

Manager's Message

By **Evan Hass, GM**

The days are growing longer and the daily temperatures slowly rising. Ah, my favorite time of year – a time for growing many things. Last week my golf score continued to grow as the first round of the year took more strokes than the scorecard objective.

Like my golf score – DCN continues to grow. An integral part of our network is our location in the Fargo Metro area. Early this spring DCN purchased property in South Fargo which will be home to the DCN equipment serving the Fargo area as well as administrative offices for the accounting, billing and sales groups. The design work is progressing and we expect to be in our new offices by year end.

Routing the East fiber ring will take a bit longer. A new route will be built that will use the new building location to house DCN's equipment that is now in leased quarters. Also the next generation of our infrastructure will be installed at the new site. This will take place in early 2006 as the east ring
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Hawktree prepares for a fresh sacrifice of DCN golf balls

The water hazards at North Dakota's #1-ranked golf course are already preparing themselves for a fresh supply of golf balls from participants in the Fourth Annual 'Dakota Carrier Classic' golf outing.

If you've received an invitation and still haven't responded, don't despair. Time is still on your side, but please respond soon in order for us to team you up with some one other than Evan Hass, general manager for Dakota Carrier Network.

There are already over 100 golfers of every imaginable handicap signed up for the 1 p.m. tee-off. Teams are being assembled,

based on handicaps, in order to keep the competition equitable for the top three team scores and the BIG prizes at the end of the day ... along with prizes for longest drive, closest to the pin, longest putt and assorted other incentives.

The afternoon will conclude in the Hawktree clubhouse with a delicious meal of steak and all the fixin's.

In order to participate, call Nancy Bjorndahl at 701.364.1313 with your invitation in hand, or email Nancy at nbjorn@dakotacarrier.com.

Bring lots of old golf balls (hint, hint).

Manager's Message

(Continued from front page)
expansion is completed to provide for growth and new services.

The new building will also provide equipment space for telecommunications carriers and some of our network customers that connect to the DCN state-wide network. The new site will be served by redundant fiber paths and have protected power to maintain the same reliability that is the DCN hallmark. So a field that last year grew a crop of soybeans will soon sprout the brick and mortar that will serve as a hub in the dynamic Fargo market.

Phase 1 of our new network infrastructure will be shipping in late summer. The new network equipment will grow our network capacity by over 320 times – plus provide new services such as Ethernet which will carry data and video services across the state ... an exciting time for a growing North Dakota.

If only I could be as excited about my golf game. It's so bad that my wife – yes, my wife - reported that she heard there was a new \$350 golf club that could solve all my problems with another 12 yards on every drive – now if I could get those yards in the right direction I might have hope. Maybe this year I should take up fishing – the size of the fish you catch is always expected to grow.



"Member Owned"

Tom Jabens, Vice President
Systems & Data Control
Gate City Bank

Case Study: Gate City Bank

Headquarters: Fargo, ND

Senior Manager: Steve Swiontek,
President and Chief Executive Officer

Other locations: 26 branch locations in
North Dakota and two in Moorhead, MN

Number of employees: 325

Years connected to DCN: Gate City Bank
began its business relationship with DCN
in 1999 with a point-to-point T-1 network
connecting Fargo and Bismarck

DCN services purchased: T-1, Internet,
and 11 frame relay circuits to branches

DCN applications: Gate City utilizes
Dakota Carrier Network for data and
voice transmission, including Voice Over
Internet Protocol for long distance connec-
tions using four-digit extensions for all con-
nections between all office locations. A
Cisco Systems Call Manager provides cir-
cuits for data and voice service all the way
to the desktop.

"We get very good service from DCN and we can bring all our lines into Fargo and avoid the LATA cost structure, making centralized management a lot easier; using direct connections. Voice mail is now available to anyone who needs it and we're enjoying some significant cost savings even as we gain additional features. We don't have to call the Network Operations Center very often, but when we do, they get right on it. They helped us test the new phone system, which was a six-month install project in 2003-04. DCN adds value to our business with data lines that let us connect our branches the way WE do business. Every one we have dealt with at Dakota Carrier Network has been helpful, professional and easy to work with."

Fargo HQ offers great advantages

As mentioned in the General Manager's Message, DCN is rapidly completing plans for a new building location in Fargo, ND. That site will house the DCN network equipment and provide offices for DCN's Fargo staff. A project summary:

Schedule – The plans are complete and bids will be reviewed at the end of June. A July groundbreaking is expected, with occupancy by the end of December.

Building Scope – The 11,000-square-foot building will provide space for terminating the DCN fiber optic rings that serve all of North Dakota and connect to surrounding states. It will have a secure environment with redundant fiber paths, back up power and protection against tornado winds.

Network Uses – Customers are already considering using the DCN customer equipment space to house their equipment that provides for back up data storage and other services. The new location will have redundant paths to the Tier 1 Internet providers. DCN's core infrastructure will route through this building bringing the latest technology for high speed networks.

