

# ProService magazine

The Journal of NESDA and IS CET

Vol. XXXI, No. 5 • October 2005

## **The Electronics Industry... In The Eye of a Storm**

**Staying Well Grounded**

**Hitachi Endorses CSCs**

**Closing the Gender Gap**

**Increased Credit Card Payments**

**In Memoriam: A Farewell to Clancy**

## ProService

An official journal of the National Electronics Service Dealers Association and The International Society of Certified Electronics Technicians.

### Purpose:

ProService Magazine is published by the National Electronics Service Dealers Assn., 3608 Pershing Ave., Ft. Worth, TX 76107. It is intended for the enlightenment, education and entertainment of members of NESDA and ISCET.

With the exception of official announcements, the statements and opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the associations.

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ProService Magazine is now an ONLINE publication that can be found only at www.nesda.com, except for the April and August issues.



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Send your calendar items to: Editor@nesda.com

**October 7-9, 2005** — T-E-A Management Institute, Stagecoach Inn, Salado TX. For more information, contact Mack Blakely, 817-921-9061; Fax 817-921-3741; email: mackblake@hotmail.com.

**January 5-8, 2006** — 2006 International CES, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas NV.

**February 13-16, 2006** — Service and Retail Convention, Harrah's Resort, Las Vegas, Nevada. Sponsored by NARDA, USA, ETA International. For more information: info@SRC06.org; www.SRC06.org.

**March 8-11, 2006** — OPEA (Oregon Professional Electronics Assn.) 46th Annual Western Regional Conference, Hood River Inn, Hood River OR.

**National Professional Service Convention & Professional Service Trade Show**; Hyatt Regency, **moved due to hurricane damage**, To Be Announced, Convention: July 25-29, 2006. Trade Show: July 27-28, 2005; Contact the NESDA office, (817) 921-9061, for further details, or watch for announcements in near future.

### Cover Photo:

The eyewall of Katrina, courtesy of NOAA

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**Fred Paradis, CSM**  
**NESDA President**  
 Dave's Radio & TV Inc. (CSC)  
 Ashland, MA

# Katrina, NESDAnet Concerns

Hello all,

By the time you read this, three months will have passed since NPSC 2005 in Orlando. The memories of a fantastic time amongst friends at the convention were swiftly washed away by the devastation inflicted by Hurricane Katrina. The losses suffered by friends of ours and people we have never met will be not be forgotten, and the outpouring of support

from not only our NESDA family but families across the country and throughout the world, reaffirms my faith in the goodness of mankind. The NESDA family also endured the loss of Clancy Harms, former NESDA Region 7 Director. Clancy was one of a kind and the outpouring of sympathy on the NESDAnet was heartfelt and numerous.

To a lesser and much more insignificant extent, NESDA/ISCET on an organizational level was also affected by Hurricane Katrina. As was planned, NPSC 2006 was scheduled to be held at the Hyatt in New Orleans, which is located in the shadow of the Superdome. News accounts showed significant wind damage to the hotel, and though the Hyatt first gamely vowed to be open for events by March 1<sup>st</sup> 2006, they to their credit realized that the hotel might be ready but the city, as we know it would not. Mack and the office have worked feverishly with various contingency plans, and at press time our new site should have already been announced.

One subject that I would like to talk about is the NESDAnet and the discuss list in particular. Much has been made about the "Zero Tolerance" policy and its perceived attempt to stifle free speech. This was never the case. What it was designed to do was to A.) Clean up the Tech support list when it came to technical assistance, parts requests, and signature files and B.) Bring a sense of respectability to the Discuss list. It was not designed to inhibit the free flow of ideas and concerns between members. What it is designed to do is penalize those who fail to follow the rules published at the bottom of every NESDAnet post.

NESDAnet is a valuable resource for all of us, and it is my intent to continue to enhance and grow this tool. The Discuss list is the place to converse when you have a problem with an Industry Partner, NESDA, policies, etc. This does come with a caveat however. And that caveat is respect and common courtesy. Any post that does not have those two prerequisites will result in the penalties published in the rules. In my mind it is fairly straight forward, and I am sorry some don't see it that way.

I would hope that everyone could step back for a moment, see what we are trying to do, and apply the same effort that is currently being used to avoid the system into working within it.

Respectfully,  
 Frederic Paradis, CSM

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# Staying Well-Grounded



**Jerrell Helms**  
Helms Radio & TV  
Dothan, AL

I am going to go technical in this article. I ran into an unusual situation recently and remembered a NESDAnet thread relative to it some while back. I thought it might be interesting and informative to anyone who has not experienced and solved it.

It began with a Panasonic Plasma Display TH-42PD50U with a complaint of bars floating through the screen and a buzz from the speakers. This occurred only with a cable box, which had been replaced. Larry, the cable guy, told the customer there was about 15 VAC between the cable box and the TV.

Billy, my son, went on-site and, not being able to eliminate the TV as the problem, pulled it to the shop along with the cable box. Once in the shop there was no problem. I checked AC leakage on the TV and the box with my B&K 1655 and by the TV service manual. All was OK.

I had to put my thinking cap on. I know that in my training, the domestic AC power supply was only lightly covered. I suspect the same may be true for many. I did, however, get a lot of exposure to the electrical distribution system while a firefighter. With the two sources I know several things:

1. TVs always isolate the exposed connections, or chassis ground, from the earth, or hot ground. This is to avoid shock hazards in case AC outlets are wired incorrectly.

2. The neutral and the equipment ground on house wiring go to the same place. They are connected to the earth ground and power service cable neutral at the panel box.

3. This TV had a three-wire power cable and the equipment ground was connected directly to the jack panel and tuner connectors.

How, then, could the connectors possibly be iso-

lated or floating? The answer: they aren't. They are grounded.

I went back to the basics of wiring. The standard house is provided with single phase 220-240VAC. There are three wires coming from the power transformer: the two that have 220VAC between them (called stingers); and the third, a center tap of the transformer (called neutral) which is connected to earth ground at every opportunity. Neutral to stinger gives 110-120VAC, but the two stingers are out of phase with each other.

A 220VAC device, like a stove, is connected across the stingers, getting 220VAC and the neutral is connected to the chassis, grounding it. There are usually only three wires in that circuit. Sometimes there is a fourth, in which case the equipment ground is connected to the chassis instead of the neutral.

On a code compliant 110VAC outlet the black (hot) wire is connected to the brass screw terminal and the narrow slot. The white (neutral) wire is connected to the silver screw and the wide slot. That's about backwards to what we are accustomed to. There is a third, usually bare or green, wire. It connects to the green screw and the round slot. That is ground. Don't confuse neutral and ground, although they connect to the very same place in the power panel. The neutral completes the circuit for the hot, and the same amount of current flows in both wires. Since it is AC, it flows both ways, changing directions at 60 Hz. The ground is not intended to carry any current at all in a proper circuit, only grounding exposed parts for safety reasons.

In our case we found the outlets were properly wired. At the meter base outside there was no voltage difference between the cable shield and the AC ground. At the TV, however, there was 15VAC between the equipment ground and both the cable shield and the AC neutral. The audio and video 60Hz hums were emanating from the cable box, not the TV, but only when connected to this particular TV, and to cable. There was over 40 ohms resistance between neutral and ground, but less than 5 between neutral and the cable shield. There was evidently a poor connection in the panel box for the equipment ground. Since we are not licensed electricians we referred the customer to one.

Most TVs only have the hot and neutral connected, with the exposed connectors isolated or floating similar to a bird sitting on a power line. This problem would only be evidenced by a set like this one using the equipment ground. In this case, the safety redundancy circuit was actually the cause of the problem.

I have to remind myself that just like humans, TVs don't work in isolation, but rather in an environment that both affects and is affected by the TV. ■

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**“...like humans,  
TVs don't work  
in isolation,  
but rather in an  
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both affects and is  
affected by the TV.**

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## 2006 ProService Directory: Be Sure Your Listing is Correct!

Members, the 2006 edition of the yearbook is now in production. As in previous years, we will be listing ALL current members of NESDA, but ONLY if your dues are paid current. Be sure you are listed! If you have questions about when your membership expires or need to make a payment, please call the office at 817/921-9061 ext. 16 or e-mail [patricia@nesda.com](mailto:patricia@nesda.com).

Please check your listing as it appeared in the 2005 (current) version of the yearbook. If you can't locate your copy, you can view the PDF inside NESDA Members Only. The list-

ing section begins on page 52. If it is correct as listed, and nothing has changed since the last printing, your listing will appear exactly that way in the 2006 yearbook.

If anything has changed this year (your e-mail address, phone or fax, street address, ZIP code, or Area Code) PLEASE let us know by completing the online form at this link: <http://www.nesda.com/servicers/memberupdate.html>.

Even if you have already completed this form for updating the NESDA Locator Information, please do it

**continued on page 8**

# Divergence Linked to Success



**"C.W." Villademoros,**  
PhD., CET  
ISCET President

Luckily, I have been blessed with the opportunity to do a lot of public speaking in a broad array of forums. Frequent presentations are made to the military, the business community, the media, and university students as well as the technical community. These addresses to the technical community vary considerably, but their essence is usually related to the opportunities available to individuals preparing to take their place in the electronics field.

The key point is that of divergence. There are over 5,000 manufacturers of electronic equipment in the United States. The electronics industry is, by far, the most fragmented of any sector in the industrial arena today, and it continues to become more divergent.

One of the most common questions listeners ask relates to convergence and the belief (or expectation) that one day all systems will be operating on a common platform. While this might seem like an ideal scenario for the consumer and would certainly ease the pressures and challenges of developing high quality consumer products, it's also an unrealistic perspective, at least for the foreseeable future.

