



4th Quarter 2014 Edition

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## Consumer Services and Marketing Seminar

*The Best Western Hood River Inn located in the beautiful Columbia River Gorge was the setting for the 2014 Consumer Services and Marketing Seminar.*

This event not only proved to be educational and inspiring, but was full of fun and creativity as well. Huge thanks to Committee Chair, Tangee Summerhill-Bishop of Beaver Creek Telephone Cooperative and her very supportive teammates Kenya Johnson and Meagan Gilliland who drove quite a distance in a van totally consumed with props and decorations to make this year's seminar one to remember. And kudos to the untiring and willing committee members who took Tangee's lead and spent many hours prepping and setting up for each days sessions.

The first day began at the North Pole with Christmas carols playing as attendees entered the festively laid out session room. Finding their assigned seats and a bag of goodies that Santa left for each and every one, the group was then welcomed by none other than Mrs. Claus in full dress...and our day began!

**continued, see CSM Seminar**



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**Kevin McCarthy**, CEO, **Bare Naked Leadership Institute** opened the sessions with "How to Think Like a Winner – Even in Turbulent Times." Kevin shared the triumphs and tragedies of his life journey to empower us to make the right choices for a positive change.

**Lena Wittler**, Senior Communications Manager, **Clark Public Utilities** offered insight on strengthening focus on procuring the best Customer Service Representatives. She included helpful guidelines for dealing with difficult customers and "keeping it simple" with senior citizens to aid in their knowledge of today's technology.

**Alishia Young**, Strategic HR Partner, **Xenium** enlightened attendees on how to make the most of e-communications while implementing rules for etiquette dialogue.

**Leslie Bruner**, **UNLIMITED POTENTIALS Consulting Services** presented a session on dealing with difficult customers. This learning opportunity helped participants to see situations differently and to respond in a more effective, less stressful manner. Participants were shown how to skillfully respond so that they maintain their own and the customer's self-esteem while seeking to find mutually beneficial solutions.

**Michele Larsen** of **The Joy Team** spoke on "How Happiness is Good for Business." Attendees learned why and what to do to infuse more joy into the workplace.

**Rodney Wood**, Director of Sales & Business Development, **PEAK Internet, LLC** joined us to present an overview of the concept of the "Sales close" or, how to get the customer to say "yes." Rodney dissected the structure of a sales contact, showing how to set the stage for a successful close and gave examples of several techniques that professional sales people use to bring a mutually happy conclusion to the sales process.

The evening Welcome Reception was no less festive as attendees were greeted at the door with an introduction on winning prizes throughout the evening. And after the reception came to a close, Santa's helpers went back to work clearing that day's theme and setting the stage for Phase II —Valentine's Day!

Bright and early the next morning, the session room was filled with hearts, balloons, streamers and yes... romantic love songs were playing subtly on the boom box as attendees arrived.

**Dave Nieuwstraten**, President, **Pivot Group, LLC** shared his wealth of experience giving attendees an overview of the best, new marketing ideas spanning a range of products and services and provided a look at different methods that others have used to effectively reach their markets.

**Bethanne Kronick**, Productivity Strategist, Trainer, Speaker, Author & Energy Coach, **Simplify!** Discussed how to handle the multitude of e-mails we all receive, as well as giving insights on organizing and prioritizing the "clutter." She discussed pointers on multi-tasking, minimizing distractions and interruptions, and how to make the most of your time with strategies to help manage self defeating habits.

Rounding out the program, **Dan Kinney**, President, **Full Bloom Digital** joined us to talk about effective website and social media content and reach for small companies with limited staff wearing multiple hats.

An outstanding program filled with energy and creativity.

Thank you Tangee, team and committee...all of you did a remarkable job!





## Safety Seminar Review

We had great attendance at the 2014 Safety Seminar held November 19th at the Comfort Suites Airport in Salem!

The program started off with “Telco Fleet Safety — Do You Have Your Fleet Under Control?” — a presentation by **Mike Hetzel**, Director-Risk Management, **Unitel Insurance Group**. In this session Mike focused on providing the necessary resources and information to develop and implement a solid fleet safety policy.

**Craig Rapp**, Owner, **Utilicom Safety, LLC** discussed central office electrical safety. Craig covered grounding issues, surge protection and its importance, battery handling and proper housekeeping.



**Commissioner Brad Avakian** of the **Bureau of Labor and Industries** joined us to discuss workforce training programs that BOLI is developing. He also discussed current wage and hour law issues.

