

Phonotes

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The Official Newsletter Of Halstad Telephone Company

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HALSTAD TELEPHONE COMPANY

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HTC Welcomes Hillsboro To The Co-op

Halstad Telephone Company (HTC) is excited to welcome the Hillsboro, North Dakota, 636-exchange to the cooperative. This change took effect December 31, 2008, following a vote by the HTC Board on March 18, 2008.

“We are thrilled to have the residents of Hillsboro as members of our co-op,” says Ron Laqua, HTC CEO. “This is not only a great addition for HTC but our Hillsboro customers now enjoy the benefits of cooperative membership.”

Hillsboro customers will now become members and owners of the co-op. Members elect a Board of Directors and can also get cash back from HTC in the form of capital credit checks.

According to Laqua, the business name of Halstad Telephone Company has been well known to Hillsboro customers although, Hillsboro members were actually

managed under HTC’s non-cooperative subsidiary named HTC Services, Inc.

HTC started its business in 1904 by first leasing and operating lines in Halstad and Shelly from the Hillsboro-based Hillsboro, Duane, Caledonia, and Shelly Telephone Company. In the 1980s, HTC began providing business telephone systems in Hillsboro and in the 1990s, started providing the first commercial dial-up internet service in Hillsboro.

“In 2000, HTC took a huge step in providing the first competitive telephone, cable TV, and high-speed internet services to our Hillsboro customers,” says Laqua. “We later became the first to provide high-speed wireless to rural Hillsboro.”

Welcome to the co-op, Hillsboro!

Dan Christianson Named Hillsboro Director

The Halstad Telephone Company Board of Directors recently appointed Dan Christianson to serve the Hillsboro Exchange as director on its board. The directorship of Hillsboro is a new addition to the Board with the inclusion of Hillsboro in the cooperative.

Christianson is employed by Ag Country Farm Credit Services in Hillsboro, where he has worked for 32 years. A longtime Hillsboro resident, he and his wife, Carol, a pharmacist at Hillsboro Drug, moved to the area in 1970 while Christianson was still in college. They had planned to stay one year while he finished his degree at North Dakota State University. Dan and Carol quickly became involved in a number of organizations in Hillsboro, including Hillsboro Business Association, Traill County Historical Society, Hillsboro Fire Department, Hillsboro and Traill County Economic Development, Kiwanis, and Jaycees. They are also active at Our Savior’s Lutheran Church. Incidentally, Christianson has served as President for all these organizations, except the Historical Society.

“Hillsboro is definitely home now,” says Christianson. “We can’t imagine living anywhere else.”

Christianson remarks that he’s enjoyed helping with the transition of the Hillsboro exchange into the co-op. “Being a representative of the Hillsboro Exchange, having a voice in the governance of HTC is exciting,” notes Christianson. “HTC has everything we need for business and at home.”

“Dan has served on our advisory committee in Hillsboro since the project first started,” observes Ron Laqua, HTC CEO. “I look forward to continuing our work with Dan for Hillsboro and all members and customers of HTC.”



Dan Christianson

Front Cover:
Court House
in the city
of Hillsboro.



HTC To Transition To New Leadership

Ron Laqua, CEO of Halstad Telephone Company, announced to the HTC Board of Directors and employees recently that he intends to retire from his duties at HTC at the end of this year. Laqua's decision comes after 16 years as CEO at HTC, and it will close a nearly 34-year career in the telecommunications industry.

"It is with mixed emotions that I have announced this milestone in my life. While I look forward to new adventures of retirement living, I will take with me many pleasant memories of those I have worked with and those we have served," comments Laqua. "I can't think of a better way to round out my career than through the many great experiences I've had in the communities served by HTC. HTC's Board and employees are part of a great rural telecommunications force that is serving America very well, and we have come to feel very appreciated by those we serve."