Microsoft announced XNA operating system last year and promoted it as an optimal next generation tool for development that could/should be embraced by ALL the manufacturers. However, I believe they

are still awaiting phone calls from Sony, Toshiba, Hitachi and many other major manufacturers.

The fact remains that the electronics industry is one of the fastest growing and most lucrative sectors of consumer space. Everyone is working hard to establish their dominance in this industry, whether it be the fight for console supremacy, or the lead position in development and publishing domains (although EA already enjoys the coveted position as the 800 pound publishing gorilla). Various manufacturers, who are each multi-billion dollar giants, are designing their respective systems to offer unique capabilities and features with an emphasis on greater performance, adaptability and graphics. They do this to distinguish their own platforms from others, but this uniqueness still contributes to divergence from an architectural perspective.

New generation platforms are increasingly becoming more sophisticated technologically. While all different platforms allow developers and publishers to exploit and leverage each system's different features, the objective in the end is still to impart the highest quality experience to the consumer. The caveat is that each system manufacturer has their own interpretation of how best to deliver that quality from a hardware perspective. Thus, the develop-

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**"...the electronics industry is one of the fastest growing and most lucrative sectors of consumer space."**

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# The Electronics Industry: In the Eye of a Storm

M.M. Bauer

Associate Editor, ProService

Background photo:  
the eyewall of Katrina,  
courtesy of NOAA

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**“...responders have  
struggled to keep  
communications  
open.”**

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**TeleMedicine is the utilization of telecommunications to exchange medical information and services. The VitalLink 1200 is a telemedicine device which enables non-medical personnel to send vital signs of a patient in real time to a Doctor from wherever they are using telecommunications. This in turn enables the Doctor to give the non-medical personnel advice on how best to treat the patient. The VitalLink 1200 is contained in a compact, water resistant backpack which lends itself to use in several market sectors.**



The 2005 hurricane season brought the United States two “Category 4” hurricanes within three weeks, each bringing devastation to the Gulf Coast, flooding New Orleans and causing one of the worst natural disasters in U.S. history. And the season’s not over yet.

Those same storms have taken their toll on the Gulf oil industry, shutting down drilling rigs, damaging refineries and limiting delivery of product. Could the long-term effects devastate to the economy? At the pumps, gas prices took an immediate turn upward reflecting shortened supplies. It won’t be long before the impact is felt in other industries, with increased prices being ultimately passed along to consumers.

Throughout these ordeals, responders have struggled to keep communications open. First, the telephone system was destroyed, including cable as well as cellular towers. Police in New Orleans reportedly took turns talking on a single radio channel with their walkie talkies while the National Guard resorted to sending ‘runners’ to command stations. One concerned individual even donated a portable command center to first responders to aid with evacuation and emergency management. But satellite-based wireless phones proved to be the least affected service as some 10,000 units poured into hurricane stricken areas to help coordinate the relief efforts of federal disaster personnel and Red Cross workers.

Even VoIP was able to deliver important communications after traditional landline and cell phone service collapsed. Broadband connections continued to deliver text messaging, email, video blogs and other streaming media, keeping people connected.

In the aftermath of Katrina, restoration of the Port of New Orleans is expected to cost between \$1.8 billion and \$2 billion, of which twenty-five percent will be allocated to communications technology. This will include a more reliable communications infrastructure, since the port’s satellite and cellular systems both failed. Officials will be looking for the most reliable means of communications to prepare for future disasters.

Technology will play a roll in the logistical issues of recovery from the storms, as well. Wal-Mart uses transportation-management software to determine the best delivery routes, and transmits instructions and directions to computers onboard trucks. J.B. Hunt Transport Services Inc. uses a system based on in-

ternally-developed software to provide route and fuel recommendations to drivers. Drivers have access to information on more than 40 million roads, addresses, bridges, tolls and fuel stops that it gets from government sites. This all translates to more reliable routing with less down time and less time wasted searching for open roads.

Another area aided by technology has been the use of computers to register evacuees and create new electronic medical records for those who didn’t have any. Field clinicians used networked, mobile-imaging equipment to perform X-rays, ultrasounds, CT scans and other tests at evacuation centers to provide electronic diagnoses. Patients’ electronic records will be used by other physicians for follow-up care, and may lead to a system of “electronically banking” medical records within a virtual database.

More focus will undoubtedly be placed on the use of virtual storage and backup systems to aid in recovery of future disasters and minimize down time. Off-site storage areas are going to be booming as businesses look for ways to secure and maintain sensitive information needed to keep their businesses running.

The short term effects of both Katrina and Rita will be higher energy prices, which will translate into consumers having less discretionary income. It is estimated that retail prices could soar 30 to 40% by next spring. A colder-than-average winter will make it that much worse. This could cause the overall inflation rate to rise as well, draining profits and negatively affecting overall economic growth. It is conceivable that any prolonged shutdown of U.S. oil refineries will disrupt many industries, including electronics.

But in the long run, innovation will be the winner and technology its tools. In the age-old battle of Man against Nature, humans will find new ways to counteract that which they have no control over: natural disaster.

The communications industry, already booming from increased cellular sales, will step to the plate with satellite-based systems which will avoid most weather phenomena occurring here on earth. Manufacturers of some laptop computers are already including wireless broadband access technology in their newest models. Cell phones are being used for email, streaming audio, digital cameras and retrieving files from the office PC. They are even equipped with GPS systems that allow consumers to avoid traffic problems and navigate through strange territories.

While there may be a temporary setback in the electronics industry, the long term future looks bright. Innovators will find new products to put into consumers’ hands, each better than the one before. ■

# Hitachi Endorses CSCs as Preferred Service Option

In an unprecedented move, Hitachi has decided to add the recommendation that customers seek out service centers that have been certified as professional by the Consortium of Certified Service Centers. Repair shops that carry the endorsement of Consortium of Certified Service Centers, and display the CSC logo, will be the recommended resource for all Hitachi brand equipment.

According to Walt Herrin, Director of Hitachi's National Service Division, "Each of Hitachi America Ltd., Home Electronics Division and its affiliate, Hitachi Home Electronics (America), Inc. plan to use the CSC certification mark on copies of Hitachi owner's manuals, service manuals, web sites, CD-ROMs, DVD-ROMs and related print and digital materials".

Official correspondence from Hitachi to CSC President, Teresa Maher indicates that the actual wording of this endorsement will be:

"Hitachi is a proud supporter of the Certified Service Center program. Businesses who display the CSC certification mark have demonstrated that they operate in accordance with the high standards of professional-

ism prescribed by the Consortium for Certified Service Centers."

It was also noted that the 2005 warranty cards and owner's guides, which will be distributed in the very near future, will contain the CSC logo and endorsement by Hitachi.

According to Maher, "This is a very positive move in the right direction. By endorsing service centers that have been CSC certified, Hitachi keeps the quality of service and professionalism for its products at the top of the industry.

"We hope that other manufacturers will recognize the value of such a move and respond in kind."

The Consortium of Certified Service Centers has been working to establish and maintain high standards for the industry since shortly after the turn of the century. They have been actively certifying service centers for the past 28 months.

To view a list of the top service centers in the country, as certified by the Consortium of Certified Service Centers, and for more information on Certified Service Centers, go to [www.certifiedservicecenter.org](http://www.certifiedservicecenter.org). ■

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**"This is a very positive move in the right direction."**

**— Teresa Maher**

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# B&D Identifies OEM ICs

As you may, or may not already know, we are a factory authorized Sanyo Semiconductor distributor. A problem continues to grow with counterfeit thick film hybrid ICs flooding the market. (STK devices) In an attempt to assist our customers we have now learned from Sanyo the following information.

1) Date code - 4 digits had been printed before December 2001 and 5 digits after January 2002. (as stated in Sanyo's specification # ENN7138 which can be found here - [http://service.semic.sanyo.co.jp/semi/pamph\\_pdf\\_e/ENN7138.pdf](http://service.semic.sanyo.co.jp/semi/pamph_pdf_e/ENN7138.pdf))

2) Printing on the aluminum side (back side) - Before August 2003, factory code had been printed.

After September 2003, this code is printed only on some very special items. Most all production, no printing.

How to break down the factory 5 digit code-

1st digit - Only letters A, B, D, E, F, or Z

(designates the factory where produced)

2nd digit - numerical 0 through 9 (designates the year 1=2001 etc)

3rd digit - letters A through L (designates the month A=January etc)

4th and 5th digits - numerical 01 through 31 (designates the day produced)

We have seen and received many bad devices from some of our customers and what seems to be consistent is that the fakes all appear to be 4 digit date codes (which means 2001 or older) and most all are also printed on the back side (2003 or older). The old 4 digit code only contained the year, month (A-L), and date (01-31). When we have inspected some knockoffs, even the 4 digit date codes were incorrect.

So, if you have any STKs in stock that don't meet the above guidelines, they are probably counterfeit devices.

Regards,

Cary Citro, B&D Enterprises

continued from p. 4

again, but check the box at the top labeled "Contact Info Update Only" so we will know that it is an address, phone, or e-mail address update only. You don't need to complete the rest of the form, and we will disregard the other fields. If you need to tell us anything else, please note it in the Comments field toward the bottom of the form.

Manufacturers, distributors and other service providers, if your company has a listing in the resource listings section of the book, and you need to update your info, there is a special online form for you at <http://www.nesda.com/publications/year-bookupdate.html>.

You should receive your 2006 year-book in the mail in late January or early February.

