

Phonotes

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The Official Newsletter Of Halstad Telephone Company

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HTC

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Large Turnout for Annual Meeting And Customer Appreciation

More than 400 people were on hand for Halstad Telephone Company's 105th Annual Meeting and Customer Appreciation event held June 17, 2009, at Norman County West High School in Halstad. HTC customers, members and employees enjoyed great food catered by Halstad Café, grooved to the music of Q5 (a smash hit from last year's meeting), and tried their luck at the more than 50 different prizes that were given out. Top prize this year was a generous \$500 gift certificate donated to HTC and won by Anne Burke of rural Climax, Minnesota.

Along with near record-setting attendance, this year's Annual Meeting marked another significant milestone for

the rural telecommunications cooperative. CEO Ron Laqua retired August 31, 2009, so this was his last chance to celebrate with employees and customers as the head of HTC before stepping down. Tom Maroney took over as CEO on September 1.

Duane Evenson of Climax, Steve Williams of Fisher, and Dan Christianson of Hillsboro, ND, were all re-elected as representatives to the Board of Directors. It was Christianson's first election, and it was also the first time that Hillsboro members could vote for directors following their inclusion into the cooperative in January of this year. Congratulations to the three of them!



Front Cover:
Knights sign
in Climax.



October Is National Co-op Month – Celebrate Your Membership with HTC

This October is National Co-op Month. Being a member of a cooperative like HTC is a unique and special opportunity that many people across the country never get. As a member, you actually become part owner of the co-op. And like the saying goes, membership has its privileges.

A cooperative is a private business organization, but it is owned and controlled by its members – the people who actually use the services and products provided by the co-op. So, not only do you get to enjoy cutting-edge services like high-speed internet access and cable television, you have a direct say in how the co-op is run by electing representatives to the Board of Directors and participating in annual meetings.

Throughout the world, cooperatives operate in every industry, including agriculture, childcare, energy, financial services, food retailing and distribution, health care, insurance, housing and, of course, telecommunications.

Perhaps the greatest benefit enjoyed by co-op member-owners is the economic benefit of being entitled to a portion of the co-op's yearly profits, as determined by the Board of Directors.

While the goal of the co-op is not to generate wealth from the distribution of goods and services, it, like all businesses, must cover costs and generate capital to cover expansion and unforeseen emergencies. The leftover profits are often returned to member-owners. At HTC, they are returned in the form of capital credits. For example, this year the HTC Board decided to allocate nearly 90 cents of member dollars spent in the form of capital credits to its members.

None of HTC's competitors offers the benefits of cash back and a voice in the operation of the company. Just one of the pluses that members receive from their cooperative, Halstad Telephone Company.

Did you know that the very first successful cooperative in the United States was formed by Benjamin Franklin himself? In 1752, Franklin formed the Philadelphia Contributionship for the Insurance of Houses from Loss by Fire. Not only was it the first, it is also the oldest continuing cooperative in the U.S.

HTC Works for Economic Stimulus Funds

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 includes the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) to develop and expand broadband (high-speed internet) service across the country. The goal of BTOP is to increase broadband access in unserved and underserved areas.

Halstad Telephone Company has been working to secure funds provided by BTOP to improve broadband speeds in its services area. Through broadband stimulus funds, HTC

could begin projects such as fiber to the homes in all of HTC's service area, including rural Hillsboro, sooner than was previously expected.

HTC staff has been working diligently on applications that are due this fall. The selection process contains multiple rounds, is highly competitive, and will take several months. Hopefully, HTC will receive notification later this year.



Study Shows Economic Impact of Co-ops

Source: Rural Telephone Finance Cooperative

Recently, the U.S. Department of Agriculture released a comprehensive study and database assessing the national economic impact of cooperatives, including telephone cooperatives. The data show that more than 29,000 U.S. cooperatives generate annual revenue of more than \$654 billion and employ more than 2 million people.

The roughly 260 telephone cooperatives offer services to 1.2 million rural Americans in 31 states covering more than 40 percent of the country's land mass. They account for nearly \$3.9 billion in revenue, 23,000 jobs, \$1.3 billion in wages paid, and \$1.8 billion in value-added income to local communities, the study calculated.

"Cooperatives are an important part of rural America," says HTC CEO Tom Maroney. "They bring services to people in remote areas that would probably not be served if it were left up to large corporations. We strive to continually bring new services to our members and are proud to be a cooperative."