Ron Laqua

Laqua started his career in 1976 at Dakota Central Rural Telecommunications, headquartered in Carrington, North Dakota, then moved to Havre, Montana, where he served the Triangle Telephone and Hill County Electric Cooperatives for 15 years before becoming the General

Manager at HTC in 1993. "This industry has come a long way over those years," Laqua shares. "Back in the 1970s I got in on the change from party lines and operator-handled to direct-dialed long distance calling, plus burying lines to replace overhead wires on poles. Since then, it has been a whirlwind of new technology, and here at HTC, I've been proud to work with our people who have shepherded it all through – with new switches to bring such things as caller ID and voice mail, to the internet, cable and high-definition TV, fiber optics, and new computer systems in our business office, among many other innovations to serve our customers. The industry has undergone massive changes in regulation and deregulation in the past 25 years, some of it good; some of it – well, very challenging. More changes will be coming, and our crew is up to the challenge. HTC is positioned with a great Board and staff to serve our communities very well," Laqua assures.

Laqua added that the Board of Directors of HTC has begun planning to fill the CEO spot and that the cooperative's members and the community will be brought up to date as that effort progresses.

Subway Hotspot

Subway in Hillsboro is not only the new food hot spot, it is the first wireless internet Hotspot in Hillsboro! Halstad Telephone Company and Subway of Hillsboro have teamed up to provide an internet Hotspot for Subway's customers. A Hotspot is a venue that offers internet access over a wireless local area network (LAN). Wireless service gives users the mobility to move around within a broad coverage area and still be connected to the network.

Customers can bring their laptop computers to Subway and have internet access while they enjoy their meal. Subway also has HTC cable TV for its customers. "We strive to bring technology to our service area in many ways," says Ron Laqua, HTC CEO. "By teaming up with Subway, we are helping folks to connect even when they aren't at home."

Give HTC a call to learn more about internet and cable TV services in your area.



HTC Gets New Look From A Local Business

Hometown Aditude Sets Up Shop In Downtown Hillsboro Building

If you've noticed a new look from HTC recently, there is a good reason for it. In 2008, HTC partnered with a new business based in Hillsboro, ND – Hometown Aditude.

"The brand that Hometown Aditude is building for us has been very well received," says Mark Forseth, HTC Office Manager. "We get a consistent, professional look that will help keep moving us forward."

HTC and Hometown Aditude have been working together to update the web site, brochures, and to develop a display for events that HTC attends. The newsletter, newspaper ads, and radio commercials also have a new look and sound. "Hometown Aditude has initiated some terrific events for us," states Forseth. "They drive events and promotions from concept to completion."

Established in 2007, Hometown Aditude is a full-service marketing and advertising consulting firm. It focuses on public relations, communications, marketing, and mission-critical strategic planning. Hometown Aditude designs and produces everything from logos and stationery packages to TV and radio commercials to brochures, trade show displays, and special events.

In the summer and fall of 2007, they remodeled a building at 15 West Caledonia Avenue in Hillsboro. "We spent five or six months working on the building to get it just how we wanted it, and it's still a work in progress," comments Teran Brown, Account Manager for Hometown Aditude. "We love being in Hillsboro. It is so strategically placed! We can get to both Fargo and Grand Forks quickly to tap into those markets."

The renovation process was well worth it. The old bank building has added new life to Hillsboro's downtown – even in the vault, which has been turned into an office.

The advertising agency also employs local student Maggie Evenson as part of the work-study program at Hillsboro High School. "Maggie is great! She does a lot for us, and it's fun to teach her about how marketing works!" says Brown.

"Hometown Aditude helps businesses and organizations reach their goals," remarks Beth Christianson-Melby, General Manager of Hometown Aditude. "We work with budgets of all sizes and help clients focus their marketing efforts on the things that are best for them."

