

2025 TOC CONFERENCE AGENDA

REGISTRATION **Hotel Lobby, Fargo Holiday Inn**
Tuesday, May 13 – 8am to 5pm
Wednesday, May 14 – 8am to noon

TUESDAY, MAY 13 – USER GROUP MEETINGS

8:30am-11:45am **Calix ConneXions at Local**
Harvest Hall 8:30-9:00am: Breakfast, 9:00-11:45am: Session.

8:30am-12pm **Ribbon Rural Business and Technology Conference**
Executive Specialty Buffet Breakfast Served at 7:30am

8:30am-11:30am **Office Professionals Meeting**
Mezzanine 1-2

10am-5pm **702 Communications (By Invitation Only)**
Frontier

TUESDAY, MAY 13 – HARVEST HALL

1:00pm **Opening Remarks**
Terry Nelson, 2025 TOC Chairman – Host State MN
General Manager, Woodstock Communications

1:15pm **Opening Keynote - Operation IFAST: How You Can Join the Fight Against Sex Trafficking**
Chris Lovell, COO, CLtel
Andrea Perry, Marketing Director, Guardian Group
Our broadband networks are meant for immense good, but unfortunately, they can also be used for unthinkable evil. 150,000 new escort ads are posted online every day in America and 75% of underage victims report being sold online. As ISPs, we have the opportunity and responsibility to do what's right and join the fight. Hear about Operation IFAST (ISPs Fight Against Sex Trafficking), learn what signs of potential trafficking to look for as a service provider in the field, and receive a preview of the new toolkit that will make it easy for your company to join dozens across the country in taking a stand against this heinous crime.

2:00pm **Mastering Curiosity, Boldness, and Creativity in the Age of AI - Like a 5th Grader Would!**
Patrick Kirby, Do Good Better
What do fearless 5th graders have in common with professionals tackling AI and technology? More than you might think! This fun, energetic keynote draws from Patrick Kirby's upcoming book "Fundraise Like a 5th Grader" to show how traits like curiosity, creativity, boldness, and resilience—straight from the classroom—can transform how telecommunication professionals approach their partnerships, relationships, and technology integration.

3:00-6:30pm **Exhibits Open – Great Hall & Pool Area**
Food & Refreshments (Keg Beer)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14 – MORNING SESSIONS

Sessions 1 through 6 begin at 8:00-9:00am. Each session repeats at 9:15-10:15am and 10:30-11:30am.

Session 1. Conference

Empowering Professionals: Unlocking AI's Potential for Impact and Innovation **Patrick Kirby, Do Good Better**

Dive headfirst into the world of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in this fun, incredibly interactive, and highly caffeinated breakout session designed to demystify AI and reveal its game-changing potential for continuing education and customized training professionals. Whether you're excited, skeptical, or overwhelmed by the rapid advancements in technology, this session will arm you with the knowledge and tools needed to navigate the AI landscape with confidence.

Session 2. Directors

The Next Dimension: New GIS Innovations and the Future of Reality **Clayton Burns, GIS and Design Manager, CNS**

Join me as we examine big shifts in GIS. Let's explore some technologies that a few years ago seemed unlikely to be adopted in rural telecom, but now they're making a real difference! If those technologies are being used now, then what other changes and innovations will we use next? How can we prepare our data and processes to handle the next steps to make those changes? There will be interactive maps and hands-on demos to keep you intrigued throughout the presentation. Come with an open mind to the Next Dimension of GIS!

Session 3. Board

CX & EX Reality Check: We're About to Get Uncomfortable **Jeremy Graves, President, Pivot**

Let's be honest — your members and employees probably aren't saying exactly what they think... at least not to you. In this fast-paced, unapologetically honest session, we'll shine a light on the blind spots hiding in your customer and employee experience. You'll score your department (or company, if you're feeling brave) with a CX/EX Scorecard designed to expose what's working, what's broken, and what's quietly driving people away.

Expect sarcasm, real talk, and a few "wait, we do that too" moments as we unpack the five areas that separate service rockstars from customer horror stories. Whether you work in customer service, operations, leadership, or tech support, you'll leave with fresh ideas, practical fixes, and a game plan to stop surviving and start standing out.

This session is the perfect lead-in to "How to Stand Out Against Verizon and Starlink (Without a Price War)" where we'll connect the dots between your internal experience, customer loyalty, and how to not get ghosted for the big guys.

Warning: If you're allergic to feedback, humor, or uncomfortable truths, this might not be your session.

Session 4. Executive

The New (Ab)Normal **Dan Caldwell, President, Consortia Consulting** **Marlene Bennett, Executive Vice President, Consortia Consulting** **Brian Ford, Vice President, Federal Regulatory, NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association**

Changes in federal government administration is not a new development. Historically, elections have brought about changes in leadership, priorities, and objectives. Perhaps what is now different, and is seemingly becoming the new (ab)normal, is the degree to which the new administration is focused on dismantling the prior administration's efforts. This leads to NTCA member companies spending time and resources (both financial and monetary) ramping up and ramping down.