The study, "Research on the Economic Impact of Cooperatives," was conducted by the University of Wisconsin's Center for Cooperatives and is available on NCBA's web site, www.ncba.coop.

HTC Grant Assists in Saving Union Block

Two historic buildings in downtown Hillsboro have been saved from the wrecking ball thanks to the efforts of the Hillsboro Community Partnership (HCP). Halstad Telephone Company recently awarded a \$2,000 grant to the HCP, as the volunteer group continues to restore and

revitalize the more than 100-year-old building that makes up the south half of Union Block in historic downtown Hillsboro. HTC is proud to support the rejuvenation of a true piece of North Dakota history.

Hillsboro EDC Another Recipient of HTC Co-op Fund

HTC Community Cooperation Funds were also awarded to the Hillsboro Economic Development Corporation for its community marketing programs that help advertise the opportunities to be found in Hillsboro, North Dakota. The \$2,000 grant was put toward TV commercials, brochures, a web site, and various advertisements placed throughout the

region. Projects eligible for the Community Cooperation Grant Fund sustain and enhance the life, safety, and growth of communities within HTC's service area. Spreading the word about the wonderful local opportunities certainly accomplishes that mission, and HTC is again proud to support its member communities.



Carol Christianson of Hillsboro EDC accepts grant funds from Ron Laqua of HTC.



Meyer Hired to Integrate HTC Systems and Streamline Services

Keith Meyer's first day on the job at Halstad Telephone Company was July 6. He was hired for a new position, Business Systems Technician, and is in charge of integrating all the automated systems within HTC. These systems will work as a group to make telephone, Internet, cable TV, and billing more streamlined.



Keith Meyer

This position will benefit HTC consumers because the streamlining of systems and services that Keith will be responsible for will save the company money, and bring services to customers and members at a faster rate. He will also help transition the company office to a paperless operation by converting all paper records to electronic files for faster and easier recordkeeping.

Keith is not new to the demands of the high-tech position he is taking over at HTC. In fact, his last position was in the training field at Microsoft's campus in Fargo, North Dakota. He is a graduate of Mayville State University and has worked with technology his entire life. Keith lives in rural Hillsboro, ND, with his wife, Betty.

ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

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Know what's below. Always call 811 before you dig. Visit call811.com for more information.

Know what's below. Call before you dig. TRAVELERS Common Ground Alliance



Win Cash From HTC!

Submit your entry to be one of two \$25 winners. Also, all entries that we receive during the year (winners or not) will be eligible for two \$100 cash prizes to be drawn at the annual meeting in June 2010! (Must be present to win the \$100.) Just return this coupon by September 30, 2009, to be eligible for the drawing.

Congratulations To The \$100 Winners:

Earl Holland, Halstad, MN
Gayle Moen, Shelly, MN

Congratulations To Last Issue's \$25 Winners:

Sandra Aalgaard, Halstad, MN
Sylvia Hansen, Hillsboro, ND

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Fill in the blank in this sentence:

“As a member, you actually become part

_____ of the co-op..”

(Answer can be found somewhere in this issue.)



Directory Sales Reps Coming to Area

The Red River Regional Directory will be sending advertising representatives to your area offering up some great advertising opportunities for local businesses. Reps will be visiting the local area this summer and fall. Advertising in your local phonebook is one of the most

economical and successful ways of reaching potential customers. After all, when you're ready to look up a number or address in the phone book, chances are good you're ready to act...or buy! Watch for the representatives over the next few months.



Rich Richter,
Red River Regional
Directory Sales Rep

Minnesota Customers See 10¢ Hike for 911 Services

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety announced a monthly 10-cent raise, from 65 cents to 75 cents, across Minnesota for both wired and wireless phone customers for its Emergency Communications Networks Statewide 911

Program. The raise was effective July 1, 2009. The 911 fee pays for the safety and security the emergency 911 system provides.

Tired of Telemarketers Interrupting Supper?

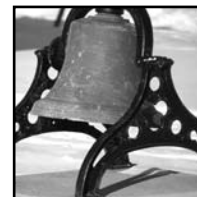
Sign-up for the Federal Do-Not-Call Registry

Even though the original rules put in place by Congress several years ago listed a five-year registration period, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has amended the rules, requiring telemarketers to honor registrations to the Do-Not-Call list indefinitely. That's good news for everyone who wishes to remain off the telemarketers' radar.

This rule change serves to minimize the inconvenience placed on consumers. Now, you are no longer required

to re-register phone numbers already registered for the Do-Not-Call list. This furthers the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) and the FCC's goal of protecting consumer privacy. The two commissions also pledge to continue coordinating with one another on additional ways to improve the Do-Not-Call Registry's accuracy.