Hometown Aditude has been able to set up shop in Hillsboro and bring several new jobs to town because of the technologies provided by HTC. "We have clients all over the country, from western North Dakota to Florida and our Art Director, Erin Brule, even teleworks from rural Crookston. It is a great opportunity for her. She comes into the office two days a week and

works from a home office the rest of the time," notes Christianson-Melby. "That just wouldn't be possible without the fantastic communication technology we receive from HTC!"

A great partnership has formed between the two companies that promises to bring both continued success.



Top left, Erin Brule; bottom left, Teran Brown; top right, Beth Christianson-Melby.



Gotteberg Honored For Leadership Excellence

Ron Gotteberg, Director for the Halstad Exchange, was recently honored by the National Telecommunications Cooperatives Association (NTCA) for his work in developing Halstad Telephone Company (HTC). Gotteberg received the Excellence in Leadership Award from NTCA through a training program developed and provided by the Association. He attended a number of seminars and conferences to learn more about the telecommunications industry and how best to govern a cooperative.

“Continuing education is important to me,” says Gotteberg, who is a retired high school teacher. “I strive to learn as much as I can to help continue the growth and services offered by HTC.”

The Excellence in Leadership Award recognizes managers, directors, and employees with outstanding records of participation in NTCA’s seminars and conferences. Recipients of the award are presented with personalized Excellence in Leadership certificates each December.

“Having directors that are knowledgeable in the industry benefits all members of HTC,” remarks Ron Laqua, HTC CEO. “We are proud of Ron’s desire to serve our members and communities.”



Ron Gotteberg

Hillsboro Parade Of Lights

HTC Lit Up The Night At The Hillsboro Parade Of Lights!



Get Capital Credits On HTC Long Distance

HTC's 5-cent, 14-cent, and 25-cent long distance plans are one smart way to invest in your cooperative. Members who opt for either the 5-cent, 14-cent, or 25-cent long distance service plans from HTC can receive cash back through capital credit allocations.

Just one more reason to consider the real value in signing up for HTC's 5-cent, 14-cent, or 25-cent long distance – capital credits!

**ALWAYS
CALL
BEFORE YOU
DIG**

One free, easy call gets your utility lines marked AND helps protect you from injury and expense.

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

811
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U.S. Department of Transportation
TRAVELERS

Common Ground Alliance

JOHN DEERE

Burro Football Live Coverage

Play-off football action was shown live from Hillsboro to HTC members on HTC's Cable TV Channel 33 on November 8, 2008.

"Winter weather with snow and cold temperatures were in the air on game day," observes Mark Forseth, HTC Office Manager. "For those fans who didn't want to brave the cold weather, we provided coverage to the comfort of their homes."

The Hillsboro Burros defeated the Napoleon-Gackle-Streeter Imperials in the semifinal game and advanced to the state Class B 9-Man title game. The Burros defeated Williams County in the state championship game on November 14.

Great job, Burros, on becoming state champions!



Mark Forseth, Office Manager at HTC (third from right), and the Bek Broadcasting team at the semifinal game in Hillsboro.





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 2009! (Must be present to win the \$100.) Just return this coupon by March 27, 2009, to be eligible for the drawing.

Congratulations To Last Issue's \$25 Winners:

Thelma Gylten, Halstad, MN

Jan Schulz, Shelly, MN

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Fill in the blank in this sentence:

“Subway in Hillsboro is not only the new food hot spot, they are the first wireless internet _____.”

(Answer can be found somewhere in this issue.)

Annual Meeting Scheduled For June 17

Nomination Process for Director of Halstad Telephone Company

Section 4.5 of the Cooperative's Bylaws:

(1) It shall be the duty of the board to appoint, not less than 30 days nor more than 90 days before the date of a meeting of the members at which board members are to be elected, a committee on nominations consisting of not less than three (3) nor more than seven (7) members. At least one (1) member of the committee shall be selected from each geographic area where a director is to be elected. No member of the Board, close relative of a Board member, or employee may serve on such committee. The committee shall prepare and post at the principal office of the Cooperative at least twenty (20) days before the meeting, a list of nominations for Board members, which shall include as many nominees for each Board position as the committee deems desirable.