## New NESDA Members thru 9/30/05

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**Robert Chavez**, Harvey's TV, 11507 W Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90064; 310-559-6700; Fax: 310-479-7305; harveystv@dslextrême.com

**Garo Mooradian**, Telec TV, 4383 Tujanga Ave #D, Studio City, CA 91604; 818-761-7207; Fax: 818-761-7207; g.mooradian@sbcglobal.net

**Manuel Avila**, Avila's TV Sales & Service, 4021 E Olympic Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90023; 323-262-6567; Fax: 323-262-7232; alilastv9021@aol.com

**Richard Purham**, R & B Electronics, 48 Apollo Way, Ik Isabella, CA 93662; 559-896-0854; Fax: 760-379-9125; rpbano@earthlink.net

**Larry Parisot**, Wedgewood Audio Service, 3315 Beacon Ave South, Seattle, WA 98144; 206-522-4961; Fax: 206-522-4961; info@wedgewoodaudio.com

**Joe Leon**, Leon's TV Service, 11592 S Fowler Ave., Selma, CA 93662; 559-896-0854; Fax: 559-891-1874; leoniservice@netzero.net

**Randy Melendez**, Randys T.V., 6619 Angelina, Chino, CA 91710, 909-984-6888; Fax: 909-590-779; KIKKI@PRODIGY.NET

**Alberto Lopez**, Master Tech, 11913 Lakewood Blvd., Downey, CA 90241; 562-869-4482; Fax: 562-622-7524; mastertech1961@yahoo.com

## Chris Fabian Retires



Chris Fabian, Vice President of the National Service Division for Toshiba America Consumer Products, retired August 30, 2005.

Chris has been a long-time supporter

of NESDA/ISCET and independent service. He was honored as the "NESDA Person of the Year" at NPSC 2004. At this year's NPSC he was presented with the M. L. Finneburgh Sr. Award of Excellence." He is a past recipient of the "National Friend of Service" and served the members of NESDA as an advisory board member to the NESDA Board of Directors in 2003-2004.

At NPSC 2003, he announced the Toshiba 2004 Challenge, sponsoring a number of Toshiba authorized servicers by paying their first year's NESDA membership dues.

His list of accomplishments is long, and while we hate to see Chris go, we do expect to see him again. He says he will still be around, and that we can look for him at CES in January and NPSC 2006.

# Recently Certified Technicians

**Congratulations to all those who passed exams, 8/12/05 - 9/30/05**

## Welcome Journeyman CETs

### LaserGrade

John M. Shaw; Caldwell, NJ

### David Lewicki

Glenn A. Rogers; Forest Lake, MN

### Alden Walther

Mark A. Larsen; Houston, TX

### Edward Reilly, Jr.

Anthony C. Griffith; North Las Vegas, NV  
Jack Unick; Las Vegas, NV

### Harry Sanders

Calvin L. Taylor; Chehalis, WA

## Welcome Associate CETs

### LaserGrade

Phillip Green; Silver Lake, OR  
Albert Maher; Brockton, MA  
Richard Rivers; Phoenix, AZ  
John M. Shaw; Caldwell, NJ  
William Susick; Southgate, MI

### Rod Moore

Shawn M. Casto; Topeka, KS  
Bernice Jordan; Topeka, KS  
Matthew L. Lewis; Topeka, KS  
Bernadette S. Smith; Topeka, KS

### Gary P. Moore

Joshua C. Bond; La Center, KY  
Richard L. Chamberlain; Martin, TN  
Levi A. Fowler; Wingo, KY  
Shandalee Gudschinsky; Martin, TN  
Jared W. Merritt; Ledbetter, KY  
Craig M. Richards; Eddyville, IL  
Stephen D. Slayden; La Center, KY

### Kevin A. McGowan

James Thompson; Leonville, LA

### Rob Steinruck

Benjamin J. Omlor; Findlay, OH  
Alan Van Houten; Columbia City, IN

### Michael Biltz (Proctor)

Steven E. Harper; Dodge City, KS

### Mack Blakely

Willie Lundy; Dallas, TX  
Frederick Walker; Fort Worth, TX

### Alan Greene

Kenneth R. Friar; Austin, TX

### Iutisone Tiliaia

Joseph M. Baricko; Chaparral, NM  
James P. Taylor; El Paso, TX  
Armando C. Villa; Chaparral, NM

### Edward Reilly, Jr.

Brendan J. Donegan; North Las Vegas, NV  
Matthew W. Evans; Las Vegas, NV  
Daniel R. Lien; North Las Vegas, NV  
Anthony Mafnas; Henderson, NV

## Welcome NASTeC Techs

### Mike Krigbaum (GE Proctor)

James Elliott, Las Vegas, NV  
Brian Eflin, Sandy, UT  
Todd Allen, Garland, TX  
Kerry Swiggs, CA  
John Mower, Las Vegas, NV  
Riley McCormick, Las Vegas, NV  
Scott Hoffman, Mesa, AZ  
Adam Losengard, Mesa, AZ  
Gustavo Garcia, Mesa, AZ  
Ron Smith, Vail, AZ  
Bob Dauerheim, Tucson, AZ  
Rodger Crawford, Chandler, AZ  
Gary Winans, Tempe, AZ  
Brian Kelly, Gilbert, AZ  
John Pulbratek, Phoenix, AZ  
David Garcia, Phoenix, AZ  
Robert Render, Cypress, CA  
Jim Bates, Phoenix, AZ  
Jesse McAfee, Tempe, AZ  
Mark Paolone, Phoenix, AZ  
Sherm Drebing, Sandy, UT

### Scott Wallace (GE Proctor)

Michael Hastings, Colorado Springs, CO  
Michael Bayer, Baitlet, CO  
Elliot Konieczny, Greeley, CO  
Steve Krueger, Peyton, CO  
David Tennyson, Denver, CO  
Mark Thompson, Loveland, CO  
Jim Tomlinson, Westminster, CO  
Loren Helfenbein, Arvada, CO

### Ken Martin (GE Proctor)

James Leenan, Reno, NV  
Jay Sattler, Reno, NV

### Rodney Loftin (GE Proctor)

Joe H. Alexander, Savannah, GA  
Lonnie Ard, Chas, SC  
Clyde W. Chinnners, Jr., Summerville, SC  
Brad S. Emery, Beaufort, SC  
Daniel Goette, Thunderbolt, GA  
Mark W. Leopard, Summerville, SC  
Glenn D. Smith, Goose Creek, SC  
Nelson K. Yerger, Savannah, GA  
Patrick E. Bowers, Landrum, SC  
Ralph W. Davis, Inman, SC  
Robert J. Grossmann, North Augusta, SC  
Frank L. Hunnicutt, Greenville, SC  
Robert L. Manus, Eastanollee, GA  
Mark A. Matulich, Brevard, NC  
Jerry E. Porter, Laurens, SC  
George L., Sosnin, Augusta, GA  
Michael W. Vaughn, Spartanburg, SC  
Paul Behrendt, Myrtle Beach, SC  
John Berry, Conway, SC  
Luther Driggers, Florence, SC  
John Gibson, Myrtle Beach, SC

Jack Harrelson, Wilmington, NC  
James Littles, Loris, SC  
Richard Wright, Leland, NC  
Roger D. Hall, Yadkinville, NC  
Jim G. Hengel, Trinity, NC  
Herb L. Meadows, Mocksville, NC  
Merle Walston, Reidsville, NC  
Darrin E. Faye, Las Vegas, NV  
Mike Mangiapane, Las Vegas, NV  
Danny Platt, Henderson, NV  
Mark Tremblay, Las Vegas, NV

### Terry Case (Proctor)

Anthony D. Hall, Scotts Hill, TN

### Jerry Lewis (GE Proctor)

Gary Bala, Mulliken, MI  
Paul Mielke, Portage, MI  
Brian Poley, Grandville, MI  
Mark Thompson, Kentwood, MI  
Ronald Vansingel, Nunica, MI

### John Stevens (GE Proctor)

John Booker, Columbia, MD  
Michael Cleveland, Baltimore, MD  
Bruce Folkins, Columbia, MD  
Roger Gill, Crownsville, MD  
Gregory Hart, New Market, MD  
Steven Keckler, Walkersville, MD  
Fair Tong, Baltimore, MD

### Gary Cyr (GE Proctor)

Antonio Aguiar, Somerset, MA  
James Blake, Melrose, MA  
David Carda, Naugatuck, CT  
Matthew Caul, Dedham, MA  
Anthony Chambers, Rockland, MA  
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Tom Dee, Hayward, MA  
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David Duran, Springfield, MA  
Thomas Ferrante, Glastonbury, CT  
Thomas Ferreira, Barrington, RI  
Wesley Frazier, Terryville, CT  
Vincent Giuliano, Barrington, RI  
Hector Lopez, Springfield, MA  
Francisco Lopez, Lawrence, MA  
John Malone, Weymouth, MA  
William McMahon, Foxboro, MA  
Peter Meskunas, Waterbury, CT  
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David Roberts, Belchertown, MA  
Michael Rose, Barrington, RI  
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Geoffry Sheldon, Hudson, MA  
John Soares, Birdgeport, CT  
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Gary Willemain, South Madley, MA



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# Closing the Gender Gap

By Michael Grebb,  
Consumer Electronics  
Association

The conventional wisdom is that men absolutely, positively and unequivocally hate to shop. And when men do shop, these sojourns are short and surgical. See the shirt. Buy the shirt. Leave.

When it comes to consumer electronics, however, things are different. Men suddenly want to browse and take their time comparing products. Women, on the other hand, enter a testosterone-fueled jungle of gadgetry. Suddenly, she's the one who wants to get in and out quickly. "It's totally a role reversal thing," says James Chung, president of Reach Advisors, a Boston-based strategy and research firm. "For men, consumer electronics is one of the few shopping categories that's entertainment. For women, it's a lot less fun."

