



**OPASTCO**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**OPASTCO's 47th ANNUAL WINTER CONVENTION SPOTLIGHTS  
GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, FRED AND INNOVATIVE VENDORS**

*Electricom, Inc.'s Mize Honored at Annual Awards Breakfast*

SAN DIEGO – The Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO) yesterday honored grassroots advocacy and its board of directors at the annual awards breakfast at the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual OPASTCO Winter Convention at the Hotel del Coronado, in Coronado, Calif. OPASTCO's outgoing board members were recognized for their service, as were the recipients of grants and other distinctions from the Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED).

This year's recipient of the OPASTCO Grassroots Advocacy Excellence Award is Lou Mize of Electricom, Inc., in Paoli, Ind. As an associate member, Mize has been a long-standing supporter and participant of OPASTCO's Legislative and Regulatory Conference. Mize recognizes that lobbying on Capitol Hill gives telcos needed support while also giving vendors a chance to explain how legislative policy would affect their own companies, abilities to employ a workforce and the trickle-down effects that occur.

OPASTCO welcomes four new members to its Board of Directors in 2010. They include Janet Britton of EATEL, in Gonzales, La.; Lynn Merrill of Monte R. Lee & Company, in Oklahoma City, Okla.; Bill Otis of NU-Telecom, in New Ulm, Minn.; and Ben Spearman of PBT, in Gilbert, S.C. In addition, four current board members have renewed their seats for a second term. They are Pete Holland of Horizon Chillicothe Telcom, in Chillicothe, Ohio; Cullen McCarty of Smithville Telephone Company, Inc., in Ellettsville, Ind.; Catherine Moyer of Pioneer Communications, in Ulysses, Kan.; and Mike Osborne of Ace Communications, in Alledale, Mich.

This year's outgoing board members include Tony Duet of Vision Communications, in Larose, La.; Mark Gailey of Totah Communications, in Ochelata, Okla.; John Granger of Mapcom Systems, in Richmond, Va.; and Keith Oliver of Home Telephone Company, in Moncks Corner, S.C. OPASTCO offers its sincerest thanks for their service and leadership on behalf of the Board of Directors and the entire membership.

FRED's presentation, given by FRED President Karen Koehne of Henry County Telephone Company, included a recap of grants given to OPASTCO members and information regarding FRED's upcoming Leadership Through Learning program this spring. Monte R. Lee's Lynn Merrill presented a \$5,000 check to FRED raised by ACE, the Association of Communications Engineers. Koehne finished her address by asking

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OPASTCO members to send a valentine to FRED. In turn, for every \$250 or higher donation made to FRED in the month of February, Koehne would personally send each donor a box of chocolates.

The Innovation Showcase is an opportunity for OPASTCO associate members to exhibit their latest innovations in a table-top setting. Innovation Showcase winners were announced during the awards breakfast, although the showcase continues throughout the remainder of the convention. The first place winner was Mapcom Systems. In second place, GVNW won the ribbon, and third place went to Quintrex Data Systems.

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**Note to Editors:** The Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO) represents more than 525 small, independently owned, local telecommunications companies serving primarily rural areas of the United States and Canada. OPASTCO membership includes both commercial companies and cooperatives, which range in size from fewer than 100 to 100,000 access lines, and collectively serve more than 3.5 million customers. OPASTCO represents rural telecommunications interests before federal regulatory bodies and Congress, provides publications, and holds two conventions annually in January and July of each year, addressing the needs of the small telecommunications industry. The association has an affiliate 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED). Visit the OPASTCO Web site at [www.opastco.org](http://www.opastco.org).