(2) The secretary shall be responsible for mailing with a notice of the meeting, or separately, but at least ten (10) business days before the date of the meeting, a statement of the number of Board members to be elected and the names and addresses of the candidates nominated by the Committee on Nominations.

(3) Any fifteen (15) or more members acting together may make other nominations by petition, and the secretary shall post such nominations at the same place where the list

of nominations made by the committee is posted. Nominations made by petition, if any, received at least ten (10) business days before the meeting, shall be included on the official ballot. Such ballot shall arrange the names of the candidates by geographic areas and shall also designate the candidates nominated by the committee and those nominated by petition.

(4) Later nominations by petition shall be treated as nominations from the floor. The chairman shall call for additional nominations from the floor, and nominations shall not be closed until at least one (1) minute has passed during which no additional nominations have been made.

(5) Incumbent Board members must be renominated by the committee, by petition, or from the floor, to be reelected.

Watch for Official Notice and additional information regarding the June 17, 2009, Annual Meeting in Halstad, including the results of the work of the Committee on Nominations.

The following directorships are up for election this year: Climax Exchange currently held by Duane Evenson, Fisher Exchange currently held by Steve Williams, and Hillsboro Exchange held by Dan Christianson.



Local Community Helps Settle The Valley

Fisher, Minnesota, is located on the Red Lake River in Polk County. The community of approximately 435 is named after another important settlement that has disappeared into time. The settlement was called Fisher's Landing.

Named for William Fisher, a civil engineer and surveyor with the St. Paul & Pacific Railway Company, Fisher's Landing once surpassed nearby Crookston in business and population. Originally called Shirttail Bend because a shirt tied to a stick warned the steamboats of a bend in the river, the settlement was the landing point for steamboats that traveled the Red and Red Lake Rivers. When the railroad was built in 1875, the boats would meet the railroad to haul goods farther upstream than the steamboats could travel.

In 1879, the current townsite of Fisher was platted to escape the ever-changing river depths and annual flooding. This, along with the extension of the railroad to Grand Forks and therefore a decline in river traffic, led to moving the village to higher ground and eventually shortening its name to Fisher.

Though no buildings or artifacts remain of Fisher's Landing, a historical monument, erected in 1983, tells the story of Fisher's Landing:

In the American centennial year of 1876, a settlement called Fisher's Landing on the east bank of the Red Lake River just north of this point (Fisher)

was a flourishing community. Trains of the St. Paul and Pacific Railway exchanged passengers and freight at the Fisher's Landing railhead with steamboats plying the Red Lake and Red Rivers to and from Winnipeg. Four hotels, a Hudson's Bay Company Store, a general store, four saloons, and several gaming tents served travelers and settlers alike. After the extension of the railroad to Grand Forks, Fisher's Landing was moved to higher ground because of annual flooding. The present townsite was platted in 1879, and the town's name was later changed to Fisher.



HTC proudly contributed funds to restore this monument through HTC's Community Cooperative Grant program.



New Connections

BYGLAND

893-4535 Green, Jacob & Dorothy
893-4215 Quirk, Eric

CLIMAX

857-3502 Gunderson, Dean

FISHER

891-2332 Knutson, Jessica

HALSTAD

456-2240 Dutcher, Doreen
456-2407 Franklin, Jake
456-2286 Harrington, Nyla
456-2632 Hawkins, Tracie

456-2542 Hooha's

456-2354 Reiling, Aaron

456-2289 Rodriquez, Melinda

456-2491 St. Michel, Kevin

456-2230 Watt, Shannon

HILLSBORO

636-2731 Anderson, Kelly

636-2732 Bender, James

636-2724 Boschee, Delilah

636-2730 Christianson, Courtney

636-2721 Edenborg, Dan

636-2727 Harrington, Jack

636-2723 Holmberg, M. Kent

636-5089 Lemm, Duane

636-2210 McNamee, John

636-2729 Rarick, Jerome & Beth

636-2733 Sinmengaard, Peter

636-7827 Subway

NIELSVILLE

942-3345 Spokely, Trever & Carla

942-2636 Wegge, David

SHELLY

886-8603 Bostick, Marion

886-8232 Johnson, Peter (Mike)