## Very important factors to women when choosing a store to shop for CE products

Big selection:	51%
Helpful salespeople:	46%
Easy/convenient access:	39%
Well organized/clean:	34%
Useful product literature:	25%
Good directional signs:	19%
Comfortable lighting:	17%

Source: CEA Market Research

## Make it Exciting

That's no wonder, considering that CE showrooms often gear sales pitches, demos and other parts of the experience to men. "The industry holds onto a stereotypical idea and they're missing out on a big part of the marketplace," says Linda Mariotti, CFO of Russound, a Newmarket, N.H.-based multi-room audio/video company. "I don't think retailers handle women well. They ignore women almost completely or just consider them a niche market."

Chung says, "Any retailer that hasn't figured out that women matter is in trouble. To be sure, retailers and CE manufacturers alike are starting to change their attitudes, albeit slowly. And with women influencing some 80 percent of all household purchasing decisions these days, they have little choice."

According to recent CEA Market Research, men and women's involvement in CE buying decisions now is roughly equal compared to 1998 when 59 percent of men were the sole initiators of CE product purchases compared to only 48 percent of women.

General interest in CE products also has equalized between men and women in recent years. "I just don't see how they can see the numbers out there and not pay attention," says Mariotti. Adds Carol Campbell, director of business development at CE marketing firm Marketing Matters:

"There is screaming opportunity here."

## Parity

In many ways, this closing gap is a sign of the times: Women have more buying power and they increasingly use technology to manage their busy schedules. Women's comfort level with technology is at an all-time high. And in few categories has women's influence ramped up more noticeably than in the home theater and display markets, which are growing exponentially. According to CEA's 2005 CE Ownership and Market Potential Study, current HDTV penetration is at 13 percent (sales adjusted) or approximately 14.4 million households. About 10 million households say they plan to buy an HDTV within the next year.

## Style Is Key

In the not-so-distant past, boxy big-screen TVs and cavernous speakers that took up lots of space was mostly a guy thing. Women—horrified by the questionable aesthetics of hulking electronics everywhere—often relegated such systems to the basement where the male could bask in technophile glory. But in recent years, technology has brought sleek flat-screen LCD and plasma displays, as well as smaller speakers that are even better than their monster-sized predecessors.

According to CEA, flat-screen TVs are present in 10 percent or 10.8 million U.S. households, with another 10.8 million households planning to buy a flat-screen within the next year. To assume that women aren't represented in those numbers is to overlook reality.

Witness the recent shift in buying patterns at Chicago retailer Abt Electronics, which is billed as the largest single-store CE retailer in the United States. President Mike Abt says that while women were always attracted to the store's wide selection of household appliances, they traditionally

showed less interest in its big-screen TVs. But that all changed a few years ago as affordable, sleek flat-screens started appearing in the 80,000 square-foot showroom.

"Women saw those thin TVs and started to get excited," says Abt, noting that couples shopping for appliances often end up in the TV section of the store based on the urging of the woman, not the man. "So often, the women will say, 'Hey honey, look at this TV'. The woman is pushing the sale. This is

## What are the most irritating things about shopping for CE products?

Salespeople who can't help you:	74%
Pushy salespeople:	70%
Lack of selection/Out of stock:	66%
Crowded stores:	26%
Poor product displays:	23%
Store not easy to browse:	18%
Loud music:	16%
Other:	2%

Source: CEA Market Research

# Register Early and \$AVE! 2006

## National Professional Service Convention & Professional Service Trade Show

**To Be  
Announced**

Hyatt Regency New Orleans - Poydras Plaza at Loyola Avenue - New Orleans, LA  
July 25-29, 2006

Full convention registration includes all programmed meals, banquets, door prize drawings, trade show, dealer/manufacturer meetings, seminars and workshops. Activities may be scheduled for optional participation at an extra cost. There is no convention youth program. However, **CHILDREN 17 AND UNDER ARE FREE**. Plan to arrive on July 25 and depart on July 29 to participate in all scheduled events. Advance plans include a Welcome Reception on the evening of July 25 with food, fun and beverages.

Return completed Registration to: NPSC 2006, 3608 Pershing Ave., Ft. Worth, TX 76107; 817-921-9061; Fax 817.921.3741; or register online at [www.nesda.com](http://www.nesda.com).

**NOTE:** Special Registration Rates are valid ONLY on registrations completed, fully paid and received before the deadlines listed. Children age 17 and under are free with registered parent or guardian. Convention fee schedule per person (ages 18 and up):

If registered and FULLY PAID by ...	Full Convention Registration	Daily	Totals:
Jan. 31, 2006	\$180	\$75	\$ _____
May 15, 2006	\$200	\$75	\$ _____
July 15, 2006	\$220	\$75	\$ _____
After July 15/At the door	\$250	\$75	\$ _____

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Below, please print legibly **your** name, and the names of all other registrants (including nicknames) as they are to appear on the registration badges. Please put a check in all appropriate boxes:

### Numbers of Participants/Length of Registration

# Adults \_\_\_\_\_ # Adults \_\_\_\_\_ Total No. of Days: \_\_\_\_\_  
Full: \_\_\_\_\_ Daily: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Special Room Rates:** Room rates at the Hyatt Regency are only \$99 single or double. Children 17 years and under stay free with parents. Rates do not include room tax. A special block of rooms has been set aside for NPSC attendees. Rooms are subject to availability after the entire block is sold or after the block expires on **June 26, 2006**. **RESERVATION REQUESTS RECEIVED AFTER THE CUT-OFF DATE WILL BE BASED ON AVAILABILITY AT THE HOTEL'S PREVAILING RATES.** To reserve a room, phone ~~800-633-7313 or 504-561-1234~~ and say that you're reserving under NPSC. Remember, make your reservation by June 26, 2006 or earlier if possible.

Check Box if First NPSC	Full Name Badge Name	If Full Convention-Leave Blank If Daily- Circle Below TU W TH F S	Check all that apply											
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**REFUND POLICY:** If you register in advance and later find that you have to cancel — any time prior to convention — all money prepaid will be refunded except for a 15% processing fee per registered person.

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really recent for us." Abt estimates that, at least at his store, women are the driving factor in flat-screen purchases about 60 percent of the time. He says that compares with only about 15 percent of the time a few years ago.

**Women rank the importance of each in CE products:**

Functionality	51%
Durability	23%
Ease-of-use	21%
Style/design	5%

Source: CEA Market Research

**Catering to Women**

Such trends are forcing retailers and manufacturers to take notice. Major national retailer Best Buy, for example, recently started testing a new store concept called Studio D. The stores are smaller (3,500 to 5,000 square feet), feature fewer products and emphasize a more personal and intimate shopping experience. "It's more like a Starbucks or Barnes & Noble than a Best Buy," says Chung. "Even if it doesn't pan out, they will have learned a ton about their female customers."

At Studio D, retail associates walk customers through products and encourage browsing that can take hours. Customers can attend demonstrations and training sessions that emphasize lifestyle enhancements rather than technical jargon. In October 2004, Best Buy also launched a separate \$50 million initiative to convert 68 stores in California to specialized outlets targeting high-growth customer segments. Twelve of the new stores are devoted to the "busy suburban moms" category. Executives hope the stores will yield customer data they can use to tweak sales tactics at its nearly 800 stores nationwide.

According to the experts, Best Buy has realized something important: women are just as interested in CE products as men—but for different reasons. "Don't talk about technology with women," says Lori Robinson, New York director of marketing communications for Hill & Knowlton. "It's not about megabytes or pixels. Don't talk about screen size. It's about features that relate to their lifestyle."

According to the experts, Best Buy has realized something important: women are just as interested in CE products as men—but for different reasons. "Don't talk about technology with women," says Lori Robinson, New York director of marketing communications for Hill & Knowlton. "It's not about megabytes or pixels. Don't talk about screen size. It's about features that relate to their lifestyle."

**Tailor It to Lifestyle**

For example, women may view a home theater system as a way to enhance the home environment rather than another powerful toy to brag about to friends (a key consideration for men, after all). "She is less interested in the product specs and more interested in how the products will enrich her life or her family's life," says Bonnie Ulman, founder of Marietta, Ga.-based The Haystack Group.

Campbell says many retailers go wrong from the start, choosing, for example, to demo home theater systems using only explosion-laden action movies rather than also showing movies more geared to

women. "You've got to create environments they're used to," she says. "That may mean demoing with chick flicks."

Campbell says retailers could even show daytime TV shows popular with women on the screens in their display windows or offer babysitting services. Why not schedule a showing of a kids' movie on one of the home theater systems so that the mom has time to fall in love with the product? "Women love music," she says. "They love theater. Who is typically in charge of the cultural life within a family and in the home? It's usually the mom. Show her the elegance and the ambience."

The trick for retailers is to highlight the aesthetic charm and simplicity generally more valued by women while wooing men with technical horsepower and performance. "Women are concerned with how the finished product will look and how it fits in with the decorating scheme," says Jon Robbins, chief operating officer at HiFi House, a chain of three high-end audio/video stores in the Philadelphia area. "With men, it's just the bigger the picture, the happier they are."

**Simplify My Life**

Indeed, while women may find aesthetics and style more important than men, that doesn't mean they aren't concerned with technology. It's just that

they want to understand the comprehensive benefits. "Women are much more results oriented," says Nancy Carr, vice

president of worldwide marketing for Kodak, which has years of experience focusing on female customers. "She has no desire to figure out software. It's about, 'Make my life simpler. I've got too much to do.' If you're results driven, you're going to design things to be much more intuitive."

Philips Electronics, which has long understood the importance of marketing to women, realized early on that flat-screen TVs were an opportunity to bridge the gender gap with style and technology. Recent ad campaigns feature both male and female actors watching flat-screens in impeccably decorated homes. "We saw it from the beginning," says Patrick Pondaven, Philips' director of product marketing. "There was an attraction of both men and women. Women immediately were attracted by the design and that it was thin."