Building Sites – DCN's core building will be the center of a multi-building technology park that will provide tenants easy and secure access to worldwide telecommunications.



Jeff Day, senior telecommunications analyst with the Veteran Administration Medical and Regional Operations Center, and Evan Hass, general manager for Dakota Carrier Network

“They (the Indian vets) feel it’s an honor to serve our nation, and we feel it’s an honor to deliver the VA benefits they earned for that service.” - Jeff Day, VAMROC, Fargo

Indian veterans served by DCN

Sometimes it's the little things that make a difference in a relationship with a customer.

For the Veterans Administration and Regional Operations Center (VAMROC) of North Dakota, the unhesitant response of Dakota Carrier Network to a healthcare delivery problem has helped VAMROC bring healthcare to Native American vets across North Dakota and Minnesota.

“Per capita, American Indians serving in the armed forces represent a ratio that’s three times higher than the rest of the U.S. population,” says Jeff Day, senior telecommunications analyst with VAMROC the last four years. “Over 50 percent of Native American men serve in the military, but they often return to life on reservations that are far removed from our medical centers.”

That situation wasn't acceptable to the healthcare professionals at the Fargo center, so about 18 months ago, with the help of DCN and its owner companies, the VAMROC began holding 'stand-downs' on reservations around the state and in northern Minnesota (with the help of Qwest Communications).

“Our first outreach was at New Town, North Dakota,” recalls Day, himself a veteran with obvious pride in his job and the service provided. “We take all our personnel to each stand-down, and with direct circuits back to VAMROC, we can update

each veteran's personal medical files over a secure network.”

What was once a day's effort of traveling to Fargo or a regional office by Native American veterans is now a marvel of communications technology.

“We couldn't have done one of these, much less the six we've completed, without the complete commitment of DCN and owner companies,” explains Day. “They did this without a second of hesitation; it goes WAY beyond a business relationship. They often helped on very short notice and left the systems in place for future work.”

For Jeff Day and the Indian veterans who complete this generous medical circuit, the entire process completes a commitment on the part of both parties ... “They feel it's an honor to serve our nation, and we feel it's an honor to deliver the VA benefits they earned for that service.”

In celebration of this on-going program, Jeff Day and VA managers presented Evan Hass, Dakota Carrier Network General Manager, and other carriers with plaques of appreciation at a ceremony this spring.

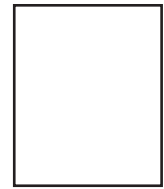
Companies who also received a VA award were: Ideacon Telecom, United Telephone Mutual Aid Corporation, North Dakota Telephone Company, Reservation Telephone Cooperative, SRT Communications and West River Telecommunications.



Dakota Carrier Network

Connecting Business ... Creating Value

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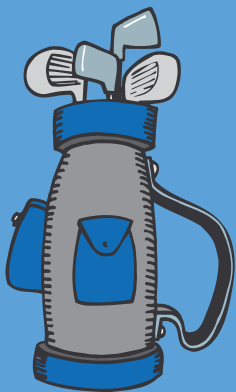
(If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please e-mail Nancy Bjorndahl at nbjorn@dakotacarrier.com)

Gaining the DCN advantage & value

Dakota Carrier Network is pleased to welcome the following new customers who are now enjoying the most contemporary network options in the country with their DCN service agreements:

NEW CUSTOMERS

- Independent Practitioners
- KLJ Solutions
- Nexus Innovations



Fourth Annual
Dakota Carrier
Classic
Hawktree Golf Club
Tuesday, July 19



Arndorfer assumes new DCN role



Seth Arndorfer, product development manager

A knack for technology and a sense for business has lead Seth Arndorfer from his former duties as a regional marketing specialist to an exciting new position that places him in the forefront of adding value to DCN's business customers.

"It's now my job to work with all the personnel and resources related to Dakota Carrier Network and communicate closely with DCN clients to identify future directions and technology for the growth of their businesses," Arndorfer says. "In order to perform that task efficiently, I will monitor and analyze the business, technology, and regulatory environments that may impact modifications to DCN's product development strategy, or existing product plans."

Prior to joining DCN in 2002, Arndorfer had several years experience serving clients of Dickinson's Consolidated Tele-

phone. That experience included an in-depth understanding of the technology involved with modern telephony.

"I will conduct research on vendors and manufacturers of emerging technology and, in some cases, will actually help purchase hardware and software for use by DCN and our customers," he says. "Based in Bismarck, I'll be able to work around the entire state, capitalizing on my sales experience, where I gained a feel for our customers and their growth needs."

Another one of Arndorfer's responsibilities will be to track legislation changes and related impacts on network communications for the benefit of DCN and its clients.

"We are providing a service that has become more and more integral to the success of our customers," he emphasizes. "We feel it's in everyone's best interest in a global economy to have one person designated to identify and determine the feasibility of bringing new services on line that are consistent with our mission of adding value to customer operations."

A first undertaking for Arndorfer will be to test a DCN managed service package for customers, offering an advanced firewall, intrusion detection and content filtering.