



## MANAGER'S MESSAGE

Always Midstream in an Optical Network



Evan Hass, General Manager

The beginning of 2010 marked the starting point for several major projects at DCN, including two of utmost importance. First, our plans were unveiled for a new Network Operations Center (NOC) in Bismarck. Second, efforts began on a network design to build out our fiber network. These efforts included applying for a federal grant to fund the placement of high-speed fiber connections to more than 175 anchor institutions across North Dakota.

Major network plans often take years to complete, and these two projects are no exception. It has been nearly eight months since the ground breaking for the new NOC. Concrete walls have taken the place of a large hole in the ground; the outline of the steel structure can be seen on the Bismarck skyline; muddy spring days show the

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## PROGRESS CONTINUES ON THE NEW DCN NETWORK OPERATIONS CENTER IN BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA.



Rendering



View from southeast



View of entrance to the northwest



View of east entrance



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promise of an impressive structure that will be the heart of the DCN fiber optic core that connects our entire region. A year from now, our equipment will have transitioned to the NOC, and the network will be reconfigured – truly a milestone in our short history.

While heavy equipment moved Missouri Valley boulders and carved out the footprint for the NOC, we were working diligently to secure federal funding to add to our fiber network. We were successfully awarded a \$10.8 million Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) grant to put into place the high-speed network originally envisioned by DCN a year ago. A \$4.6 million match by DCN and our Owner Companies created an investment of more than \$15.4 million in high-speed broadband connections. Additional grants and loans were received by DCN Owner Companies, bringing the total investment to nearly \$93 million. This investment reflects the tremendous commitment of DCN and our Owner Companies to bring high-speed services to the communities we serve. With such connections, business can truly be done anywhere.

In a sense, we are in midstream. Major projects are started, and yet it will be nearly a year before the NOC is completed. It will be almost two years before we begin to complete all of the work associated with the BTOP grant. Upon the culmination of these projects, DCN will have passed another milestone in growing our optical network. And in that sense, we will always be midstream, never ceasing – along with our Owner Companies – to bring high-speed connections to every community we serve. ■

## DCN BROADCASTING 2011 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Dakota Carrier Network is proud to broadcast North Dakota's 62<sup>nd</sup> Legislative Assembly, which convened in regular session on Tuesday, January 4, 2011.

Currently, 12 of DCN's 15 independent rural telecommunications companies provide video service as part of their product offerings. Several of these companies had expressed interest in providing both the House of Representatives and Senate chamber feeds to their subscribers via a community access channel. In response, Seth Arndorfer, business development manager for DCN, worked with the legislative council and obtained permission to broadcast both the audio and video feeds of the legislative session.

Approximately 30,000 households receive video service from DCN's Owner Companies. "I'm happy that we can provide such a great service by giving customers real-time access to the legislative process," says Arndorfer. "This is a fantastic

example of the power and reach of technology."

DCN Owner Companies broadcasting the 2011 legislative session include:

- BEK Communications Cooperative
- Consolidated Telcom
- Dakota Central Telecommunications Coop.
- Dickey Rural Telephone Cooperative
- Midstate Telephone & Communications
- Moore & Liberty Telephone Company
- North Dakota Telephone Company
- Northwest Communications Cooperative
- Polar Communications
- Reservation Telephone Cooperative
- SRT Communications, Inc.
- United Telephone Mutual Aid Corporation



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**OWNER COMPANY PROFILE:  
MIDSTATE TELEPHONE &  
COMMUNICATIONS**

*Five Minutes with Ryan Wilhelmi,  
Operations Manager*

**Dakota Carrier Network**

**(DCN):** Tell us a bit about the history of Midstate Telephone & Communications.

**Ryan Wilhelmi (RW):** Our roots date back to 1918, when telephone service expanded rapidly in the Stanley, North Dakota area. At the time, several small telephone cooperatives were formed, and typically they were family-owned businesses. Economic and drought conditions brought several changes of ownership in the cooperatives – and service levels – in the 1920s and 1930s. As conditions improved, the number of telephone lines increased. In fact, between the years 1935 and 1950, there was a 300 percent increase in telephone lines connected to the Stanley switchboard. In 1962, the Stanley Exchange was sold to Joe Wilhelmi (my grandfather) and James Wilhelmi (my uncle), and they began operating as Midstate Telephone Company.