**The 2014 Ray Hawkins Safety Employee of the Year Award** was presented to **Allen Baxter of SCTC**. Allen has almost 20 years in the Outside Plant at Stayton Cooperative Telephone Company with no reportable accidents or injuries. Allen is always thinking ahead when planning jobs. Safety is consistently his first priority— his co-workers trust and rely on him on a daily basis and he is always willing to lend a hand. He has contributed several great ideas to SCTC’s Safety Committee. Allen has been affectionately dubbed with the nickname of “MacGyver” because of his resourcefulness and safety minded work habits!



Congratulations Allen and thank you for keeping safety first!

**Chris Fenerty**, Deputy, **Linn County Sheriff’s Office** did a presentation on “Safety at the Customer’s Property.” Deputy Fenerty talked about how to appropriately deal with potential violations of law that might arise when technicians are working at the customer’s premises and what to do when confronted with potentially unsafe situations at a customer’s home or property.

“Organization Continuity and Emergency Preparedness” was the topic by **Ann Steves**, Operations Manager for Business Continuity and Emergency Management, **PGE**. Ann offered attendees insights on how to ensure that a company is ready with all the necessary elements of a plan in place to deal with the loss of facilities, people and infrastructure.

Finishing up the one day seminar, **Mike Hetzel**, Director-Risk Management Services, **Unitel Insurance Group** offered attendees strategies on how to evaluate flagging operations for safety and effectiveness. Mike provided valuable resources for making a flagging program the best it can be.



Thank you Stayton Cooperative Telephone Company for participating as a sponsor of this event!



# OTA COMMITTEE MEETINGS CALENDAR



## MARCH 2015

- 4th *Outside Plant Committee Meeting*  
Wednesday – 12:00 p.m. at ITA Showcase  
Holiday Inn Airport Hotel – Portland, OR
- 5th *Associate Member Committee Meeting*  
Thursday – 7:00 a.m. at Elmer's Restaurant  
N.E. 102nd & Sandy Blvd – Portland, OR
- 6th *Scholarship Foundation Committee Meeting*  
Friday – 11:00 a.m. via Conference Call
- 11th *Central Office / Information Technologies Committee Meeting*  
Wednesday – 10:00 a.m. at Canby Telcom – Canby, OR
- 17th *Board of Directors and Small Company Committee Meeting*  
Tuesday – 9:30 a.m. at a location yet to be determined
- 18th *Consumer Services / Marketing Committee Meeting*  
Wednesday – 10:00 a.m. at SCTC – Stayton, OR

## APRIL 2015

- 2nd *Annual Meeting Committee Meeting*  
Thursday – 9:00 a.m. via Conference Call
- 8th *Outside Plant Pre-Seminar Committee Meeting*  
Wednesday – 6:00 p.m. at the Chinook Winds Casino & Resort  
– Lincoln City, OR

## MAY 2015

- 6th *Scholarship Foundation Board of Directors Meeting*  
Wednesday – 9:00 a.m. at the OTA Office; Conference Rm A  
– Salem, OR
- 12th *Board of Directors and Small Company Committee Meeting*  
Tuesday – 9:30 a.m. at a location yet to be determined

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# OTA EVENT CALENDAR

## MARCH 2015

### ITA Showcase

March 4 - 5

Holiday Inn Portland Airport Hotel - Portland, OR

## April 2015

### Outside Plant Seminar

April 9 - 10

Chinook Winds Casino & Resort - Lincoln City, OR

## June 2015

### OTA-WITA Joint Annual Meeting

June 3 - 5

Salishan Spa & Golf Resort - Gleneden Beach, OR

Learn. Share. **Grow.**

## Notification of OTA President of Any Antitrust Concerns

OTA members, representatives and attendees should promptly bring any antitrust concerns to the attention of OTA President. Because antitrust law and policy is legally complex (especially in view of the heavily regulated nature of the telecommunications industry), all OTA members, representatives and attendees are expected and instructed to seek promptly the advice of counsel for OTA in the event that there is any question as to whether any contemplated action, activity, proposal, or other course of action may be in conflict with applicable law.

OTA members, representatives and attendees should terminate any discussion, seek legal counsel's advice, or, if necessary, leave any meeting or discussion where improper subjects are being discussed and explain the reasons for departure to those still in attendance.

*For a copy of OTA's Antitrust Policy in its entirety, please contact the OTA office.*



Oregon Telecommunications Association  
&  
Washington Independent  
Telecommunications Association

**2015 Joint Annual Meeting  
June 3 - 5**



Gleneden Beach, OR



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## Accounting Seminar Recap

*The 2014 Accounting Seminar took place at the Best Western Agate Beach Inn on the beautiful Oregon Coast in Newport. Attendees enjoyed another couple of days of sun and very pleasant weather surrounding our event.*

**Rick Rebel** from **AKT Benefit Advisors** was back by popular demand to address a variety of issues that employers should be aware of, including Pay or Play mandate, employer fines, new taxes and a host of other important issues.