Philips' Mirror TV technology, which allows a flat-screen TV to become a standard mirror when it's not in use, affects men and women differently. Men tend to ask about the technical specifications or how exactly it works, while "she just looks at it and says, 'When I turn it off, it's a mirror!'" says Andre Lalande, Philips' director of product strategy and planning.

**"Women are concerned with how the finished product ... fits in with the decorating scheme."**

**When women intend to purchase a product, they are most likely to:**

Browse before making the purchase	43%
Purchase the product and accessories	30%
Make the purchase quickly and leave	23%
None of the above	2%

Source: CEA Market Research

**Women who have not made a purchase because they were ignored or treated poorly by a salesperson:**

Yes:	65%
No:	20%
Yes, once:	11%
Don't know:	4%

Source: CEA Market Research

continued on page 12

# Your Minimum Credit Card Payments May Be Going Up!

Sheila Fredrickson,  
NESDA/ISCET Director  
of Communications &  
Information Technology

Do you pay off your full credit card balance every month? If you don't, you are not the only one. According to an online source, only about 40% of Americans do, leaving 60% that for whatever reason, do not.

Some credit card companies will be adjusting minimum payments from 2% to 4% of the total balance, which could double your payments. Because not all cards use a straight percentage to figure minimum payments, and may use a formula, the specifics may be different for you.

Not related to the bankruptcy laws that will take effect October 17, these changes are related to a series of events that actually occurred a couple of years ago. In 2003, federal banking regulators, including the Treasury Department's Office of the Comptroller of the Currency issued a new directive. Regulators were concerned that when credit card minimum payments were set too low, the payments that consumers made on their accounts barely covered the interest and fees on the cards and the prin-

cipal amount did not decrease very quickly. Regulators were concerned that the matter had gotten out of hand, because they want people to pay off their debt in a more reasonable period of time and cut the amount of interest that consumers pay.

According to an online source, it took banks and card issuers a while to deal with minimum payments because there were such broad implications.

The average consumer may or may not see a difference in their required minimum payment. At least one card issuer, Bank of America, raised its minimum payments last year from 2.2% on the balance to \$10 plus all fees and interest. At Citibank and MBNA, the new minimum will be 1% of the balance plus fees and interest.

What does this mean for you? First your balance should decrease much sooner because you will pay less interest. Second, your minimum payment may change and you may not like the new amount.

According to the card issuers we spoke with (Discover and Citibank), consumers

will be notified by mail with a new Cardmember Agreement if their terms change. These agreements typically come as a small brochure containing information that your terms are about to change. If you want to accept the new terms, and continue to use the card, you generally don't have to do anything. If you don't want to accept the new terms, you will need to cease using the card before the deadline date mentioned.

A real problem is that many consumers ignore these notices when they receive them, or don't read them, because they typically are confusing, contain a lot of small print and are written in "legalese." Sometimes, if you have more than one card, you can't tell which card is involved and even a phone call may not resolve it.

The only thing you can do now is to pay down your balances as quickly as possible, watch for these notices in the mail, and make a case-by-case decision on whether to stay with the cards. If you don't want to stay with the ones you have, you can consider a balance transfer to another card. ■

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Mirror TV also allows someone to watch a program in the corner while still using the rest of the mirror for other things.

Campbell says women appreciate such innovations because they create a direct benefit. "It's just brilliant that I can watch Katie Couric as I'm applying my mascara," she says.

In a similar push, Philips has been marketing its Amblight technology, which projects a tinted glow of light behind and around a flat-screen television—helping to integrate it into the chosen décor of the home (the light hue also can change based on the content showing on the display). Such features can help coax an otherwise skeptical buyer to make the purchase. "What might be missing is, 'How will the TV fit in with my interior?'" says Pondaven.

More than ever, technology companies are working to find feature sets that equally excite men and women. In the growing field of home automation, for example, men may like the science-fiction element as well as the feeling of power that comes with centrally controlling electronics all over the

house. Women, however, often worry about whether such systems will be too complicated or not work well.

"Women are intrigued by technology, but they're suspicious of it," says Mark Morgan, founder and vice president of marketing at home automation vendor Control4. "They're interested in whether this is really easy-to-use."

So the home-automation pitch for men might focus more on enhancements to the home theater system, while lighting or security systems might be a more appropriate starting point when pitching the product to women. "It all depends on what your hot button is," says Morgan.

Of course, experts also emphasize that women's desire for simplicity and elegance doesn't mean they want superficially enhanced products. "The breakdown occurs when people think they can put a pink cover on it or a cup holder on it and be done," says Paul Rand, director of Ketchum's global technology practice.

Women want features that help them achieve their goals—whatever they are. And experts note that women often heavily

research CE products before they enter the showroom in order to fully understand how they work.

"They just do it differently than men," says Robinson, who has helped companies ranging from Intel to Pioneer to Panasonic improve marketing to women. She says women enter retail outlets "looking for a lot of information and a confirmation of what they have learned." The problem is that salespeople sometimes fail to listen or to ask the right questions.

Part of the solution also may be for stores to hire more female sales associates. Campbell, who teaches a course about selling CE products to women for corporate clientele, says the question comes a lot. "Recruiting that talent is the next best step," she says. "You can't wait for it to walk in the door."

Whether it's through hiring more female salespeople, offering more elegant products or cultivating more inviting shopping experiences, one thing is clear: The industry is finally showing that it cares what women want. And for female customers who may have felt neglected in the past, it's not a moment too soon. ■

# The Passing Parade: ISCET News & Views



Feel the  
Power of  
ISCET  
Certification  
and  
Learning

by Ed Clingman, ISCET  
Administrator



Rita, both ladies of Mother Nature's furor and certain to be the object of focus for many Americans for some time to come. As is usually the case when mankind becomes entangled with nature's forces, there is much moaning and gnashing of teeth, but there are always advances made in the progression of man's struggle to survive and attain betterment.

In today's struggles, it can only be hoped that the lessons learned will allow both our governments and ourselves to better understand the needs, both physical and mental, of persons thrust into threatening positions not of their choosing, but from which it is impossible to escape without help from caring individuals. The gesture of the outstretched hand represents one of man's most admirable emotions, whether it is as an individual, a group or a government. In a society organized with such intricate complexity as our present-day governments, societies and economics these lessons to be learned vary according to the positions we hold in these structures. We must, as mankind, better learn to assess our roles in meeting the needs of others, as well as to assess our abilities to meet our own needs by planning for those eventualities that can be deemed inevitable. To rely on the ability of others to meet all of our own needs can be the root of catastrophe.

So then, let us endeavor to not only meet the needs of others in harm's way, but to help ourselves meet our own needs as best we can.

## ONLINE LEARNING

The first **CET Prep Course** was held online for those preparing to take the ISCET Associate CET examination. The **CSM Prep Course**, for Certified Service Managers, is being completed and

should be available in early 2006. Both courses are given in Virtual Classroom format only, and include self-study material as well as vouchers for the examination. For more information call 800-946-0201, or e-mail to [info@iscet.org](mailto:info@iscet.org). If your employer is considering becoming a Certified Service Center (CSC), then you should consider being one of the required certified electronics technicians. The CET Prep Course is intended for those technicians that have education and experience in electronics, but just need a review to "brush" the cobwebs out their memory concerning formulas and basic electronic theory.

Both the Electronics Learning Courses (Associate level) and the Telecommunications-I Virtual Classroom courses are currently accepting registrants for classes beginning soon. For a complete listing of courses available in Self Study and Virtual Classroom format, go to [www.iscet.org](http://www.iscet.org).

ISCET's commitment to provide educational opportunities for those electronics disciplines in which certification is offered has met with general acceptance. Thousands of interested electronics buffs, students and wanna-be technicians view our material on Google. Self Study material has been very popular. This includes Study Guides and Practice Tests. Additional material is being prepared and should be ready by year's end.

## ONLINE TESTING

Online Testing is currently being enhanced and should be ready for movement to the Testing and Learning server very soon. This form of testing is popular with schools that have testing centers or laboratories where a variety of testing formats occurs.

## THE NEW "CAnet"

In order to provide a more rapid manner of communication with the large group of CAs (Certification Administrators) offering ISCET testing, the new **CAnet** has been established. It is now possible to communicate with all of the CAs as a group through the addition of their email addresses to the CAnet list. This will help with the rapid dissemination of information, which could deal with the status of the Testing & Learning Systems, for example. CAs can communicate easily by addressing their messages to [CAnet@iscet.org](mailto:CAnet@iscet.org). That message will be delivered to three (3) people at ISCET and will be answered by the person that has the best information con-

continued on page 15

## Diversity, continued from p. 5

ment community will continue to be challenged to develop cool new features that will escalate the love affair consumers are having with the electronics industry. Developers must achieve this by exploiting different hardware features offered by system developers and leveraging their past development experience to learn new engineering techniques that keep each platform unique.

While convergence remains a utopic consideration, divergence is increasingly becoming the norm. At ISCET, this degree of divergence is a great thing, challenging us to develop new programs that enable technicians and service engineers to perform their best as required for installation and service of these new products. We embrace divergence and realize "it's here to stay!" ■

cerning the message received. If you are a CA and have not received the "Welcome" message, we may not have your address, or the address may no longer correct, or there is a mistake in the way your address was entered.

Commencing in December 2005, we will publish the quarterly "CA Communicator" every 3 months (March, June, September and December) on the net in the CA section. This will give all CAs an opportunity to keep abreast of the news about testing and learning. ISCET depends on its CAs to keep the wheels turning. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

### FCC EXAMINATIONS

For the year ending July, 2005, FCC testing was up 10% from 2004 at the same time. We have given examinations as far away as South Korea and Alaska using the Online Testing System. A large proportion of the FCC testing that we do comes from individuals responding to our Google advertising.