**DCN:** You've got quite a service area, considering that you serve Stanley and Beach. Why, so to speak, do you have separate service areas?

**RW:** We do definitely cover a lot of ground! Currently we serve Stanley and the surrounding area, Portal, York, Medora and Beach as well as portions of Billings and Golden Valley Counties. Our presence in the far western part of the state was a result of building the company in any area that needed service. We acquired the western service areas from Qwest based on our exchange miles in that region.



Midstate Telephone & Communications plans to break ground on its new headquarters building in Stanley (see rendering) this spring.

**DCN:** Midstate is one of the 15 independent telephone companies that started DCN in 1996. Why did you choose to become an Owner Company?

**RW:** The interconnection to meet – and exceed – our customers' growing needs was our primary driver for becoming a DCN Owner Company.

**DCN:** What sets Midstate apart from the competition?

**RW:** We're local: local people, local support and local involvement. When we first began providing service to former Qwest customers, they were happily surprised by how quickly we took care of – in person – their service requests. Prior to being Midstate customers, they had sometimes been without phone service for two to three weeks! Another thing that sets us apart is our deployment of state-of-the-art FTTH (fiber to the home) to all of our customers.

**DCN:** What's on the horizon for Midstate?

**RW:** We're working to develop an international interconnection between DCN and SaskTel in western North Dakota. Additionally, we plan to break ground in April on a new headquarters adjacent to our existing HQ building in Stanley. We're excited about these changes, and as always, we thank our customers for their business and support! ■

**MIDSTATE AT A GLANCE**

**Founded:** 1962

**Headquarters:**  
Stanley, North Dakota

**Employees:** 18

**Customers:** 2,800 Telephone Access Lines in Five Counties

**Services:** Landline Telephone Service, High-speed Internet, VLAN, TDMA, and Ethernet Transport



## Dakota Carrier NETWORK

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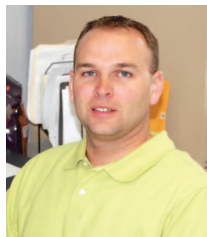
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## connections

### EMPLOYEE PROFILES



Daro Maattala



Jesse Heck

#### Daro Maattala

Daro Maattala has been with Dakota Carrier Network for eight months and serves as an account executive. Before joining DCN, he worked as a communications consultant at 702 Communications in Moorhead, Minnesota for three years. Prior to that, Daro worked at Qwest Communications in Sioux Falls, South Dakota and Fargo, North Dakota as a senior account executive for six years and at Motorola Communications in Sioux City, Iowa and Omaha, Nebraska as a special markets representative for eight years.

Daro's primary responsibilities at DCN focus on sales of the company's Carrier Ethernet Service. DCN's Carrier Ethernet Service provides a platform for high-

capacity, cost-effective transport that supports emerging IP-based voice and video applications. DCN's Carrier Ethernet Service is available in two categories, "E-Line" and "E-LAN" Ethernet. In his role, Daro gets to meet and assist a wide variety of customers, and he says that's the best part of his job.

Daro notes that while many companies provide the same services as DCN, there are important differentiators. "What set us apart from the others are our network, our staff and our experience."

Daro, who works in DCN's Fargo office, resides in his hometown of Moorhead, Minnesota and has one son, Derek. Outside of DCN, Daro enjoys motorcycle racing, hockey and fishing.

#### Jesse Heck

Jesse Heck was named operations manager for Dakota Carrier Network on February 14. He replaces Don Pedersen, who will manage the transition to the new Bismarck Network Operations Center. Jesse's been with DCN for 10 ½ years, previously working as a

network technician and a network design specialist. His primary responsibilities focus on managing the Network Operations Center, which includes overseeing the DCN network infrastructure and the operations support staff. He works in the Bismarck DCN office.

The best part of his job, Jesse says, is collaborating with all the great people at DCN and working with all of the latest and greatest technologies in the industry. Such technologies provide a definite advantage for customers.

"Our ability to provide robust, leading-edge services and being able to roll out those services to our customers in a timely manner really sets us apart from the competition," says Jesse. "Plus, we offer top-of-the-line support on all of our product offerings and provide customers with a direct connection to our highly-skilled technicians."

Originally from Mandan, Jesse currently resides in Bismarck with his wife, Candice, and their children Carter and Addison. In his spare time, Jesse enjoys hunting, playing hockey, biking and running, including 5k road races. ■