

**Manager's Message****By Evan Hass, GM**

Winter is quickly fading and there are the great hopes of summer – will my golf game get better this year? Will I finally catch the big one? (OK, how about a keeper?)

Summer also brings the time for construction projects throughout our region. One of the terms in our industry is “backhoe fade”... meaning you have a service outage due to a cable cut – quite often from construction activity and someone who did not call for a cable locate before digging. The DCN backbone routes are designed with redundant paths and milli-second electronic route switching to protect against cable cuts.

Our design strategy is to take out the outages. The Broadband Internet Services we recently introduced are protected by redundant Internet gateways – 200 miles apart. Our ATM services have meshed connections providing multiple paths between the backbone switches. And all of our services ride on the SONET rings. Our five year reliability history gives our customers comfort – but we always work to improve service reliability.



## Golfing adventure begins anew on July 20 at Hawktree



For those customers, suppliers and friends of Dakota Carrier Network who didn't get enough humiliation last year or the year before, here's another chance for challenge at North Dakota's (in)famous Hawktree Golf Club. There should be plenty of water and sand for every golfer, as in the past.

Yes, the third annual 'Dakota Carrier Classic' has been scheduled for Tuesday, July 20. A shotgun start will take place at 1 p.m. for all registered golfers. And, as in previous years, those who attend are encouraged to bring along a good supply of golf balls.

“Last year was about picture perfect, with a ‘light’ North Dakota wind,” recalls Evan Hass, general manager of Dakota Carrier Network. “We expect this

year to match 2003 in every regard, including the number of balls we feed to Hawktree.”

Ranked number 19 in the nation by *Golf Digest* magazine when the course opened, Hawktree is considered by many authorities to be the number one course in North Dakota. It was designed by a Dickinson native, Jim Engh, who is an international superstar in course design.

As in previous years, the Dakota Carrier Classic will be a four-person scramble. Participants can register individually and be matched with other team members. Learn more from Nancy Bjorndahl at 800-814-3333 or email her at [nbjorn@dakotacarrier.com](mailto:nbjorn@dakotacarrier.com).

Find out more about Hawktree at their Web site, [www.hawktree.com](http://www.hawktree.com).

## Speedy service - a DCN hallmark

When a client like Dakota Community Bank decides to join Dakota Carrier Network, upgrade their system, or deal with an emergency, DCN responds in a way that few other network providers can match.

According to Don Pedersen, Operations Manager at the Bismarck Network Operations Center (NOC), orders for installs or upgrades come through the marketing representative handling the account. The order goes into the system, a circuit is designed and one of the NOC's five technicians will then program it.

If a customer reports a problem with their network, the 'administration' desk will initiate immediate action at DCN and through the member companies that are serving that client.

"Each week a different technician staffs the 'admin' desk and watches the network monitors," says Pedersen. "If a problem is detected on the monitor or called in, then that person is responsible for taking the action required and following through to make certain the problem is solved."

The weekly assignment rotates and enables the 'admin' desk technician to maintain continuity during the course of the entire week, checking on the flow of the work assignment.

Customers can call the NOC at 800-296-5956.



Jay Steffan  
System Administrator  
Dakota Community Bank

## Case Study: Dakota Community Bank

**Headquarters:** Hebron, ND

Dakota Community Bank is a family-owned full-service bank based in the state's capitol, with growing services to meet customer needs at all its locations.

**Senior Manager:** Dale Pahlke, Owner

**Other major facility locations:** Hebron, Taylor, New Leipzig, Dickinson, Mandan, Lincoln, Glen Ullin, Bowman

**Number of employees:** 85

**Year connected to DCN:** Dakota Community Bank started its business relationship with DCN early in 2002.

**DCN services purchased:** Dakota Community Bank utilizes frame relay T1 services from DCN.

**DCN applications:** Dakota Community Bank uses Dakota Carrier Network connections for data, video conferencing, and voice over Internet Protocol long distance telecommunications.

A native of Dickinson, Jay Steffan has an extensive background in telecommunications and financial services, having worked with a major financial institution in Fargo before joining Dakota Community Bank.

*"Prior to coming back to Bismarck, I dealt with a number of major network providers, but we liked the idea of working with local providers as much as possible, including software providers. When I call Dakota Carrier Network and talk to them about my needs, they are very knowledgeable and responsive. When they promise something, they deliver and they deliver fast. Since we began working with DCN we've added a full range of network services to our banking operation, including Internet banking for our customers."*

## Planning for the future of telecom

Ever wonder where the next generation of telecommunication specialists is coming from? Many of them will be coming right from our neighborhoods, if they attend an upcoming academy.

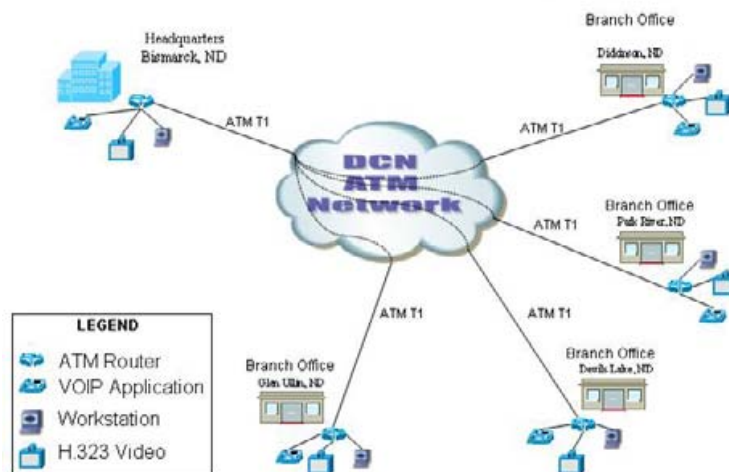
For two weeks in June (7-18), Bismarck State College will host a telecommunications academy for area high school students who want to explore career options in telecommunications. The academy will offer basic skills, technical information, telecom computer applications and regional network information. Classes will feature hands-on interactive opportunities to help build knowledge, skills and interest in the field.

