

MESSENGER

Summer 2020



SILVER LININGS

By Jens Laipenieks CEO/General Manager

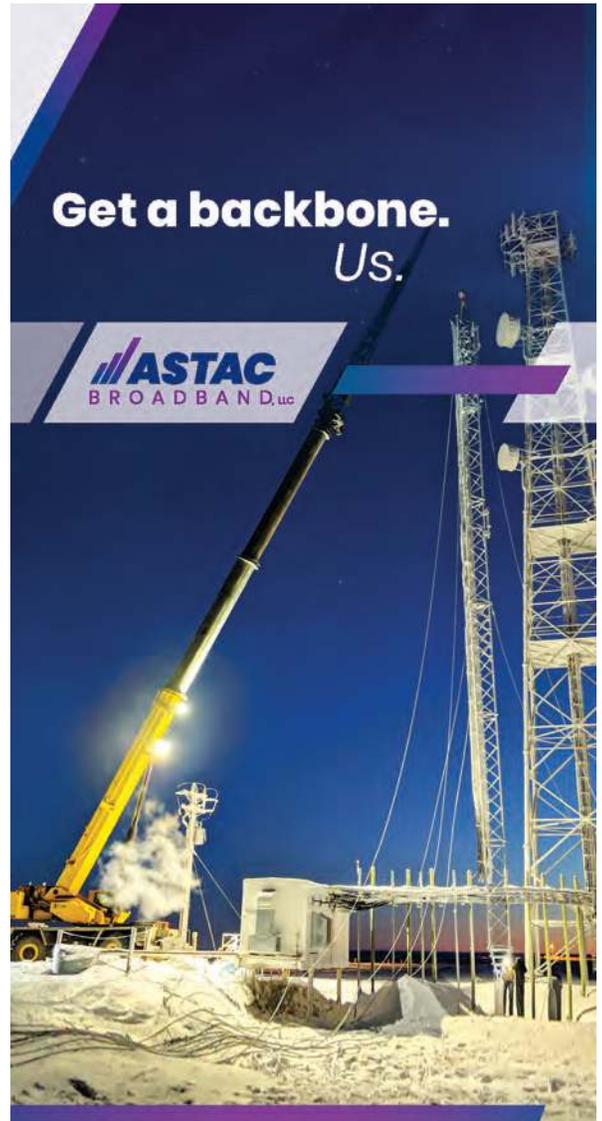


So many things have changed since our Spring Messenger was published. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted almost every aspect of ASTAC's operations and network. We began our impact and continuity planning in early March. On March 16, we decided to close the Anchorage office and our entire office moved to teleworking. In the same week, ASTAC's

field operations and Utqiġvik storefront staff began following our COVID-19 response plan to minimize customer interaction to ensure both customer and employee safety.

ASTAC was fortunate to be well prepared with modern tools for remote work and network access. Over the past few years, we had strategically invested to evolve our operations to cloud-based e-mail, intranet, file storage, video conferencing, and collaboration tools. About a year ago, we also enabled a mobile version of our primary back-office system, NISC, called AppSuite. These capabilities have allowed us to make the transition to remote work with almost no loss in production. In the days preceding the pandemic, we had just migrated to a new VPN platform with the capacity to support the mobilization of ASTAC's entire workforce. No one here at ASTAC predicted the coming of COVID-19 or of the far-reaching impacts on our business it would have. It's been a terrible few months watching the disease spread and the economic uncertainties grow on the horizon. If there is a silver lining, it is that of our stated goal of eliminating paper-driven processes and inefficiencies, driven by our strategic focus on automation and integration of systems, has been stress tested and proven effective.

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ANNUAL MEETINGS



The ASTAC Board of Directors has unanimously approved to postpone our Annual Meetings and Board of Director elections scheduled for July 6-10, 2020, due to the severe and unprecedented public health emergency facing the State of Alaska, ASTAC, and its members. A new date will be announced to members when conditions allow.

Questions or comments concerning our Annual Meetings should be directed to info@astac.net or by mail to ASTAC, 4300 B Street, Suite 501, Anchorage, Alaska 99503.

HEARING AID COMPATIBLE PHONES

Hearing aids do not always function well with wireless handsets. ASTAC has numerous handsets that have been tested and rated for use with hearing aids and it offers several price categories. ASTAC's sales staff is trained to assist customers looking for Hearing Aid Compatible (HAC) devices/handsets.

When choosing a phone, it's important to try the different features thoroughly and in various locations using your hearing aid or cochlear implant to determine if you hear interfering noise. Refer to our website for more details regarding HAC phones and their price ranges.

