



OPASTCO

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**OPASTCO 49th ANNUAL WINTER CONVENTION SPEAKERS
FOCUS ON CHANGE IN POLICIES, BUSINESS AND THINKING**

*OPASTCO Leadership Announced;
FCC Commissioner Clyburn Speaks on Recent USF/ICC Transformation Order*

LAKE BUENA VISTA, FLA. – The Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO) today held the Second General Session of its 49th Annual Winter Convention at Disney's Contemporary Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. On the agenda for the convention's final day was FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn; a presentation by the Disney Institute on embracing industrial and workplace change; and announcement of the new OPASTCO leadership for 2012, including the Leadership Address.

“[USF and ICC] reform is not finished, and much remains to be done,” said Commissioner Clyburn, whose address opened the session. She underscored that the FCC “has a duty” to achieve parity in all advanced services available to all Americans, comparing the deployment of high-speed broadband to the electrification of the United States in the 20th century. “We need to work on moving people from the digital sidelines and onto the broadband playing field,” said Clyburn. One effort toward realizing this, she noted, would be further USF reform to accommodate broadband in the Lifeline and Link Up programs for low-income consumers. The FCC plans to adopt just such a pilot program at its upcoming Jan. 31 open meeting.

The Second General Session concluded with a presentation by the Disney Institute and the announcement of OPASTCO's new officers and the new chairman's leadership address. The 2012 OPASTCO Chairman is Mike Osborne of Ace Communications, Michigan. Rhonda Armstrong of Sebastian Corp., California, is first vice chairman, and Cullen McCarty of Smithville Communications, Indiana, is the second vice chairman. Pete Holland of Horizon Telecom, Ohio, is treasurer, and Bill Otis of NU-Telecom, Minnesota, is the non-officer board representative. Mike Osborne closed the general session with the convention's Leadership Address, in which he touched on industry unification and his commitment on behalf of the OPASTCO leadership to keep the full membership informed on efforts toward achieving this.

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Note to Editors: The Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO) represents more than 460 small, 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 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 website at www.opastco.org.