To sign-up for the Do-Not-Call list, go to www.donotcall.gov.



HTC Proud Sponsor of North Dakota's 2009 Shrine Bowl

Fans Statewide Tuned in to See ND's Best High School Players Square Off

HTC teamed up with BEK Communications of Steele, North Dakota, and twelve additional telecommunications companies to deliver live, statewide coverage of the annual North Dakota Shrine Bowl from the Alerus Center in Grand Forks, North Dakota, on July 18. The yearly game pits the best high school football players from the East against the best from the West in both 9- and 11-man formats.

The successful cooperation between HTC and the other companies provided televised action to more than 24,000 homes! This year was the 36th Annual Shrine Bowl, and as always, the money raised from the event goes to support the Shriners Hospitals for Children all across the U.S.

HTC and its partners were excited to have the opportunity to get down on the field and bring live high school football coverage from one of the most prestigious games to the entire state. It was all-star football at its best, as the West came out with a 14-12 win in the 11-man game, while the East shut out the West 33-0 in the 9-man contest.

Recycle Your Old Directory



Minnesota state law requires all telephone books be recycled. HTC encourages all customers in both Minnesota and North Dakota to be green and recycle! Drop off your 2008-2009 Red River Regional Directory at the following places:

- HTC Office – 345 2nd Avenue West in Halstad
124 East Caledonia Avenue in Hillsboro
- Dale's Food Pride or Olsen Hardware & Appliance in Hillsboro
- Judy's Café in Shelly
- HTC Pay Station in Nielsville
- Pete's One Stop in Climax
- Cenex C-store in Fisher

Officers and Directors

- Chester Mauritson – President Shelly
- Steve Williams – Vice President Fisher
- Lori DeLong – Secretary/Treasurer Halstad
- Duane Evenson Climax
- Ron Gotteberg Halstad
- Dan Christianson Hillsboro
- Elroy Hedde Nielsville
- Kent Wavra Bygland
- Tom Maroney CEO

Office Employees

- Mark Forseth Office Manager
- Pauleen Hinkley Customer Service
- Tracy Holte Customer Service
- Sheri Ketterl Customer Service
- Kathy Maroney Customer Service
- Melanie Nelson Customer Service

Plant Employees

- Brandon Mickelson.. Network Service Coordinator
- Chad Tice Network Service Technician
- Keith Meyer Business Systems Technician
- Kevin Richter Operations Coordinator
- Andy Shulstad Technician
- Ole Van Den Einde Technician
- Dave Weeding Technician
- John Hilley Technician
- Jake Quern Technician
- Arden Buchholz Custodian
- Tom & Laurel Keeney Custodians



Halstad Office

345 2nd Ave. W. • 218-456-2125

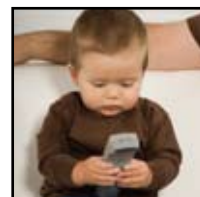
Hillsboro Office

124 E. Caledonia Ave. • 701-636-2125

After Hours Troubles 800-300-1687

**Help Desk 218-891-3006
or 888-891-3006**

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HALSTAD TELEPHONE COMPANY

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PO Box 55 • Halstad, MN 56548



New Connections

BYGLAND

893-2284 Pokorny, Christy

FISHER

891-2006 Brockpahler, Josh
& Katie

891-2021 Lundgren, Michael

891-2009 Molden, Andrew

891-2020 Shulstad, Nichole

891-2007 Stai, Lauren

HALSTAD

456-2270 Anderson, Violet

456-2309 Antonson, Donald
& Joan

456-2276 Baker, Taylor

456-2363 Diaz, Armondo

456-2369 Hettervig, Robert

456-2287 Lund, Eric

456-2201 Menge, Paul & Dee Dee

456-2246 Sanchez, Tina

HILLSBORO

636-4897 Hanson, Liz

636-2002 Lamb, Matthew

636-2006 Madsen, Kelly

636-4631 Nelson, Cecelia

636-5445 Reno's Sports Bar

636-2040 VEI Global

NIELSVILLE

946-2575 Diversified Bean, Inc.

946-2625 Millard, Chuck

946-2415 Millard, Lorraine

SHELLY

886-6490 Sanchez, Connie

886-6775 Simplot Growers
Solution Manager



HTC Offices Closed

Our offices will be closed
November 26 and 27
for Thanksgiving.