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My new normal has become days filled with WebEx meetings, instant messaging conversations, and e-signatures requests. And just like my household, there are thousands of you working from home relying on ASTAC's broadband networks to go to work, collaborate, complete schoolwork, shop, play games, and watch TV. The increased demand on the network is measurable, and we continue to actively monitor network health, manage capacity, and troubleshoot when problems arise. Given the increased demand, the ASTAC networks are performing well and the benefits of our past investments in fiber optics and modern infrastructure are apparent.

On a final note, the Annual Meetings, normally scheduled for mid-July, will be postponed until later in the year. We will continue to closely monitor the situation and plan accordingly. The safety of our employees, and you, our owner-members, are at the forefront of every decision we make.

Stay safe,

Jens

WELLNESS PROGRAM

ASTAC is celebrating 1 year of wellness this month! Last year, we started the program to engage and encourage employees to develop a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

In April and May we encouraged employees to participate in a 100 Miles challenge. This challenge

benefits many including Healthy Futures, an Alaska Sports Hall of Fame program that seeks to empower Alaska's youth to build the habit of daily physical activity. Many schools use the Healthy Futures "Play Every Day" fitness tracker sheet to log active minutes. Healthy Futures also supports events all across the state to get kids moving and teach them about the benefits of exercise - including in Nuiqsut. This fundraiser + spring time fitness challenge is a great opportunity for some friendly competition that benefits Alaskan students and your own health.

In mid-March we wrapped up ASTAC's Biggest Loser challenge. The 13 participants lost a collective 45.4 lbs!



UTQIAĠVIK ALASKA AIRLINES TERMINAL



ASTAC upgraded its Wi-Fi service at the Wiley Post-Will Rogers Memorial Airport on March 20 in Utqiagvik. Travelers will have access to a free high-speed Wi-Fi connection during airport operating hours.

ASTAC WINS USDA GRANT TO BUILD OUT FIBER TO ATQASUK



ASTAC has been successful with our recent grant submissions to help us further reach our goal - to connect all of the nine ASTAC markets to high-quality terrestrially served broadband and help close the digital opportunity gap between remote and urban Alaska.

We have been awarded \$3M in funding for a \$6.5M broadband project in Atqasuk through USDA's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Community Connect Grant Program which will be used to build a fiber optic extension and fiber to every home & business in Atqasuk. Nearly 70 miles of fiber will connect Atqasuk to Utqiagvik.

BATTERIES PLUS PARTNERSHIP

Our new partnership with Batteries Plus is just another way



to demonstrate our commitment to our members. ASTAC members will receive a 20% discount off any smartphone or tablet repair. ASTAC will provide packaging for you to mail your device to Batteries Plus located in Anchorage. If you need a loaner, just give us a call. Batteries Plus will not only repair your device but keep you posted throughout the process and mail your device back good as new. We at ASTAC stand by their work and have confidence that you will too. For more information contact your Customer Experience Team at 1-800-478-6409 and we will be happy to get you set up.

FREE SHIPPING

Did you know ASTAC offers free shipping ALL YEAR long? Call our Customer Experience Department at 1-800-478-6409 to place an order today!



Did you know you can be on the go and in control with SmartHub? It allows you to manage your account in a number of ways: view and pay your bill, monitor your wireless and Internet data usage, report service issues, receive key notices, and even vote for your board of director. The free app can be downloaded for both Apple and Android devices, as well as from your computer. Give our friendly Customer Experience Team a call to get set up today.

LIFELINE

Lifeline Service: Provides an individual fixed/mobile broadband or voice service residential line, 911 service, access to operator services, long-distance access (unless toll blocking is requested), and access to directory assistance. Under this enhanced plan, eligible customers will receive basic local service for \$0.00 per month.

Link-Up Assistance: Offers up to \$100.00 discount on applicable, new, non-recurring service connection charges.

Eligibility Requirements: A customer must fill out the Lifeline service and/or Link-Up Assistance application and participate in a qualified program, including proof of program participation or income to confirm eligibility. Contact our Customer Experience Team for assistance with eligibility requirements.

911 EMERGENCY NUMBERS, ALL LOCATIONS

For police and fire, call 911.

Notice: The 911 emergency number has been developed to quickly respond to crisis situations. Call 911 only when human life or property is in jeopardy.

ALASKA BUSINESS WEEK

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ASTAC must postpone hosting its first Alaska Business Week to June 2021. High school students (9th-12th grade) are encouraged to follow ASTAC's Facebook page and web site to register for this incredible event next year.

Alaska Business Week is a fun, intensive entrepreneurship experience for Alaska high school students. The week-long program teaches students the basics of business, leadership and entrepreneurship. Participants compete as teams in a dynamic business simulation with the guidance of adult mentors from the business community. After completing the program, students have a competitive edge on workplace readiness, college preparation and overall life success.



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Have you checked out ASTAC's Facebook page lately? We share lots of great information including local events, product overviews, troubleshooting tips, jobs, network outages and more. Like our page and stay up to date:
www.facebook.com/GoASTAC/



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