### NASTeC

We are considering a newsletter for NASTeC certificate holders that will talk about the Appliance Service industry, its problems, news and happenings to keep servicers abreast of the industry. If you have any ideas about this, contact [ed@iscet.org](mailto:ed@iscet.org) or call 800-946-0201 and ask for Ed, avail-

able 24/7.

There a couple of new programs being developed that will put ISCET ahead; more information later.

### STUDENT CHAPTERS

There are now over 20 Student Chapters under the ISCET umbrella. New programs will be announced very soon that will put the ISCET Student Chapters in a league all their own. One goal of the program is to be able to communicate with all members of the Chapters. David Bates, one of ISCET's directors and chairman of the committee that oversees the Student Chapters, along with staff member Mary Margaret Bauer are putting this program together. If you have any input about what you think, contact them NOW. Mr. Bates can be reached by e-mail at [batesd@wwtc.edu](mailto:batesd@wwtc.edu). Mary Margaret is available at [marymargaret@nesda.com](mailto:marymargaret@nesda.com), or by calling 800-946-0201 during office hours.

### ABOUT ISCET

There is a whole new ideology entering the academics of electronics. More and more we find that electronics courses are designed to meet the requirements of the available job market in a particular geographic area surrounding the classroom. Teachers are consulting with local business leaders to ascertain what kind of persons

they are hiring in the electronics field. While it is still true that electronics theory forms the basis of every electronics technician, it is not true that all knowledge of electronics is necessary to each of the many specialized fields. This is demonstrated again by the article written by our new President, "C.W." Villademoros, PhD, CET, whose article appears in this issue of ProService.

The example provided by Dr. Villademoros is that of the Electronic Entertainment, or games, if you will. This segment of electronics has grown to gigantic proportions, and although ISCET does not directly interact with that industry, the principle of diversity is quite evident.

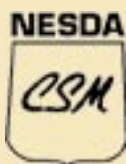
ISCET's new series of certification and learning, the Electronics Systems Associate (ESA) is built for just such diversity, allowing the instructor to pick and choose amongst very basic and advanced electronics so that the required type of training can be offered and tested. At the completion of five specific courses, students should then be able to pass the Associate CET exam. For those not taking the entire five courses (this may begin in secondary levels and complete in post secondary levels), they have a specific area of electronics to their credit. These courses are being taught right now, and testing has occurred with eager acceptance by instructors, administrators and students alike. ■

## Available NOW!

### CET Prep Course



### CSM Study Course



*Both the Certified Electronics Technician (CET) Prep Course and the Certified Service Manager (CSM) Study Course are available to you online: A complete online classroom with live instructor. Full audio between instructor and students.*

- **CET Prep Course** – a 6 hour course: 1 hour each Tuesday & Thursday evening for 3 weeks. The computerized Study Guide and Practice Test disc for the Associate CET Exam is included, as well as a voucher for taking for the Associate CET Exam, valued at \$92.95. The instructor-led CET Prep Course can be yours for \$225.
- **CSM Study Course** – a full 4 to 6 hour course over 2 to 3 weeks: 1 hour each Tuesday and Thursday evening. Length of the course depends on student participation and question generation. Get answers to your questions. Complete with printed CSM Study Guide for \$185 (10% discount to NESDA members).

**Classes forming NOW for September Start Dates**  
**Call 800-946-0201 for information and enrollment.**

**International Society of Certified Electronics Technicians**  
**3608 Pershing Ave., Ft. Worth TX 76107**  
**800-946-0201; 817-921-9061**



# Clancy Harms...

## A promise is a promise



By Walt Herrin,  
Director, National  
Service Division,  
Hitachi

In his own words, Clancy and I were "Best Buds". In his world, that placed our relationship at a significantly higher level, both emotionally and intellectually, than "best friends", and required a considerable investment in time. I had the last of hundreds

Well, Clancy came to San Diego for the Executive Service Conference and was thrilled. He arrived a day early, left a day late, our schedule was in shambles, and everyone here at Hitachi National Service fell in love with Clancy Harms. Our Japanese executive management paid him the highest possible tribute:

"Clancy is very honest man."

I also saw San Diego for the first time in 3 years... through Clancy's eyes. "This is GREAT! This is so GREAT!"

I had given each of the delegates both my home and cell phone numbers on a business card in case of emergency during their stay. Clancy immediately programmed both numbers into his speed dial. That was the second defining moment in our friend-

But I came to look forward to those calls as a pleasant diversion. I would never let Clancy know that, of course... he enjoyed the thought of aggravating me too much.

The next year he came to San Diego again... for Thanksgiving, on his own. My furnishings being somewhat sparse, I had to buy a bed for the extra room. We christened it the "Clancy Harms Memorial Bed". Clancy is the only one who's ever slept in that bed... most likely the only one who ever will.

We discussed many and varied things that Thanksgiving, including Clancy's future plans. He said "I wanna be you." I told him, "Well, that job's already been taken, Clancy."

At a subsequent NPSC Convention, as I was about to leave and discarded my name

of telephone conversations with Clancy on the occasion of my birthday, September 5, 2005. At some point during the discussion of many topics (typically, a phone conversation between Clancy and I was a little like playing ping-pong without a paddle) he asked me to write his eulogy. I answered with some flippant remark, and he repeated the request. I told him he was being ridiculous. He became insistent. So I promised that, should the time ever arise and I was not too old to hold a pen, I would comply with his request. That was the last thing he ever asked me to do for him. A promise is a promise . . .

I met Clancy about five years ago in Peoria, IL. He had volunteered to participate in Hitachi's Executive Service Conference the year before and lost due to a coin toss. I personally phoned him both to thank him and to assure him that he would have a place at the Conference in 2001. Arriving in Peoria that same year, Bill Warren pointed him out to me and, quite frankly, I had visualized him in my mind as someone else.

Clancy crossed the room with an outstretched arm, and announced with his usual big laugh, "Hi, I'm Clancy Harms!" And I said, "No, you're not. Clancy has salt and pepper hair, a crew cut, he's taller than you and a lot better lookin'." I told him that, since he was not who I thought he was, that I was going to take back the invitation to San Diego. He reminded me that a promise is a promise... That was the first defining moment in our friendship.



ship.

I'm not sure exactly when the phone calls began, but they were relentless. In meetings, at dinner, out of town, Clancy would always start the conversation with "Let me tell you about my day!" On one occasion I told him, truthfully: "Clancy, I had surgery this afternoon, the anesthetic is wearing off, and I'm not at all interested in your day right now." Pressing on he said, "You think THAT'S bad, let me tell you about MY day." He was unstoppable.

badge, Clancy retrieved it and wrote "Jr." next to "Walt", wearing it throughout the final moments of the Convention. I, of course, pretended to be aggravated. In reality, I was flattered. That's what best buds do, I suppose.

That was the eve of his divorce, and he was devastated. We tried to deal with that, he and I, in many subsequent conver-

sations. Shortly after, NESDA realigned their regions, and he was ousted as a Director and removed from the NESDA board. Another devastating event in his life. He began to withdraw. Through many conversations, we dealt with the politics of organizations. Nothing personal, just business...

the way life works, sometimes. He expressed the desire to be known ... to be appreciated... to be respected... to be loved... and, once again, to be me.

Prior to the NPSC Convention in Reno, I

## In Memoriam

Harms, Thomas 'Clancy,' in St. Peters, MO, September 25, 2005, age 49.

Devoted father of Courtney Harms; brother of Patricia Nagel, Janice Courtney, Fredrick Harms (Tary), Sharon Dillaha (Dan), M. Rosalind Kafoury and Dulany Harms; son of the late Marvin G. and M. Rosalind Harms; he was a dear uncle, cousin, nephew and friend to all.



Clancy was a lover of St. Patrick's Day and all that it entails. He will be missed by all. Services were held at the Baue Funeral and Memorial Center in St. Charles, MO. Memorials may be made to the Family for Courtney (checks payable to Sharon Dillaha). ■

promised to help, should he agree. I asked, "Do you trust me?"

He answered "Yes". I told him, "What I am about to do will make Clancy Harms a household word within the Industry. It's my hope that it will give you all the things you asked for... what you do with this notoriety is entirely up to you." My intent was to try to rebuild a broken man... the least I could do for a "best bud".

And the saga of Clancy Harms began. I told the story of our relationship... the phone calls, interrupted meetings, cold suppers (he always seemed to call during Dinner). He loved being in the spotlight... he loved the fact that everyone knew the extent of my pretended "aggravation"... and that he was the cause.

I raffled him off that year. George Brownyard won him. In Nashville, the following year, I had nothing prepared in the way of a presentation, so I winged it. With Clancy at my side. I told the story of the Cowboy hat from the year before, and then I gave Clancy away... to Joe Sopko. We had fun. The audience seemed to love it. Clancy definitely loved it.

Clancy joined me again for Thanksgiving last year. He was sitting outside baggage claim when I arrived at the airport, smoking a cigarette. His hands were shaking. We were at the beginning of a journey to Arizona that would culminate in a Thanksgiving dinner at the "El Tovar" Hotel, perched on the rim of the Grand Canyon. Our base of operations would be "my" special small town, Prescott (pronounced Preskitt), AZ.

The first night, we dined at the old "Palace Saloon", on Whiskey Row. Having been to Prescott many times, seeing it through Clancy's eyes was special. He loved a sauce that was served with their Onion Rings, and, being Clancy, asked the waiter if he could have the recipe. Being Prescott, the waiter returned in five minutes with a folded piece of paper in the Chef's handwriting, which Clancy proceeded to read out loud... 8 gallons of mayonnaise, 3 quarts of mustard, a pint of horseradish..."

