

2024 TOC CONFERENCE AGENDA

REGISTRATION **Hotel Lobby, Fargo Holiday Inn**
Tuesday, May 14 – 8am to 5pm
Wednesday, May 15 – 8am to noon

TUESDAY, MAY 14 – USER GROUP MEETINGS

8:30am-11:45am **Calix ConneXions Event**
Harvest Hall

10:30am-12pm **NISC Messenger Training – “Service Orders from Office to Field and Back”**
Prairie

9:00am-11:45am **Ribbon Rural Business and Technology Conference**
Executive
Breakfast Served at 8:30am

8:30am-11:30am **Tri-State Office Professionals Meeting**
Mezzanine 1-2
Breakfast Served

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

TUESDAY, MAY 14 – HARVEST HALL

1:00pm **Opening Remarks**
Kent Schimke, 2024 TOC Chairman – Host State ND
CEO/General Manager, DRN ReditTech

1:15pm **Opening Keynote Address - “Feed the Machine – The China Threat”**
Eric Wilkens, Ph.D., Director of Cybersecurity, Arvig
The threat from China is ever-increasing, and some will argue that the cyber threat from China is more significant than any other nation even Russia. How did China get to this position of ability, and what are some of their current tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs)? This presentation will examine some of the fundamental advances and goals of the China cyber threat, specifically regarding the telecommunications sector.

2:00pm **eSports**
Kaleb Dschaak, CEO, & Gannon Karsky, CSO, Fenworks
Kaleb Dschaak, the founder of Fenworks (a K-12 high-tech activities company) will discuss how Telco’s and Internet Service Providers are changing the game by getting involved. These high-tech activities -Esports, Drone Racing, Hackathons, and more- are happening in our rural communities and are using cutting edge technology. Learn how to be on the front line of these innovative solutions.

