



SYCAMORE TELEPHONE

One of approximately 35 small, independent telephone companies in Ohio, founded in 1896, Sycamore Telephone Company (STC) has been in business for more than 100 years. STC offers telephone service to 2,200 subscribers in Sycamore, Melmore and McCutchenville.

Family-owned STC has more than 250 miles of buried cable, 23 miles of fiber optic cable for toll calls and private line service for all customers. CLASS features, such as call forwarding, call waiting, caller ID, along with many others, are offered.

One of Upper Sandusky's newest businesses, Sycom, was opened by STC at 1201 E.

Wyandot Avenue in Upper Sandusky. The retail telecommunications business offers an inventory of cellular, cordless and conventional telephones, answering machines and assortment of accessories. Internet through Bright.net is also available and Sycom is a Radio Shack and Alltel cellular service authorized dealer.

In 2004, STC completed its project of serving its entire subscriber base with high speed broadband (DSL) internet. This service is available throughout all of STC's territory.

STC has always been very active in the local community, helping with many

projects in the area. As a continuing effort, STC provides scholarships to graduating seniors, sponsors local sports like Little League Baseball and Softball for both children and adults. STC also supports the farming community by helping the FFA and 4H Junior Fair Livestock program. These are only a few of the many programs that STC supports. Like all of Ohio's small telephone companies, STC is continually working to better serve its customers as well as its community.

Sycamore Telephone Company
104 E. 7th Street
Sycamore, OH 44882-9409
(419) 927-6012

17 South High Street,
Suite 600
Columbus, OH 43215
www.obtotelecom.com



TELECOM

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Charles Moses, President; Cheryl Burchard, Editor; Kristen Dohmann, Writer

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Today

THE NEW AT&T: THE COMPANY OUR CUSTOMERS NEED US TO BE

Connie Browning
President, AT&T Ohio



On the face of it, the creation of the new AT&T marks the culmination of a process that began nearly a year ago when the former SBC Communications Inc. announced its intention to merge with AT&T Corp. More significantly for our customers in Ohio and across the country, however, it marks a historic shift in the fundamental nature of our industry.

It's a shift that began quietly in the mid-1980s, when a small circle of university researchers developed a modest network to help them share data. In the two decades since, that network has evolved into the Internet, which has dramatically changed the communications landscape. Internet Protocol, the core language that the Internet was built upon, has matured and grown well beyond its PC-based beginnings. Today, it is rapidly emerging as a platform for a full range of communications — voice, data and video.

There's no question that the development of IP-based communications has revolutionized how we gather information, shop, listen to music and watch video. We have office phones, cell phones, home phones, HDTVs, PDAs, BlackBerry devices, laptops, desktops and countless messages spread out among them all.

Today, the real challenge for our company and for our industry is to make these services work together and work better for customers — from families who need to stay in touch and maintain control of their increasingly fast-paced lives, to

worldwide enterprises that must compete in an increasingly complex global marketplace. And that's no small task. As separate services evolved over the years, proprietary technology and networks evolved with each of them. But, today, Internet Protocol enables us to converge these technologies to create truly integrated networks and services that provide anytime, anywhere access to applications, on any device.

We have already witnessed a dramatic transformation of the communications landscape — a transformation that IP is about to take to the next level. Meeting our customers' evolving needs in this transformed industry environment is the imperative that has driven us to transform our company into the new AT&T. We have created a company with the local and global networks, the wireless capabilities, and the research facilities to be a major player in a new era of IP-based communications and entertainment. We are now a company equipped to deliver a complete suite of communications and entertainment services, across technologies and around the world, to consumers and businesses of all sizes.

Over the course of our company's 120-year heritage, one of the most critical lessons we have learned is this: Technology enables change, but customer demand drives the marketplace. Our experience has been that customers — consumers and

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HOW IP IS ENABLING TELCOS TO TRANSFORM THEIR ACCESS NETWORKS FOR NEW SERVICE DELIVERY

Mike Skubisz, Chief Technologist – Pannaway Technologies

When Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM) was introduced in the mid 1990s, many industry pundits announced that ATM would soon be the dominant technology in both the Local-Area Network (LAN) and the Wide-Area Network (WAN). As history has proven, ATM had very limited success in the LAN, and only slightly more success in the WAN.

Today ATM is considered by some, a legacy technology and few companies are making any investments in it. This means that over time ATM-based solutions will increasingly be at a cost disadvantage vs. competing technologies – primarily Internet Protocol (IP).

The proliferation of personal computers, personal communications devices and the communications migration to high-bandwidth voice, video and data applications requiring internetworking services has been ushered into our lives thanks in large part to IP.

Bandwidth consumption continues to rise due to these technologies, yet telephone companies are faced with the ever present requirement to lower their cost-per-bit performance in order to support IP-based applications and services. Further, telephone companies are being

required to reconstitute their service offerings in order to meet the customer demands related to this advancement of telecommunication.

