

Helping organizations achieve greater value through the advancement of fiber optic telecommunications

### Manager's Message

As we say good bye to 2004 we look back at a very successful year at DCN. Many major projects were completed as our sales and operations groups had a great year.

One of our most satisfying projects is highlighted in this issue. The BTWAN network is special to our North Dakota-based company. We are pleased to provide the network that links all of the hospitals within the state. The video network is up and working superbly according to the North Dakota Healthcare Association. It is an important project when you consider the safety and security of the people throughout the state, which is very satisfying. As you will see in the story – this network will be for emergency situations and training of medical personnel.

A second video network to be used by the Regional Federal Highway Administration has been contracted and should be up and working early this year. The DCN network provides the quality and reliability needed for video networks in a cost effective design.

*(Continued on next page)*



*(Left, above): Chip Thomas, president North Dakota Healthcare Association  
(Right above): Evan Hass, general manager Dakota Carrier Network (Right): BTWAN Videoconference demonstration*



## Bio-Terrorism network unveiled at Network Operations Center

State officials and healthcare executives gathered at the Dakota Carrier Network Operations Center (NOC) in Bismarck on Thursday, January 20 to see a demonstration of the new Bio-Terrorism Wide Area Network (BTWAN).

Over a year in planning and development, the BTWAN is a separate broadband network that connects 41 hospitals and other locations for real-time videoconferencing in the event of an intentional or unintentional threat to public safety.

According to Chip Thomas, president of the North Dakota Healthcare Association (NDHA), "The BTWAN system represents a practical and necessary health, communications and educational link for the many communities served by health care providers and emergency responders."

The network is the result of strategic plans developed in conjunction with the North Dakota Department of Health and the North Dakota Department of Emergency

Management. By some accounts it is one of the first such networks to be developed in the U.S., using federal funds from the Health Resource Services Administrations (HRSA).

"We believe this is an important resource for North Dakota," said Governor Hoeven.

The network uses video systems from AVI Systems of Bismarck; routers and switches from MultiBand of Fargo; and project administration from Nexus Innovations of Bismarck.

"The connections that we at St. Aloisius (in Harvey) have with other hospitals in North Dakota has brought us a saving in dollars already by being able to have meetings at our desk, in-service education from our facility and state information on bioterrorism without traveling," said Ron Volk, CEO of St. Aloisius.

The contract for maintaining the network is between Dakota Carrier Network and the North Dakota Department of Health.

## Manager's Message

(Continued from front page)

In late 2004 DCN also moved to expand our fiber network in Bismarck. A second fiber path now connects us to the major carriers in Bismarck and DCN has acquired additional fiber capacity to better serve the Bismarck business community.

This is a significant step as we continue to expand service to more business customers.

In the upcoming year, DCN is moving ahead to implement the expansion of our statewide network. Customers require more bandwidth for their growing businesses. The initial phase of a project utilizing Dense Wave Division Multiplexing (DWDM) to be installed will increase our capacity by a factor of 320 times and have the ability to grow even further. Truly, all of the areas of North Dakota will continue to be well served on the expanding DCN fiber network.

There is a sense of excitement at Dakota Carrier Network as we expand and grow our network. We look forward to another great year of providing the high quality, reliable services needed by businesses across the state to be part of the economy that requires high speed broadband technology.



Dennis Kramer  
Bismarck Comptroller  
Northern Improvement  
Company

## Case Study: Northern Improvement Co.

**Headquarters:** Fargo, ND

**Senior Manager:** Steve McCormick,  
President

**Other locations:** Bismarck and Dickinson

**Number of employees:** 600+

**Years connected to DCN:** Northern Improvement Company began its business relationship with DCN in 2001

**DCN services purchased:** T-1, Internet

**DCN applications:** We use DCN to transfer data between Fargo, Bismarck and Dickinson. We also use it for intercom services between the three offices, allowing us to get into Fargo, Dickinson and Bismarck's phone system and thereby make local calls instead of long distance

calls. In itself, this saves us the cost of the T-1 lines.

We get more reliable services with DCN because of their different paths of fiber optic lines throughout North Dakota. We have never been down without service.

*"Our relationship with DCN has always been very favorable and they are easy to work with. They have checked out the T-1 connections a few times and called me back to say that their lines are running fine. We can then check the other areas, such as routers and switches locally. I am very pleased with the service and personal relationship we have with DCN."*

## DCN expands Internet gateways

Demand for the DCN Internet service has grown at a rapid pace over the past year. As a result DCN has moved to expand the capacity to the Tier 1 providers to connect to the worldwide Internet at the east and west gateways.

Each of the connections has been more than tripled in capacity. DCN constantly monitors the usage of the Internet gateways and ensures that sufficient capacity is always available for our Internet customers.

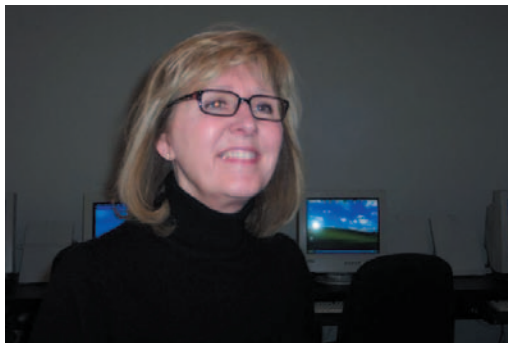
Dakota Carrier's focus is on providing highly reliable Internet services. The design of the two gateways provides for a fail over capability so that if there is a problem on one of the national provider's networks the network will automatically reroute to the other gateway. This is a feature that is very valuable to our customers.