Three feet of snow was on the ground when we arrived at the Grand Canyon. Again,

seeing it through Clancy's eyes was like seeing it for the first time. "This is GREAT!", he said. "This is so GREAT!" Yes... it was.

What goes around, comes around. I last saw Clancy where I saw him first. In Peoria, IL. Attendees at the Midwest Conference asked me, "What are you going to do to Clancy tonight?" Sadly, nothing. Schedules being schedules, there was no opportunity afforded for me to speak at the banquet. The next day, Clancy and I had an hour of privacy in the Hotel lobby, just before he left. As usual, we discussed many things, including his health. He looked tired. He had lost weight. I pleaded with him to take care of himself. He agreed to see a Doctor.

He stopped calling. I called him. "I'm fine!", he said, laughing. I knew better. "I can't come to the Convention this year", he said. "Financial problems," he said. "If anyone asks, it's nothing more than financial problems. Promise me you'll tell them that." I did. A promise is a promise...

Sam Sieben suggested that those who were doing well should finance those who are not doing well, so that they could attend the Convention. God bless you, Sam. If only you knew...

So it was, at the same Hotel in Orlando that Clancy dubbed himself "Walt, Jr."... during the Breakfast on Saturday morning... I took Clancy back. I had no idea that, very soon, he would be taken from ME... for good. At my request, the NESDA staff had provided an "official" name badge for Clancy reading... "Walt, Jr."... It was sent to him.

**continued on p. 19**

## Classified Ads

### Business for Sale

**GREAT OPPORTUNITY** — Having served the entire Delmarva Peninsular for the past 43 years, we have decided to offer our lucrative business to the right person. We are the largest service center with the unique position of not having to deal with competition. Only the most serious of persons need inquire. It will be a turnkey operation. (vehicles, test equipment, inventory and staff). Contact: Al Moses, CET, **ALS TV SERVICE CENTER**, Dover, DE; 302-736-3816 (business); 302-653-5648 (home); 302-242-8723 (cell). **1005**

### For Sale

**To All NESDA members:** Needles and Cartridges available for NESDA members at dealer pricing. Over 1000 needles in stock and 500 cartridges. Extensive cross reference data by model, cartridge or needle numbers. Resources available to get hard to find discontinued types. — Hal Robbins CET/CSM, NESDA Life Member, Hal Robbins Etc, 4872 Topanga Canyon Blvd. #220, Woodland Hills, CA 91364; 818-887-2655 phone / fax; email: halr2@att.net **1005**

### Help for Hurricane Victims

Norman's Electronics, located in the metro Atlanta,

GA-area, is participating in a fund which has been set-up by NSA to help Gerry McCann in New Orleans (who has lost both his business and his home) as well as other NESDA members who may have suffered similar loss. This is a time to put all "politics" aside, and help our fellow "brothers and sisters."

After a conversation with Kurt Dodgers, we both agreed to kick off the fund with \$1000.00 each. Doug Freeman of Marvin's in Jacksonville, and Rob Steinruck of CEI in Raleigh, NC also agreed to kick in \$1000 each.

If you can help, please do. The amount is not as important as your willingness to help others. Whatever you can do to help within your own means will be sincerely appreciated by those in need. If you can help, funds can be donated by sending a check to: **McCann/NESDA Member Relief Fund**, 6651 S. State St., Salt Lake City, UT 84107; Or by wiring funds to: **McCann/NESDA Member Relief Fund**, Zions National Bank, Routing/Transit Number: 124000054; Account Number: 547326959

Help if you can, and even of you can't keep all of these folks in your prayers. Sincerely, Lane H. Norman, President; NEI After-Sale Solutions, 5669 New Peachtree Rd., Chamblee, GA 30341; 770-452-9890, x211; FAX: 770-452-1237; Cell: 770-851-5057; email LaneNorman@neiusa.com **1005**

I will donate a set of Zenith television paper manuals

J line through Z line plus a few newer, and a set of NAP manuals TV, PTV, Audio, Camcorder, VCR from the old days up to Force (1999?). Free for shipping charges to anyone in either hurricane. If someone wanted to buy them I would also donate the money, but I think hurricane damages ought to get first crack at them.

— Tom Brucker CSM, Hi Tech Service, 2934 Nolensville Rd., Nashville, TN 37211; 615.331.9250; fax 615.831.3165; email: hitech77@earthlink.net **1005**

### Temporary Help for Hurricane Victims

After much discussion, it was decided that those seeking temporary jobs, as well as those who may have temporary jobs to offer to persons displaced by hurricanes this year may visit the ISCET Career Center online at [http://www.jobtarget.com/home/index.cfm?site\\_id=112](http://www.jobtarget.com/home/index.cfm?site_id=112). Employers who would like to help may enter your listings for free. **1005**

**Send your classified ads to Editor@nesda.com, published at no charge to NESDA/ISCET members. Please be sure to cancel your ad when your needs are met. — Thanks!**



**Ed Clingman**  
**IS CET**  
**Administrator**

## What Are We Thinking About?

First, let it be said that this is in no way a political endeavor... Whether you are a Democrat, Republican, Whig, Right Wing, Middle Ground Conservative, etc., it makes not a whit of difference. There are, believe it or not, truths that transcend the murky pool of politics.

When most of us were in our education years, we learned (were told) what a Democracy was, and how the Constitution protected us from all sorts of malfeasance... and that the government had three basic parts (Legislative, Judicial and Executive). Many names were tossed into the air such as Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson, to name a few, as well as mentions of great politicians and jurors. When we saw pictures of these they were always in somewhat reverent poses, stiff backed as though they were grown on large vines that had left straight sticks for backbones.

As our education trickled down to the machinery of the government, we learned that the Supreme Court was composed of nine very smart and fair men that kept reins on the other two branches to see that the Constitution was followed, to the letter. In these pictures we saw of Supreme Court Justices we were supposed to see the great objectivity of these learned men, their experience at coping with scoundrels that would toy with taking liberties with our citizen's rights, and slay the demons before they could slay us.

If no other trait was historically placed in these men, it was the trait of objectivity. They were known for their ability to hear arguments by other learned men concerning various stands on the matters of our freedom(s), and the needs of the individual as well as mankind collectively, the theory being that with nine such men, a majority decision was a guarantee that right would prevail.

So, now, today we are faced with the awesome spectacle of our legislative branch demanding that the naming of these men be predicated upon what they might believe on cases and issues that have not yet been presented, or cases to undo previous rulings so that wrongs might be corrected. Make no mistake, wrongs will prevail in some instances, and rights to correct such wrongs might be necessary, but to appoint on the basis of prejudged issues is as wrong as appointing on the basis of race or creed. When our legislators feel not only free, but committed to appoint only those that agree with a certain dogma relating to the legislators personal convictions will

certainly lead, in the end, to the appointment of the Wolf in Sheep's clothing, that person who will testify to his beliefs in one direction, only to achieve a path in a totally different direction. This could be the only way in which objectivity could prevail.

If you were a lawyer picking a juror in a civil matter, could you ask the jurors, after presenting a synopsis of the issues how they would vote, and picking only those that voted as you would have them vote. NO would not be allowed, and understandably so.

Why, then, would we think that our legislators would be allowed to pick only those judges that would pledge to vote in their favor if appointed? Why do we even allow such questioning to prevail?

Judgments concerning the appointment of judges should be considered on basis other than their pledges to vote in a specific manner in specific areas. Such judgments should be made on the basis of ability, experience and yes the judge's ability to discern facts in a fair and objective manner.

Think about it, which will get us in deep trouble the most rapidly, the unconsidered verdict to satisfy political promise, or the verdict that is that product of the judges mind that is arrived by objective reasoning, coupled with mercy and humanism.

Several other things are a matter of law where appointing Justices to the Supreme Court. Among these are Lifetime Appointment, Freedom from Arrest (Article II Section 4 of the Constitution of the United States), and can be removed by resignation, death or impeachment (which must be held in the U.S. Congress), and generous compensation and lifetime packages of support. All were intended to give the Judges freedom from political pressures. Why then would we allow legislators and members of the Executive branch of government to wave this huge ax of securing pledges to vote in a certain manner on a given field of thought?

Think about it! It's your rights that could very well be next on the chopping block. Any ill-founded incursion on your neighbors' rights is also an incursion on your rights.

Consider this in your next conversation with yourself. Think hard about the fragility of your basic rights in this country. Respect those that respect the other person's rights as he respects his own. ■

*\* With the exception of official announcements, the statements and opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the associations.*

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**It's your rights  
that could very  
well be next on  
the chopping  
block.**

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I gave everyone his telephone number, and asked them to call (preferably during the dinner hour) and tell him how much we missed him at the Convention. From the podium, I could see the audience copying the number, some programming the number into their cell phones. George Weiss called FROM the Breakfast. (God bless you, George).

A couple of hours later, waiting for my plane, Clancy calls: "Let me tell you about my day!", he says. He had received 25 telephone calls, and around 50 voice mails. (God bless you, NESDA).

It was on a Sunday, around 7:30 PM, Pacific Time, when I received the call that Clancy was no longer with us. I was having Dinner. Even in death, Clancy's

timing was impeccable. At 2:00 AM the following morning, I called his cell phone... Just to hear his voice. "This is Clancy, of Dick's Radio and TV..." I didn't leave a message.

A dear friend told me, "Sadly, I removed Clancy from my e-mail address book today." My response? "Not me... I'm just waiting for an updated address." And each time my cell phone rings, during a meeting, lunch, dinner, whatever... I expect to answer and hear, "Let me tell you about my day! It was my last one and, boy, was it a humdinger."

