships we have had with the SDTA member companies allows our program to offer more grant-funded equipment solutions to more institutions across South Dakota."

Ogan says that because of the additional funds redirected to broadband equipment at Community Anchor Institutions, city and county offices will be able to offer public WIFI at commission and board meetings, schools and libraries will have more computers and wireless access for students and patrons, and community centers will have opportunities to offer more technology access to their guests.

## Very Important Persons at Kennebec Elementary School

In March the Lyman Elementary students are asked who is a "Very Important Person" in their lives. The program used to be called the "Most Admired Person" In either case, the students put together a power point with the reasons that they chose this individual, and their VIP's are invited to the classroom that day.

Pictured above are KTCI employees who were chosen to be VIP's: Stacie Gran with daughter Caysen; Donna Bowar with Colton Collins; Debbie Miller with her daughter Jaycee; Chris Zirpel with daughter Jordan; and Jason Thiry with daughter Lyndsey.



## Welcome to the Future

Do the words "wireless home control" and "automation" make you think of "The Jetsons," complete with flying cars and a robot maid? Home automation has been around for years. New technology and more practical, affordable applications are now bringing the benefits of home automation to ordinary people.

What exactly is wireless home automation? Simply put, wireless home automation gives you automatic control of things around the home -- meaning the control of appliances through a device such as a remote control, cell phone or personal computer. Basic systems have been around for years, but have been plagued by poor performance, high prices, complicated set-up and operation, and in many cases, the need to rewire the home.

Today, you can purchase a wireless home automation starter kit for as low as \$100 with options available to do more than just lighting control. For example, using today's technology, you can receive a text message at work telling you that your kids have arrived home from school, turn off the downstairs TV from the upstairs bedroom, or turn up the heater on your drive home!

### Energy Conservation

With gas and electric bills climbing and the impact of global warming in the minds of consumers, energy conservation is as much a benefit to the environment as it is to the pocketbook. Wireless home control and automation technologies have emerged as key enablers for today's energy-intelligent homes. Homeowners can monitor usage from anywhere in the world via an Internet connection, with real-time control over their HVAC system, lights, and appliances.

### Home Security/Remote Home Monitoring

Security is top-of-mind for many homeowners. Wireless home automation solutions allow consumers to remotely monitor who is in and around their homes, whether they are down the street or thousands of miles away.

If you are interested in exploring any of these possibilities for your home, farm, or business, contact Tim Meiners at TCS. Or call the office and we will connect you with either Tim or Jason Thiry.

**KENNEBEC TELEPHONE CO., INC.**

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## Thanks for Stopping by!

The staff at Charley's Welding and Auto would like to thank everyone that stopped at our open house last weekend. We are always happy to see our customers and appreciate their support.

If you were not able to attend Charley's open house, you are more than welcome to stop in. Our store hours are 7:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday and 7:00 am to 1:00 pm on Saturdays. We encourage everyone to stop in and check out our new tool inventory along with the great deals we have on other store items including antifreeze, oil, filters, windshield washer fluid, and much more!. If we don't have the part in stock, we can usually order it and have it here fast.

So, if you're in Kennebec, stop in and check out our NAPA tools and parts; we'd love to share some of our NAPA KNOW HOW!!!



*Our mission is to provide the highest quality telecommunications and information service to our customers at an affordable price. We will strive to offer prompt, friendly, and dependable service along with the latest technology to attain the highest possible customer satisfaction.*

If you would like more information or have questions about anything in this newsletter, feel free to contact us at 605-869-2220.