



risk management **MATTERS**

A Risk Management Newsletter for NTCA Members

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We Wish You Joy All Through

We wish you joy all through your holidays,
 We wish you good luck that forever stays.
 We wish you the love of family and friends,
 We wish you happy days that never ever ends.

...Merry Christmas to you!



*Chris Chris Eric Pete
 Joye Kim D. Beckie Jennifer
 Sue Gina Alan Todd Dan
 Kibwee Julie Janice
 michelle Wanjana*

Presidential Matters

By Peter J. Elliott, CPCU

The end of the year brings many things like changing seasons, holidays, and reflection on events that occurred during the year. It, also, brings the Telcom Insurance Group's traditional Holiday Issue of *Risk Management Matters*. Changing seasons and the holidays for some are stressors, but for most they are things to be excited about. I know everyday can't be filled with joy and that many faced challenges from this year that just can't be ignored, but maybe the holidays and your time spent with friends and family can bring you magical moments of happiness that will leave you with positive reflections of 2012.

As I reflect on 2012, I am very positive about what your Telcom Insurance Group has accomplished and where we are headed. I am writing this article on a day when my region is responding and recovering from Hurricane Sandy and the unprecedented damage she did to parts of the East Coast, including New York and New Jersey. I know that despite the fact that the Federal, Local Government, and most businesses in the area are closed today, my Staff and I are contacting our customers in the impacted area and making sure they know we are available if they need us for anything. It used to be the post office that delivered and neither rain, snow, sleet nor hail would stop them from their appointed rounds, but that is not true today, and I am ready to claim their mantra for Telcom Insurance Group because we are delivering today. This is just one example of why I am so positive about what we have accomplished and where we are headed. Also during the year, we enhanced coverage in our program by adding intellectual property defense protection, theft of services coverage, and CAN, SPAM, and COPPA fine expense reimbursement. We also enhanced our unbundled risk management and loss prevention services, which can be purchased by non-policyholders by improving our Teletracker Risk Audit Program. The Stay Connected Handset Replacement program changed to a more responsive repair vendor

and as of December 1st will be able to accept iPhones for coverage and repair. All of these things were improvements to existing products and programs, but as I stated I am still most proud of how we respond to claims, both the day-to-day type and those in times of disaster. This intangible is tough to put a value on, but based on a record year of new business production it appears that the telecommunications industry has noted and appreciates the way we deliver.

It has been a busy year but when the work involves helping our families, friends, and customers, it isn't tiring but instead energizing. The Staff at Telcom has the ability to shape your insurance experience and make a difference when it comes to your business operations. Our relationship with you, transcends the typical business affiliation most insurance providers have with their customers. Our business is built on a belief that we should earn your trust to be chosen to protect your business. We earn that trust by being there before, during, and after claims occur. That faith we gain provides us with credibility when we offer other programs and services that support the core property and casualty insurance that we began with. We do all of this by making it a priority to do the right thing regardless of the cost and when others do not deliver. We determine what the "right thing" is by focusing on treating people the way we would want to be treated if we were in their position. Our judgment is never clouded by the financial impact to the bottom-line. Partnerships, friendships, and families don't focus on only the financial impact of decisions, and we don't focus on these when it comes to how we treat you.

I said this last year but it bears repeating. Our role is to be the protectors of the people and the assets of the NTCA Membership; our Company was created by and for rural telecommunications companies. We feel a responsibility to do more than operate



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Presidential Matters

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an insurance business procedurally. Don't get me wrong, we are a "best business practices" company with respect to process and procedure, but there is so much more to building relationships than that. Processes and procedures are important, but there are times when they might miss the importance of the positive impact a company can have on a human being and the world in general. Insurance partnerships between insured and insurer are based upon trust and fulfillment of promises. Yes, there is a policy, which is a contract, to govern that promises are kept. But, is that what you want to rely on? The Staff and I believe that insuring NTCA members, is more than a contractual agreement or processing transactions and that our work revolves around protecting people who can be injured physically and emotionally by the stress of an accident. We recognize that when there is a loss, that the damage to assets are not always of the greatest concern, and the thing that matters most is carefully managing the human emotions that are generated by the accident. You have responded to our approach and given credibility to our beliefs, and in 2012 we enjoyed a remarkable retention of 96% of prior year policyholders. And there was an additional 13 NTCA members who joined as new customers because they appreciate what we offer. The more than 330 NTCA members that are part of our insurance program have affirmed our belief that an insurer, built on earning the trust of people by focusing on the human element and doing the right thing, could succeed in an industry where the decision of where to place coverage is too often driven by cost only.