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

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15 – 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
Cybersecurity Build-a-Plan Workshop
Andy Deinert, Director of Network & Security Services, Vantage Point
Ben Prill, IT Security Specialist, Vantage Point
Whether it's for BEAD, Enhanced A-CAM, insurability, or just day-to-day protecting the network – Everyone needs a cybersecurity plan... but no one is really sure where to start. Start here! Andy Deinert, CISSP, will review baseline protective measures and programmatic requirements so you know what's a "should," what's a "must," and what's the next right step for your specific company.
- Session 2.**
Directors
Practical Applications for AI (a.k.a. Ways to use ChatGPT in real life)
Shaun Carlson, Director of Enterprise IT, Arvig
- Session 3.**
Board
Exploring the Buyer's Journey - laying a path for loyalty.
Caralee Nowak, Senior Customer Success Manager, Calix
From the very beginning of the Buyer's Journey throughout the point of purchase, loyalty is created. And with increasing competition, demand, and expectations, loyalty is more important than ever. Are you providing the best experience that makes people get excited and confident about being your customer? This session will explore best practices including product positioning, mystery shopping, soft skills when selling/advising, and improving the overall customer experience through the awareness, consideration, and decision-making stages.
- Session 4.**
Executive
Where do we go with Video?
Jean Edlund, Video Products Partner, Cooperative Network Services, LLC
Many operators are at a crossroads with their video product. 2023 saw another cycle of retransmission consent negotiations and more and more content shifting to streaming services. Whether you are considering shutting down your video, or if you are committed to providing a high-quality, competitive pay-tv service; you'll want to have the most up to date information on where the industry is headed and what other companies (large and small) are doing.
- Session 5.**
Prairie
AI and Autonomy Impacts on our Networks
Seth Arndorfer, CEO, DCN
- Session 6.**
Frontier
Evolution of FTTH
Greg Luhman, Business Development Manager, Adtran
Evolution of FTTH: How a reliable history of advances in FTTx and Wi-Fi technology keep changing the access landscape, to the home and in the home. We will cover a brief review of where networks have been and where they are going and the technologies to look forward too.
- 11:30am-1:15pm** Lunch Break (On Your Own)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15 – 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
Work Smarter Not Harder: Ways to Leverage AI in Marketing
Autumn Ricke, Marketing Coordinator, Pinnacle Marketing Group
Enjoy a fun session that takes the “robot’s taking over the word” edge off AI and gain some quick ideas on how you can use AI even if you don’t work in marketing. Artificial Intelligence enables organizations to improve their overall marketing efforts. AI can automate your everyday marketing tasks like scheduling and sending emails or predicting campaign performance and let you get back to work on other important things, like satisfying clients.
- Session 8.**
Directors
Streaming/Cut the Cord Panel
Moderator: Jean Edlund, Video Products Partner, Cooperative Network Services, LLC
Shawn Grosz, CTO, SRT Communications
Jake Stern, Network Engineer, Tremolo Communications
Jeff Symens, CEO/GM, Valley Telecommunications
A panel of technology and network managers from area internet service providers will discuss experiences they’ve had with streaming TV and over-the-top (OTT) media.
- Session 9.**
Board
PON Testing Challenges (XGS & GPON)
Kipp Botner, Regional Sales Manager, VeEX: Sponsored by Eagle Marketing
Carl Goldschmidt, VP Sales North America, VeEX
This session will focus on both XGS & GPON, testing challenges which address the proper way to test dark fiber at the customer prem (ONT to OLT) as well as live fiber networks, common mistakes in testing including fiber/broadband speeds that may impact the customer experience, and developing repeatable testing processes for the providers to alleviate multiple truck rolls.
- Session 10.**
Executive
The Increasingly Complex, Burdensome and Crazy World of Telecommunications
Industry Compliance
Dan Caldwell, President, Consortia Consulting
Marlene Bennett, Consortia Consulting
Chana Kubie, Consortia Consulting
A look at a host of different audit and compliance requirements that are creating strains on carrier resources.
- Session 11.**
Prairie
Unleashing the potential: UAS empowerment in telecommunications
Collin Kemmesat, Unmanned Technical Sales, Frontier Precision
Unleashing the Potential: UAS Empowerment in Telecommunications" explores the dynamic landscape of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and their transformative impact on the telecommunications industry. This talk delves into the current state of UAS technology, highlighting its evolution and expanding capabilities. By showcasing real-world applications and case studies, we illustrate how UAS are revolutionizing day-to-day operations in the telecommunications sector. From infrastructure inspection and maintenance to network expansion and optimization, UAS offer unparalleled efficiency, safety, and cost-effectiveness. Join us as we delve into the myriad ways UAS are reshaping the telecommunications landscape, unlocking new possibilities, and driving innovation forward.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15 – AFTERNOON SESSIONS

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

- Session 12.** **Continuous Improvement & Automation in your Broadband Operations**
Frontier **Chris Reiser, E&O Telecom Manager, NISC**
This focuses on leveraging digital technology to streamline broadband operations. It addresses several key questions to help understand the benefits of automation in daily tasks and processes.
- 3:00-6:00pm** **Exhibits Open** – Great Hall & Pool Area
Keg Beer & Snacks

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15 – 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 16 – HARVEST HALL

- 8:00am** **Presiding**
Kent Schimke, 2024 TOC Chairman – Host State ND
CEO/General Manager, DRN ReadITech
- 8:15am** **Finding the Funny in Communications**
Jan McInnis
Get ready for a fun and information-packed session on communication, where the art of comedy meets the power of speech! Keynote Speaker and Comedian Jan McInnis will unveil the secrets behind a comedian's knack for crystal-clear communication. You'll be armed with tips, tricks, and tactics for not only communicating clearly but also for adding some humor to your communications to get people to listen and remember your message. Plus, Jan will sprinkle in some essential communication dos and don'ts, "etiquette" pointers, and lots of her hilarious humor. Don't miss this fun conference wrap-up session!
- 9:00am** **Break**
- 9:15am** **Closing Keynote – Comedy Up North**
John DeBoer, Comedian
It has been said, there are only two ways you can go in life after making a mistake. Learn from it and move on or don't learn from it and stay where you are. John DeBoer has chosen a third route: Write a joke about it and share it with the masses. His nerve-hitting show flows from the devious side of childhood to the never-ending pressures of our times.
- 10:15am** **Door Prize Drawings & Adjourn**