Change To Bylaws Made

RESOLUTION TO AMEND ARTICLE IV, SECTION 4.3 OF THE BYLAWS OF HALSTAD TELEPHONE COMPANY

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of Halstad Telephone Company have, by separate resolution, voted to transfer the assets of HTC Services, Inc., its wholly owned subsidiary, to the parent corporation effective December 31, 2008; and

WHEREAS, the assets of HTC Services, Inc. include the assets of the Hillsboro Competitive Local Exchange Carrier; and

WHEREAS, the intent of the board is to make the customers of the Hillsboro CLEC members of the cooperative and to provide representation therefore on the Board of Directors;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED

1. That Article IV, Section 4.3 Board Election Geographic Area, of the Bylaws of Halstad Telephone Company be amended, as follows:

The Cooperative is divided into seven (7) geographic service areas and from each shall be elected one director to the Board by the entire membership; except that two directors shall be elected from the Halstad exchange.

The geographic service areas are set forth as follows:

- Geographic Area 1: Halstad Exchange Prefixes 456-457
- Geographic Area 2: Shelly Exchange Prefixes 886-887
- Geographic Area 3: Nielsville Exchange Prefixes 942-946
- Geographic Area 4: Climax Exchange Prefixes 856-857
- Geographic Area 5: Bygland Exchange Prefix 893
- Geographic Area 6: Fisher Exchange Prefix 891
- Geographic Area 7: Hillsboro Exchange Prefix 636

2. That Dan Christianson shall be appointed interim director for the Hillsboro Exchange commencing January 1, 2009, and shall serve in that position until the 2009 annual meeting at which time a director will be elected from the Hillsboro Exchange to serve an additional term as director in accordance with Article IV of the Bylaws.

Dated this 25th day of November, 2008.

Lori DeLong, Secretary

Officers and Directors

Chester Mauritsen – President	Shelly
Steve Williams – Vice President	Fisher
Lori DeLong – Secretary/Treasurer	Halstad
Dan Christianson.....	Hillsboro
Duane Evenson	Climax
Ron Gotteberg.....	Halstad
Elroy Hedde	Nielsville
Kent Wavra	Bygland
Ronald Laqua.....	CEO

Office Employees

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

Plant Employees

Tom Maroney.....	Plant Manager
Brandon Mickelson..	Network Service Coordinator
Chad Tice	Network Service Technician
Kevin Richter	Operations Coordinator
Andy Shulstad.....	Technician
Ole Van Den Einde.....	Technician
Dave Weeding	Technician
John Hilley	Technician
Jake Quern	Technician
Tom & Laurel Keeney	Custodians



Halstad Office
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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

How To Connect

PO Box 55 • Halstad, MN 56548

New Phone Directory Arriving Soon

The Red River Regional Directory will be arriving in your mailbox during the months of April and May.

According to Minnesota law, all phone books must be recycled. HTC encourages all customers in both Minnesota and North Dakota to drop off their old directories for recycling after their new directory arrives at:

- Halstad – HTC office at 345 Second Avenue West
- Hillsboro – HTC office at 124 East Caledonia Avenue
Dale's Food Pride
Olsen Hardware & Appliance
- Shelly – Judy's Café
- Nielsville – Telephone Booth by Nielsville Fire Hall
- Climax – Pete's One Stop
- Fisher – Cenex Convenience Store

HTC Offices Closed

The HTC offices
in Halstad
and Hillsboro

will be
closed Friday,
April 10, 2009,
for Good Friday.