### RANKING DILEMMA

For those who would like to track the progress being made in broadband and e-commerce, finding current information is difficult.

The most recent state ranking by TechNet, a network of 200+ CEOs, shows North Dakota in 18th place, just two steps behind Minnesota (as of 2002).

Globally, the U.S. is ranked number six by The Economist's Intelligence Unit (as of 2004) for e-readiness.



*Tara Holt, interim director  
Rural Development Council and  
founder of The Center for  
Technology and Business*

## Broadband fuels rural growth

When considering the history of North Dakota's rural technology development, one name figures prominently in the story: Tara Holt of Bismarck.

Founder of the Center for Technology and Business program, partly funded by the North Dakota Department of Commerce (DOC) and the United States Small Business Administration (SBA), Holt became an advocate for advancing rural technology skills more than a decade ago. That was a period in her life when she started noticing many small-town business people and farm families with computers on their desks.

"But, most of those computers were just gathering dust," she says. "The manuals and the training on their use was so complex and difficult that many people simply never tried to make them a part of their lives."

Holt set out to change that, writing an application for funding that was approved by Mike Gallagher and Jim Stai at the SBA. That funding sent Holt down a road that changed her life.

"We held our first classes on basic computer instruction in Hettinger and Bowman at the schools," she recalls. "Our predictions were for about 200 students in the first year of classes, but we had that many in the first three months alone! We set out to train rural women but we couldn't turn down all the men who showed up."

From that basic instruction on how to create and save files and use software, the next step was to hook students up to the Internet. The end results have been remarkable, according to Holt.

"Now, so much of rural North Dakota is wired for broadband that our small towns are ready for telecommuting and/or home-based jobs," she states. "I just returned from Chicago where companies can't keep employees on the job at nine dollars an hour, so they spend tons of money training new people and re-training people. For a home-based telecommuter, nine dollars an hour in rural America is a big deal because that person can save all the money they might have spent on a wardrobe, vehicle, gas, meals, insurance, childcare ... lots of things."

As the interim director of the Rural Development Council at the DOC, Holt reports that the situation in small towns across the state is better than many might believe.

"The whole state has been mapped to display where broadband is available, so developers can get site selectors and potential businesses into a good location," she explains. "Some rural towns, like Rugby, have become technology hubs for smaller, outlying towns. Many of these towns are so successful you can hardly find an empty building or home. I can see why so many companies are beginning to look at rural North Dakota for locating a business or an expansion."

Holt points to the map produced by the ND Association of Telecommunications Cooperative as evidence of one tool that is getting a lot of use by developers. ([www.ndatc.com](http://www.ndatc.com)).

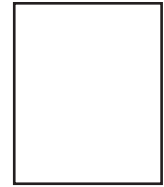
"It was smart to build out the capacity before the need existed," she concludes.



# Dakota Carrier Network

Connecting Business ... Creating Value

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*(If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please e-mail Nancy Bjorndahl at nbjorn@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

- Tel 8 Transportation
- Tri-County Insurance
- Security First Bank
- General Equipment & Supplies

### RENEWING CUSTOMERS

- Town & Country Credit Union
- Dynamics Marketing
- KFYR-TV

## Customer Appreciation Golf Outing Scheduled

Dust off the golf clubs for the Fourth Annual Dakota Carrier Classic at Hawktree Golf Club on Tuesday, July 19. Clear your calendar. Details to follow.



# Lucky to have 'Luckie' at DCN



*Luckie Greig, DCN Network Technician*

It was a twist of fate that resulted in a North Dakota farm girl winding up with the name 'Luckie', but the moniker seems to suit Dakota Carrier Network's senior network technician; she feels lucky every day.

Born and raised on a farm south of New England, Lucille Greig struck out at an early age for the bright lights of Chicago, landing a job in 1966 with Standard Oil in a department that already had a Lucille and a Lucy, so she was quickly named 'Luckie' as a means of keeping her separate from the others. The name stuck, and when she moved to Columbus, Ohio the next year for a job with Ohio Bell, she carried the new nickname with her.

After working as a long distance operator for a year, the yearning for home was too strong to resist and she managed to

transfer to Bismarck and Northwestern Bell in 1968. Thirty years later she retired from U.S. West, took a week of vacation, and joined Dakota Carrier Network at the Network Operations Center. She and husband Kip live in Bismarck.

"My job is to design all the circuits and layouts," says Greig, "developing paths from A to Z for our clients' networks."

Having essentially given birth to the entire network, it's also her responsibility to not only back up the other technicians and their clients, but to monitor the entire system and recommend upgrades and additions to keep ahead of client needs.

"What makes it so rewarding as a career is to serve those who rely on our network," she asserts. "We want to make certain our clients can utilize our network to its full capacity, which is why 're-grooming' the network periodically is so critical."

Realizing that so many organizations need to depend on the strength of the network keeps Greig on her toes and engaged on a daily basis.

"I enjoy working with the marketing department and other technicians in meeting all the challenges of this industry," she states. "It continues to be a great place to work with people who truly care about service."