**Jim Rennard** from **GWN Consulting, Inc.** joined us to discuss the latest developments regarding UM 1481 which proposes to extend the current Memorandum of Understanding through 2021.

**Shane Ideus** of **Unitel Insurance** spoke to the group on what to expect during a cyber incursion and how to trim exposure to loss.

**Susan Doherty** of **NECA** provided an update on a variety of current issues and tariff filings.

“Consolidating Services” was the topic of a panel discussion facilitated by **Jennifer Niegel** of **Duncan, Tiger & Niegel** with panelists, **Jim Rennard** of **GWN** and **Paul Hauer** of **Consolidated Business Services**. The panel discussed how companies are looking to consolidate management and other services, how that is currently working and what issues have arisen to date.

**Brant Wolf, OTA** and **Jeff Smith, GWN Consulting, Inc.** teamed up to provide an overview of the legislative and regulatory issues affecting the telecommunications industry at both the state and federal levels.

**Jon Cray, Oregon Public Utility Commission** presented an update on the Oregon Residential Service Protection Fund and Lifeline program.

**Matt Bayley, AKT Wealth Advisors** rounded out the seminar with his presentation on the proponents of passive vs. active investment management styles, discussing the virtues and draw backs of each approach.



Thank you to the following sponsors of our event!



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# New Members

*The OTA would like to welcome the following companies who have recently joined the association.*

*For contact info and links to their websites, please visit the OTA website.*

*New Associate Members:  
CoBank  
Versalift Northwest*



## Legislative Update...

by Brant Wolf, CAE, Executive Vice President

*This newsletter is for the last quarter of 2014. However, it is past that time and we are in the beginning of what could be an interesting legislative session.*

By now Governor Kitzhaber has resigned his position and Kate Brown is now our Governor. This turn of events should not impact any of the issues that we might be involved with this session. By the time any of our issues make it as far as the Governor's office for action, we have taken all the action that we would probably be inclined to take. Once things have settled down, maybe after the session has included, OTA might reach out to the Governor and see if she might come and visit with us about those issues we care about.

We have started tracking quite a few bills and some of them have already had action taken. For example, legislation to renew the Oregon Broadband Advisory Council was considered and has already been voted out of the Senate. A few others have had hearings and OTA has offered testimony but nothing with any far reaching effect has moved out of any Committee.

Eventually there will be legislation considered that if passed would change the way cities can implement local franchise fees. In past sessions Comcast and the League of Oregon Cities (LOC) have sought to simply eliminate the law related to franchise fees. Over the course of a couple of years OTA and Comcast have agreed to language that would allow cities to charge a franchise fee on a broader range of services (not access to broadband) and have a lower cap of 5% on the fee. The bill would also allow us to pass along the entire fee on customer's bills. It is way too early to tell if this franchise legislation will pass or not. Regardless, this issue will be discussed. In fact, the cities have once again introduced legislation to completely eliminate franchise fee law. If this passes, a city could charge a fee on any service in any amount they choose. We will have to be vigilant about that particular legislation.

We are also in a pretty critical stage of the Oregon USF proceeding at the OPUC. While we thought we had this wrapped up for a while, that might not be the case. This is where we stand now: all parties had agreed or at least did not oppose an agreement that would have lowered the fund disbursements and placed a cap on the surcharge amount, among other things. This stipulation was sent to the Commissioners in September and in January it was rejected by them. All parties were ordered to go back to the beginning and try again. Without going into detail, this was a demoralizing, depressing outcome. Now there will be a workshop on April 16th with all three Commissioners in attendance that will hopefully educate the Commissioners about the Oregon USF, how it is used and how it came about in the first place. There are a few other issues OTA is engaged in at the OPUC but the Oregon USF proceeding is by far the most important. If you have time on the afternoon of April 16th you might consider attending the USF workshop. The Commissioners might actually call upon some folks to answer questions they might have. Even if they don't it will be important to demonstrate that we all care about the outcome of this docket.

Finally, I want to thank each and every one of you that contributed to the OTA Political Action Committee (PAC). Every year I ask and every year many of you respond to my request to fund the PAC. Our PAC gives us the opportunity to support people who support us and get to know newly elected legislators. We also have the opportunity to attend events that support legislators and those in leadership positions in the House and Senate. While our PAC will never be as large as some others it doesn't really have to be. We have a great story to tell and you all do good work in your communities. The PAC just lets us tell that story to a few people who might need to hear it.

## Need to contact the Oregon Telecommunications Association?

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