

March 2006

# Teleconnections

Published by:



**Webster-Calhoun**  
Cooperative Telephone Association

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## Annual Meeting Notices Mailed

The Annual Meeting of Members will be held on Tuesday, March 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the Prairie Valley High School Gymnasium. "Modern Day Pioneers" will set the tone of the meeting as WCCTA implements Fiber to the Home to prepare the way for new technologies. Election of Directors for Badger, Gowrie, Knierim, Pilot Mound and Vincent will take place as well as the year in review and goals for the future. Special door prizes will be awarded and refreshments served. Make plans to attend!



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## Recent News Articles of Interest:

### Officials Charge Man In Telephone Outage

A Solon man is charged with criminal mischief for allegedly firing a gun at a telephone junction box, which caused a telephone outage in northeast Johnson County in October.

Aaron Anson, 19, faces up to 10 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. Johnson County Sheriff's Department reports said the telephone equipment was hit twice with blasts from a 12-gauge shotgun on October 7. Evidence was matched to a weapon taken from Anson, sheriff's reports said. Anson was placed in the Johnson County Jail on \$15,000 bond.

### Second arrest made in phone box shooting

A second person has been charged with shooting a telephone junction box. The shooting disrupted service to about 45 customers in October.

Spencer Ray Kunkel, 19, of Solon was arrested on Friday and charged with first-degree criminal mischief.

The charges stem from the Oct. 7 incident in which a telephone junction box near Solon was shot twice with a 12-gauge shotgun, officials with the Johnson County sheriff's office said. Telephone service was disrupted for up to 17 hours for the affected customers, the sheriff's office said.

Aaron Anson, 19, of Solon was arrested on Thursday. He was charged with first-degree criminal mischief.

If convicted, each man faces up to 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$10,000. The investigation was continuing. More arrests were possible, the sheriff's office said.

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## ITA Day At The Capitol

On January 25<sup>th</sup> over 30 independent telephone companies from across the state of Iowa visited with legislators at the Capitol building in Des Moines. Sponsored by the Iowa Telecommunications Association (ITA), Webster-Calhoun Cooperative Telephone Association featured a display using the same theme as the upcoming Annual Meeting of Members: "Modern Day Pioneers."

### Issues discussed included the ITA's 2006 Legislative Positions:

- Ⓞ **Machinery and Equipment Sales Tax Exemption – SSB 1060**
  - The tax needs to be eliminated. Telecommunications and pipelines are the only two industries in Iowa yet to receive the exemption from this tax.
  - Paying this tax is double taxation for our industry, as we pay the sales tax on our purchases of new equipment and then we are also centrally assessed for property taxes.
  - If eliminated, our companies would reinvest that money back into the state to improve their networks and continue installing the latest technology for Iowans. Elimination of the tax would only cost the state's general fund \$8.5 million.
  - We will consider phasing in the exemption over a period of years.
- Ⓞ **Taxpayer Protection and Full Disclosure Act – HF 861**
  - Independent phone companies have invested millions to provide rural Iowans unsurpassed telecommunications services at reasonable prices.
  - We believe all Iowans deserve access to high speed internet.
  - We encourage any community that desires additional services to contact their local provider. Many times, the local provider will work with the community to install the technologies that are needed.
  - If a community is looking at establishing a telecom utility, the taxpayers should have the right to see an independently-prepared feasibility study prior to the public vote.
- Ⓞ **State Cable Television Franchises**
  - Some municipalities are imposing unreasonable financial burdens and delays on companies seeking to offer cable television service.
  - We support elimination of local cable television franchises in favor of a statewide cable television franchise.
  - Under this proposal, new entrants into a market would pay the same franchise fee as the incumbent cable operator. Any applicable franchise fee would be capped at 5 percent.
  - Existing franchise agreements and other arrangements would be protected and enforced.
- Ⓞ **ICN**
  - Our core position is that the government should not compete against private industry.
  - If the Legislature decides to sell the ICN, the process needs to be as open as possible, and the purchaser should not be any given economic or regulatory advantages/incentives.
  - We do not support the expansion of the ICN.



WCCTA General Manager, Daryl Carlson (left), and Office Manager, Marcie Boerner, are pictured with Senator Daryl Beall (right).



Glenn Stark (right), Boxholm Board Member, and his wife Marva are pictured with Representative Donovan Olson (left).