Yes, it was. Rest easy, my friend... my "Best Bud"... rest easy. So this is the eulogy of Clancy Harms, written the way I think he would have wanted it written. 'Cause a promise... is a promise. ■

continued from page 19

ment community will continue to be challenged to develop cool new features that will escalate the love affair consumers are having with the electronics industry. Developers must achieve this by exploiting different hardware features offered by system

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divergence is a great thing, challenging us to develop new programs that enable technicians and service engineers to perform their best as required for installation and service of these new products. We embrace divergence and realize "it's here to stay!" ■



# Online Learning from IS CET

**ONLINE LEARNING – Both Self Study & Virtual Classroom (scheduled classes - live Instructors) Two-way audio via VoIP. Graphical exchange lets students see whiteboard and lesson material.**

- Basic Electronics – Associate CET Study Material • Telecommunications

***Study Guides & Practice Tests available online***

- Industrial Electronics
- Computer Electronics
- Radar Electronics

**All you need is Internet access and a desire to learn.**

*If you have any questions contact IS CET at*

**800-946-0201, ext. 19; or email: [testing@iscet.org](mailto:testing@iscet.org).**

# First City-wide Availability of Broadband Over Powerline (BOP) in the U.S. Delivered

The 37,000-person Washington, D.C. suburb of Manassas, Virginia, is now home to a major national success story in broadband access: the first city-wide commercial deployment of broadband-over-powerline (BPL) technology anywhere in the United States, according to Communication Technologies, Inc. (COMTek), the Chantilly, Va.-based "Inc. 500" company that owns and operates the BPL network in Manassas. BPL technology uses the electricity grid in a city and the wiring in individual homes to provide direct "plug in" broadband access through electricity sockets, rather than over phone or cable TV lines.

COMTek said that the roughly 12,500 households in Manassas now are within the reach of its BPL network and that commercial services are available throughout the city to 2,500 businesses on an on-demand basis. COMTek already has an estimated 700 customers in Manassas, with another 500 requests for service now being processed. In addition to Manassas, COMTek is in negotiations to deliver similar services for nine other investor-owned utilities, municipal-owned utilities, and other entities.

COMTek Founder and CEO Joseph E. Fergus said: "This is truly a historic day for COMTek, which is the U.S. leader in broadband over powerline services. The major national technology milestone that we are announcing today with the City of Manassas is the most eloquent possible expression of our commitment to grow the BPL category of broadband access. Make no mistake about it: What we are announcing today in Manassas is something that we could be rolling out in a year or two from now in literally scores of communities across the U.S. The Manassas experiment is a good thing for every American who lives in any city or town with little or no access to affordable broadband."

City of Manassas Mayor Douglas Waldron said: "Manassas resolved to move forward with broadband over powerline as a major enhancement of what our city-owned utility provides to its customers. COMTek accepted the challenge of working with us by building a BPL network that would serve all of our citizens. This has proven to be an extraordinarily positive and results-oriented partnership in which every citizen of Manassas can take pride. We have accomplished something here that will be a model for other cities and towns across the United States."

Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA) said: "Congress is looking closely at ways to improve broadband access in rural and other non-urban settings and that is why I am so encouraged by the Manassas success with broadband over powerline. The City of Manassas and COMTek are to be applauded for their leadership roles in pioneering access in a way that has never been achieved anywhere else in the United States. Now, the challenge before us is to make this same

sort of success story blossom across the nation."

American Public Power Association President and CEO Mr. Alan H. Richardson said: "The American Public Power Association's member-supported Demonstration of Energy-Efficient Developments (DEED) program provided a grant in 2001 to the City of Manassas for the initial investigation of how BPL could provide Internet access to consumers and businesses, while enhancing the efficiency and reliability of the electric utility. The City of Manassas has led the way for many other community-owned electric utilities. Its successful deployment and 'lessons learned' will help other public power communities evaluate the communications and utility opportunities of this technology."

In July 2004, the City of Manassas selected COMTek to provide BPL services over the city's electric system. COMTek owns and operates the BPL network and also serves as the ISP, providing email and Web hosting services for customers. COMTek signs up and services the needs of Manassas customers. The City of Manassas provides utility staff to install BPL couplers and repeaters and to maintain the fiber connections that link COMTek servers and routers to the power lines. The city receives a portion of subscriber revenues to offset the manpower and equipment resources that they contribute to the BPL services.

In addition to delivering broadband access to residential and commercial customers, COMTek has enabled the Manassas utility to save money and respond more quickly in identifying outages at both the transformer and customer level, central control for traffic signals, and operating video surveillance systems at substations. The City is exploring opportunities to use BPL for other advanced utility applications such as automatic distribution switching, which would restore power more quickly to the grid after outages, and automated meter reading, which already is available on the Manassas network.

In February 2005, COMTek was identified as a national leader in broadband-over-powerline technology by a report from the New Millennium Research Council (NMRC). The report noted that trials and actual commercial deployments of BPL systems are on the rise, with over 20 projects in operation in 2004 and more expected to come online in 2005. Roughly a quarter million homes in the United States already had the opportunity to choose BPL services in 2004, according to NMRC.

Major investments in BPL technology have been announced in recent months by such major entities as Google, Hearst and Goldman Sachs. Both the White House and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) have highlighted BPL technology as an

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**"...the challenge before us is to make this same sort of success story blossom across the nation."**

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# New Bankruptcy Law by Dezann Korbuly

The Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act will go in to effect October 17, 2005. The new law will make it more difficult for those filing for bankruptcy, especially those filing under Chapter 7. There are new tougher requirements for proving one's inability to repay their debts, more documentation requirements, and new changes regarding credit card debt. The major changes are listed below:

## New Income Test Requirements for filing under Chapter 7

Debtors whose average monthly income for the last 60 months is greater than \$10,000 cannot file under Chapter 7.

- Debtor whose average monthly income is between \$6,000-10,000 may be able to file if net monthly income is less than 25% of all non-priority unsecured debts.
- Debtor whose average monthly income for the last 60 months is less than \$6,000 will most likely be able to file.

## Bankruptcy Filers

- Filers will have to complete 6 months of consumer credit counseling, and emerge with a payment plan. Then you may have to pay off the debt.

## Documentation Changes

- Tax returns and a projection of earnings will be required.
- Retirement asset statements will be reviewed.
- Educational account statements will be requested.

## Home-ownership issues

- Filers must live in their home for at least 40 months in order to use their state's homestead exemption, otherwise the maximum exemption is \$125,000.
- There is a new 10 year review period to determine whether any money or equity in a homestead was transferred with the intent to delay or defraud a creditor.

## Retirement Accounts

- Funds in a traditional or Roth IRA are exempt, if you're in bankruptcy, up to \$1 million.
- All funds in a qualified plan are still exempt.

## Education Accounts

- Money held in a Section 529 college savings plan or a Coverdell education savings account are only exempt if they were held for more than 2 years and the ben-

eficiary is a child, stepchild, grandchild, or step-grandchild.

## Credit Card debts

- The new law requires that credit card loans be repaid even after bankruptcy.
- Minimum monthly payments may only be calculated assuming a 10 yr payback instead of the current 20 yr period. That means that many card holders will find that their minimum monthly payments may double.
- If you are late on a payment, banks will be allowed to automatically jump your credit card interest rate to over 30%.

There are some areas of the new federal law that state law may override. Due to bankruptcy law complexity, debtors considering filing should consult a bankruptcy attorney in their state.

**Editor's Note:** The full text of this article appears on the website of Family Business Office, Inc. (FBO), a comprehensive planning firm located in Colleyville, Texas, about five miles from DFW International Airport. The firm specializes in dealing with the challenges and opportunities faced by family-owned businesses. FBO was founded in 1992 to apply the "family office" concept to closely-held businesses. Visit their website at <http://www.familybusinessoffice.net> for more information, or to contact them for your planning needs. ■

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important way to get broadband access to underserved portions of the nation.

## HOW BPL WORKS

Broadband over power line is the transmission of high-speed communications services, including Internet access, over the existing electric infrastructure using adaptive technologies. The wires that carry electricity, either on poles above ground or through underground pipes, possess the capacity to also serve as a conduit for data signals. These power lines are known as medium voltage, carrying between 1,000 and 32,000 volts of electricity and travel the distances between power substations and the customer's household or building. The electric lines that connect to a household or other building from the utility pole are known as low voltage, transmitting 120/240/480 volts.

By bundling radio-frequency (RF) energy on the same line with the electric current that is already carried, data can be transmitted without the need for a separate line. Since the electric current, which is used to provide power to the end users, and RF energy signals carrying the data operate at different frequencies (with electric current traveling at lower frequencies and data at higher levels), the two don't interfere with each other.

Technological advances in the past several years have enabled electric companies to place devices along existing wires and poles to provide broadband services. Known as Access BPL, the systems require a connection from the Internet backbone at a power substation, repeaters (in some cases) and couplers along the medium voltage power lines that transmit the data signals, and then a final converter that transfers the signal from the medium voltage to the low voltage lines that go into homes. Once inside the home, the signal can be accessed at any electrical outlet with a BPL modem.

## ABOUT COMTek

Headquartered in Chantilly, VA, Communication Technologies, Inc. (<http://www.comtechnologies.com>) is a cutting-edge telecommunications, managed services and training company. As part of its worldwide broadband service, COMTek owns and operates in the City of Manassas, VA, what is the first commercial broadband over powerline network to be delivered in the United States on a city-wide basis. Founded in 1990, COMTek has rapidly grown to 900 employees in greater Washington, D.C. area and elsewhere in the United States.

For more information, contact Ailis Aaron, (703) 276-3265 or [aaaron@hastingsgroup.com](mailto:aaaron@hastingsgroup.com). ■

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Once inside the home, the signal can be accessed at any electrical outlet with a BPL modem.

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