

Telecom Corner

Down to the wire at Warm Springs Teleco

By **Marsha Spellman**
Warm Springs Telecommunications Co.

The new telecom offices have been abuzz with lots of activity as we near our service launch date.

In the past few weeks, there have been a total of five teams of engineers and contractors installing the final pieces of network facilities, wireless equipment and Central Office equipment.

You may have seen some of this activity going on as trucks, workers and reels of fiber optic cable have dotted the hillsides around Warm Springs. So, what's the latest news?

MetaSwitch installed

First, after months of remodeling the old apparel factory building on Holliday Street, we now have a state of the art facility as our new home for the company's Customer Service Center and Central Office.

All of the racking, DC power, battery back-up, standby generation, servers, grounding and tower work has been completed in and outside the Central Office.

But most importantly, this past week saw the physical installation of our MetaSwitch, the \$355,000 soft-switch that is the "brains" behind the voice and data service that we will be providing.

The next step is to load the software on the MetaSwitch and to connect it to the outside world. Part of that process has been the installation of a new wireless backbone from Eagle Butte to Madras.

Installers from EZ Wireless have been climbing towers to install large microwave dishes that will take voice and data information and send it via radio waves to our two telecommunications carriers, Quantum Communications and LS Networks.

The larger dishes and radios replace the smaller ones that have been used by the tribes for the past seven years.

Microwave links

Last week, the new redundant microwave link was turned up, which has increased the tribes' potential bandwidth capacity by ten times its former capability.

Speaking of the transition to the new technology, Warm



New signage is up at the teleco offices.

As of this past week, Warm Springs Teleco is now delivering high speed internet from Madras all the way to Tribal Administration.

Springs Teleco Operations Manager Jose Matanane recently said, "We are very happy to have crossed this milestone to activate the new microwave links.

"There is still a lot more to

be done before we are in business, but this is an important first phase of our cut-over."

Adam Haas, general manager, added, "We apologize for some brief internet service interruptions while we switched radio equipment, but the new network is now fully redundant and much more reliable. The equipment we have installed will ensure that all of our customers will have service that they can count on."

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Fiber optic cable

A number of key fiber optic cable projects are also nearing completion. As the wire-line backbone of the network, fiber is the robust material that enables pulses of light to transmit voice conversations and data from your home to the rest of the world.

Unlike the copper that earlier networks used, optical fiber, which is made of glass, allows huge amounts of information to travel at very fast speeds, which is necessary for modern broadband Internet. We have contracted with a company called TetraTech, to install the initial fiber projects.

They have just completed running new fiber up to the Miller Flat tower above Warm Springs and that fiber is connected back to the Central Office.

They have also completed extending fiber to the new Indian Head Casino, our flagship customer for Warm Springs Teleco.

Customer service

The Customer Service Center has also been making good progress under the leadership of Customer Service Manager,

Danica Greene.

She is in the process of activating the very sophisticated Customer Master computer system being provided by Mid America Computer Corporation (MACC).

This system will track service orders, trouble tickets, rates and packages, accounting and billing.

"We are loading our server with the MACC software this week," Danica said, "and we'll begin a week of customer service training on the new software here in Warm Springs next week."

She added, "I spent a week last month at MACC in Nebraska for their Jumpstart training, and I was really impressed with the people and software. I can't wait for us to be in business and start serving fellow tribal members."

With more hard work, good weather and luck, Danica will soon have her wish.

(The Warm Springs Telecommunications Company is a tribally chartered enterprise whose mission is to bring advanced broadband services to the Warm Springs tribes, including voice, data and video. The start-up company will begin delivering service in 2012.)

News from Indian Country

Tribal over Park City land set in Kansas

WICHITA, Kan. (AP) – The legal fray over the Wyandotte Nation's efforts to build a casino in Park City will now be played out in a Kansas courtroom in a case that pits American Indian sovereignty against the state's own economic interests in gambling.

The Wyandotte Nation initially filed its federal lawsuit in Washington, D.C., seeking to force the Interior Department to accept into trust a tract of Park City land the tribe bought in 1992. The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act allows tribes to conduct gambling only on Indian lands, defined as land within its reservation or held in trust by the United States.

Last week, the case was formally transferred to Kansas over the tribe's objections. The move follows U.S. District Judge Beryl Howell's ruling last

month that the dispute is a matter of "significant local interest" that could best be handled in the federal judicial district where the land is located. The case was assigned to U.S. District Judge Julie Robinson in Topeka.

Wyandotte Nation, formerly known as the Wyandotte Tribe of Oklahoma, contends that after it was restored as a federal recognized tribe in 1978, it needed to reacquire lands lost due to "the failed federal policies of the past." The Wyandotte Nation contends it bought the Park City land using funds Congress set aside to be used for land that would be put into trust for the tribe's benefit.

Also last week, the Interior Department filed its response to the tribe's claims. In it, the agency argued that there is justification for its ongoing review of the tribe's application and

argued the tribe is not entitled to any relief from the court.

The state of Kansas wants to intervene in the lawsuit to protect its taxing, regulatory and economic interests. The state has granted Peninsula Gaming the exclusive right to operate a casino in south-central Kansas and is building it just 25 miles from where the tribe wants to put one.

While the Wyandotte Nation argues in its lawsuit that federal law compels the Interior Department to accept the land into trust, Kansas claims the exact opposite: that the law prohibits the trust acquisition. So while the tribe is seeking a court order compelling the Interior Department to accept land into trust that has been pending for five years, the state is asking that the Interior Department be barred from accepting it.

The Interior Department does not oppose the state's request to join in the case, though it does not concede to its claims. The tribe has opposed the move by the state to join the lawsuit. Now that the case has been moved to Kansas, it will be up to Robinson to decide whether to allow the state to intervene.

Tribe's powwow on national list

FORT WASHAKIE, Wyo. (AP) – The American Bus Association has designated the 53rd Annual Eastern Shoshone Indian Days Powwow next year as one of the Top 100 events in North America.

The powwow is set to be held next June 21-24.

The Top 100 list was pub-

lished as a supplement to the September/October issue of Destinations magazine.

The American Bus Association says the listing indicates that Eastern Shoshone Indian Days offers excellent entertainment value to both tour groups and individual travelers from around the world.

FEMA supports allowing tribes to ask for aid

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) – The Obama administration says it supports changing the federal law governing disaster aid to let tribal governments apply directly to the White House for help.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency, which announced the administration's stance Wednesday, says right now only governors can ask for a disaster declaration, which brings with it access to federal money to help a region recover from a disaster.

Rep. Nick J. Rahall, a West Virginia Democrat, introduced a bill earlier this year to let Native American tribal governments apply directly for access to disaster aid. The bill has been referred to a House Transportation and Infrastructure subcommittee.

COMMUNITY MEETING

Thursday ~ December 15th

5:30pm - 8:30pm

Community Center Social Hall

A light dinner will be provided.

Hosted by the

Joint Health Commission

Annual Health System Report

for 2010

Presentation & Discussion

*****5-hour SALE*****

9am-2pm

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