IP has evolved as the standard in every medium of network communication and has become the cornerstone in the majority of today's telco access networks. As a communication protocol there is no doubt the IP language with its infinite scalability, will be here for years to come and will have the capability to support new and emerging bandwidth intensive communication and entertainment applications as they come available.

Today, many telco-delivered applications including voice, video and data derive tremendous benefits from the simplicity and familiarity of IP. IP requires no proprietary technology to run and is built on an inherently open-system architecture. Its structure easily supports more generic network components, larger pools of vendors and ultimately – lower prices.

One example of this is IP TV. Because IP TV is delivered over the same infrastructure as the Internet, any service that is currently offered online can be offered via IP TV. As a result, telcos can now tap into enormous new revenue possibilities

by offering services ranging from e-mail to online gaming. Plus, rather than being impeded by significant system upgrades, IP TV can actually accelerate time to market for any of these new services.

Because IP has become the dominant networking protocol, it is embraced by virtually all of today's networking vendors. This has the affect of continually improving both the functionality and price/performance of solutions that are comprised of IP and Ethernet vs. solutions that are comprised of other technologies. For example, when comparing a solution comprised of IP and Ethernet with a solution comprised of IP and ATM, the IP/Ethernet solution will tend to result in:

- Faster turn up times for new services
- Reduced time to trouble shoot problems
- Enhanced capability to support emerging services such as multi-cast television
- Increased network reliability
- More scaleable networks capable of supporting emerging services

For information on the transformation to an all IP network please visit: www.pannaway.com.



A Message From
HARRY WILLIAMSON
CenturyTel Employee – Customer – Union Leader

During the last 20 years, telephone customers have enjoyed more competition, greater value, improved technology and better services. I know this first hand because I am a customer, as well as an employee of CenturyTel and also President of Communications Workers of America Local 4370.

As a customer, I can tell you that I see a lot of competition – direct mail pieces, newspaper ads, cable and TV advertisement, radio ads for a number of services, including cellular, and VoIP. There are even news articles regarding cable telephony finally coming to our area. All these entities are competing directly with my local phone company's products and services.

As an employee/technician, I am concerned about my company's ability to compete with all these other

technologies. It's tough enough to compete without having to deal with outdated regulatory requirements that our competitors don't have to deal with. We should have the same ability to react to the market as our competitors do. The Internet has changed the way people do business in ways that I never imagined. People are now sending e-mails instead of using their phones to make a call – they might even be using their landline service more for accessing the Internet than they do to make voice phone calls. And we all know that people are using their cell phones instead of landline phones to make long distance calls – all this has had an impact on our networks.

As President of CWA 4370, I truly believe that my company's ability to invest in the network has a direct impact on our ability to retain jobs

and even create new jobs in the Lorain area. We are losing customers to competitors every day. We need the ability to compete in an even-handed manner in order to move forward in the new market place. Policy makers need to continue their work on legislation which would provide a more even playing field. Reduced regulation will result in our ability to continue investing in Lorain and keep jobs in Ohio.

New rules currently being considered by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio will enable not just CenturyTel, but all of Ohio's incumbent local exchange carriers to continue investing in our state and to build a sound economic development platform to attract new businesses which means more jobs for our citizens.

CWA

Communications Workers of America

The Union for the Information Age

AFL-CIO, CLC

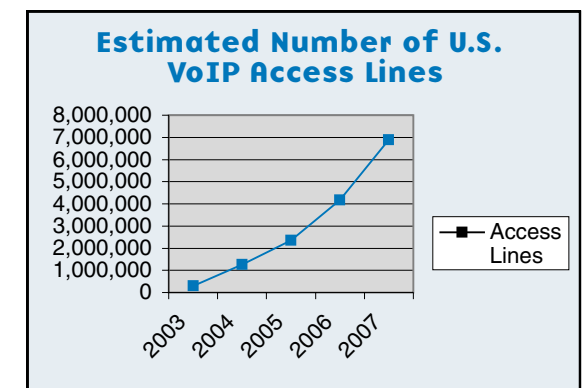
AT&T continued



businesses alike — don't buy technology for its own sake. A lot of dot-coms learned that lesson the hard way five years ago. Customers buy products and services that meet their needs and that help them manage their lives better and run their businesses more competitively. They are quick to embrace innovation that's meaningful and useful to them.

That's one of the key principles that has driven our transformation into the new AT&T. We believe that the winners in this transformed communications marketplace will be the companies that embrace and deliver on that principle — that do the best job of understanding and

anticipating customer needs. And, building upon that belief, we intend to do our part to make the people of Ohio winners in a new era of communications, entertainment and service.



Source: VoIP Magazine