Students who complete the academy will earn 1/2 a high school credit, receive a \$250 stipend from their sponsoring local telephone company and they might receive an offer to earn another half credit through cooperative work experience options. Students completing the academy are eligible for scholarships to the BSC electronics/telecommunications program.

Sponsors include BEK Communications, Consolidated Telcom, Dakota Central Telcom, Nemont Telephone, Northwest Telecommunications, Polar Communications, Reservation Telephone, United Telephone and West River Telephone.

Call Donna Fricke at 701-224-5761 to learn more.

## DCN ATM Network Design



## ATM service provides flexibility

When Dakota Carrier evolved its service offering to the third leg of a 'triple play' option of network communications, the company's client base responded with a resounding 'YES!' to Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM) service.

"When you think about the evolution of networked computer communications, you have to recall that moving data was the first requirement business had of high-speed network systems," says Kevin Kaeding, DCN sales manager. "Our first offering was point-to-point service over a dedicated DS1, DS3 or OC3 line. That was a mileage-sensitive service and it helped customers connect their Local Area Networks (LANs) to a Wide Area Network (WAN) over a secure line."

But, the demands of customers grew to include a desire for voice traffic and video traffic in the next couple years, which led to the introduction of frame relay service as a second, less expensive alternative to point-to-point.

"Frame relay required a different router and different interfaces," explains Kaeding, "and it handled data fine, but voice and video traffic was limited to

DS1 transmission speeds. There was some drop-out in voice and video signals, which can be unacceptable in some business environments."

With the advent of ATM packets of information, customers could advance to much higher speeds and voice and video transmissions that could include video-conferencing in real time.

"Most important, with ATM, our customers can assign a hierarchy to the information in the network, offering Quality Of Service (QOS) that is inherent to the system," Kaeding explains. "Voice and video can be at the top of the hierarchy and data can flow at a later moment through the network."

Seth Arndorfer, DCN sales representative in Bismarck, observes that frame relay and ATM networks enter a 'cloud' of DCN packet network information instead of a dedicated line. However, he notes that each spoke entering and exiting this 'cloud' represents a dedicated connector to a dedicated circuit.

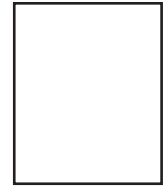
"That's why ATM service is perfect for uses like telemedicine," he says. "The speed and security are outstanding."



## Dakota Carrier Network

Connecting Business ... Creating Value

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www.dakotacarrier.com



### Gaining the DCN advantage & value

Dakota Carrier Network is pleased to welcome the following new customers and those who are renewing or expanding their service agreements with DCN:

#### NEW CUSTOMERS

- Advanced Business Methods & Advanced Office Solutions
- Central Valley Health Unit
- Citizens State Bank - Midwest
- DFC Consultants
- EAPC Architects Engineers
- First Dist. Health Unit
- Grand Forks Pub. Health Unit
- Kidder County Health Unit
- Kinetic Leasing
- Lake Region Dist. Health Unit
- LaMoure County Pub. Health Department
- Nelson-Griggs Dist. Health Unit
- Rolette County Pub. Health Unit
- Upper Missouri Dist. Health Unit
- Southwest Dist. Health Unit

#### RENEWING CUSTOMERS

- Dakota Community Bank
- Northern Improvement Co.
- Otter Tail Power Company
- V.A. Medical Center

## Thesing offers customer solutions



*Kari Thesing, DCN marketing specialist*  
Kari Thesing is one of those North Dakotans we all love to admire; a native who went away and gained some great business experience ... and then she returned to share that experience for the greater good of her clients.

A Fargo girl and Concordia College graduate, Thesing's career in the last 20+ years includes IBM, IDS/American Express, Pillsbury, Piper Jaffray and Eide Bailly. In most of those career tracks, she helped manage wide area networks and gain a depth of understanding that helps her North Dakota clients compete in the global marketplace.

"I went to work for DCN in November of 2002," she recalls. "Primarily, I work with organizations on the east side of the state; as long as they have a presence in the state, we will work with them, helping identify and install network solutions to meet their needs."

With Thesing's extensive professional background, she could easily have gone to work for any company, but she chose Dakota Carrier Network because it has three major options to offer customers.

"I was also impressed with the quality of service DCN provides," she asserts. "Our technicians at the Network Operations Center (NOC) are the absolute best at persisting and resolving problems. I've never had a customer call with a complaint about the NOC's problem solving abilities."

Thesing describes her job as one of learning her customers' goals through regular communication, and then working with other DCN personnel to create methods of helping with bandwidth, security and communication quality.

"Customers want to know how they can accomplish more with their networks and how to upgrade for emerging needs. That's a challenge I love," she says.