- Session 5.**
Prairie
A Complete Security Blueprint
Charles Killmer, Solutions Architect, ePlus/FRSecure
Do you know what's next in your security program? Join Charles Killmer, Solutions Architect at FRSecure, as he discusses a pragmatic approach to determining what security efforts will give you the most impact. By analyzing your existing program, work completed, and using our categorization—foundational, developing, and mature—you should be able to place yourself and get an idea of what's next for your security program. This is a session you won't want to miss!
- Session 6.**
Frontier
Outdoor WiFi Use Cases/Considerations and the Benefits of WiFi7
Mark Vreeland, Principal Sales Engineer, Calix
How to leverage WiFi outdoors from the Backyard to the Workshop to the Farm and beyond. Tools for WiFi design. Updates on WiFi7 from client adoption to important features and use cases.
- 11:30am-1:15pm** Lunch Break (On Your Own)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14 – AFTERNOON SESSIONS

Sessions 7 through begin at 1:15-2:15pm and repeats at 2:30-3:30pm in the same room.

- Session 7.**
Conference
Best Ways to Tackle Brownfield MDU's
Greg Herrman, Vice President of Product Development, CORE Telecom Systems
We will look at different solutions for providing quality broadband service to MDU residents including FTTH and copper-based solutions that eliminate the need for rewiring.
- Session 8.**
Directors
OSP Maintenance Fiber Testing Basics
Steve Wolles, Agent, AFL
Basic fiber testing for PON and active networks at the customer side of the network. Overview of the best use for: Visual Fault Identifiers, Power Meters, Fiber Identifiers, PON meters and OTDRs.
- Session 9.**
Board
VR Experiences with CareerViewXR
Matthew Chaussee, Co-Owner, Co-Founder, and CEO, Be More Colorful
In this session, Matt Chaussee, CEO and Co-Founder of CareerViewXR, will share how immersive technology is transforming career exploration for rural students across North Dakota. Through both virtual reality (VR) video and web-based virtual tours, CareerViewXR delivers interactive career experiences that eliminate traditional barriers like geography, travel, and limited access to industry exposure.
- Matt will highlight how this platform is helping rural schools and communities better align students for high-demand careers available in their own backyards. He'll also explore how this technology is bridging the gap between education and workforce development, and discuss emerging efforts to build a sustainable, industry-supported model that ensures long-term impact on rural career readiness.

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Session 10.

Executive

The Value of Video

Autumn Ricke, Marketing Coordinator, Pinnacle Marketing

Video is one of the most effective tools for connection, communication, and conversion. In this session, you'll learn why video delivers strong ROI, get practical DIY tips to start creating your own content, and walk away with creative ideas you can use across your company—from marketing and customer support to recruitment and internal communications.

Session 11.

Prairie

“Nobody Cares How Fast You Are — Compete Smarter”

Jeremy Graves, President, Pivot

In our earlier *CX & EX Reality Check* session, we exposed the good, the bad, and the weird in how your customers and employees experience your company. **Now, it's time to use that intel to compete where it actually matters.**

Because here's the truth: Every provider says they're fast. Every provider promises great value. Nobody cares. **The real game is won by the companies who deliver the best experience, tell the best story, and show up in unexpected ways.** This session will help you rethink how your broadband company competes in a world where Verizon's everywhere and Starlink's literally in space.

We'll dive into **typical moves you need to nail and non-typical, ridiculously effective tactics you probably haven't tried yet** — all designed to make your company stand out for reasons way beyond price or speed.

Session 12.

Frontier

Delivering an Exceptional Experience - A Customer's Point of View

Caralee Nowak, Senior Success Account Manager, Calix

As competition, demand, and customer expectations continue to rise, having a well-aligned and competitive strategy is becoming more critical every day. Are you delivering an experience that excites and instills confidence in your customers? This session will delve into best practices that will help you think from a customer's point of view to serve them in the best way possible, building loyalty from the very start.

3:00-6:00pm

Exhibits Open – Great Hall & Pool Area

Keg Beer & Snacks

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14 – HARVEST HALL

6:00 -7:30pm

Supplier-Sponsored Reception

Open Bar & Hors D'oeuvres

The winners of the vendor booth drawings will be announced during the reception.

THURSDAY, MAY 15 – HARVEST HALL

- 8:00am** **Presiding**
Terry Nelson, 2025 TOC Chairman – Host State MN
General Manager, Woodstock Communications
- 8:15am** **SmartFarm / Ag**
Nicholas Uilk, Klingbeil Endowed Educator in Precision Agriculture/Lecturer, SDSU
Nicholas Uilk from South Dakota State University will be discussing the importance of rural broadband for modern production ag practices.
- 9:00am** **Break**
- 9:15am** **Closing Keynote – Greg Schwem, Comedian**
- 10:15am** **Door Prize Drawings & Adjourn**