We believe that trust needs to be earned and this does not happen overnight. The legacy that we have developed, which has developed over 30 years, is based on consistency. One major factor that allows for this consistency is the same ownership, NTCA Members and the Association, since our inception in 1982. There are 39 member telecommunications companies of the NTCA, as well as NTCA, that owns the company. Another influence has been maintaining an all encompassing approach of insuring all lines-of-business in all states and offering up to seven insurance markets to quote our insureds and provide multiple options, not just one when they desire to shop their insurance. Many of our competitors have come and gone since 1982. They have entered and exited states and product lines. There will be more that will do the same in the future, but we believe that when it is a matter of trust, the Telcom Insurance Group will always prove to be most trustworthy because of our significantly different business model.

As we enter the Holiday Season, once again I thank you for your support and wish you all much happiness and good health. With personal visits not always being possible, this newsletter is our best opportunity to wish all of you a happy, healthy, and prosperous season from our family to yours, we wish you the best!

"Our business is built on a belief that we should earn your trust..."

Safety Matters

By Marilyn A. Blake, AU, CRM

Fa La La La La

Holiday Party Facts You Should Know

As employers, we try to think of unique ways to show our employees that we appreciate them. One way that employers show their appreciation to employees is by providing office parties especially during the holiday season. There are employee office parties being planned at hotels, restaurants, the office, or even at the boss's home. Employees love it; it builds morale; it is a great motivator. Sounds like such a positive thing.

So, what could be the down side? Well as it turns out, some states hold that the employer may be held liable if a person consumes alcoholic beverages at a company-sponsored party and subsequently causes an accident.

Most of the time, the potential liability comes in the form of drinking and driving accidents. Drinking while either intoxicated or drunk is dangerous and drivers with high blood alcohol content (BAC) are at an increased risk of car accidents, highway injuries, and vehicular deaths. According to the Department of Transportation's preliminary findings, there are some scary statistics about drunk driving. Drunk drivers each year cause over twenty percent of all traffic fatalities in the U.S. Last year during the holiday season, between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, more than 1600 people were killed in alcohol-related accidents—many after holiday parties. That is simply too many! We should remember that every single injury and death caused by drunk driving is TOTALLY preventable.

Sounds kind of like doom and despair where parties are concerned? It certainly doesn't have to be. It is all a matter of minimizing your liability risks. There are a number of creative ways to minimize your risks and maximize your fun at the same time:

- Plan lots of group activities to keep the focus away from drinking
- Offer a variety of non-alcoholic drinks; have a recipe contest before the party and serve the winners concoction at the party
- Have two punch bowls, one with alcohol and one without. Keep the one without constantly full
- Serve lots of foods rich in starch and protein as they stay in the stomach longer and slow the absorption of alcohol in the bloodstream
- Appoint designated drivers at the beginning of the evening and give them a special prize or reward for being the designated driver
- Close the bar 90 minutes before the party ends; only time sobers someone
- Designate managers to be responsible for implementing the company's alcohol and substance abuse policy
- Have a breakfast or lunch party instead of an evening party; alcohol is not expected
- Try an indoor carnival with proceeds going to a local charity instead of a traditional party
- Have employees display their talent with funny skits and/or musical selections
- Have employees decide if they would prefer to donate the money that the company would spend on a holiday party to a charitable organization

So whether you decide to have alcoholic beverages at your next company fa la la or not, make sure that you understand that there are potential repercussions. More importantly, look at alternatives and minimize the risks to your company. Then, let the party begin!

Have a fun and safe holiday season!



“between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, more than 1600 people were killed in alcohol-related accidents...”

CONGRATULATIONS!!

Fire Safety Winners - October 2012

Thanks to all of the participants in Telcom's Fall Fire Safety Art Contest. We had hundreds of submissions from kids ranging from 5 years old to 14 years old. They were all very nicely done, and we wish we could use them all. However as a staff, we chose the following winners by age category. All winning pictures will also be posted on our website - www.TelcomInsGrp.com.

Congratulations to the following:

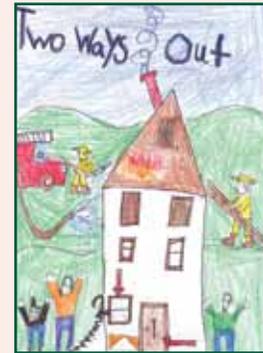
Under 8



1st Place
Haley Noland
[Oregon Farmers Mutual
Telephone Co.]



2nd Place
Autumn Warner
[Highland Telephone
Cooperative - VA]



3rd Place
Colten Williams
[Highland Telephone
Cooperative - VA]

8-10 years old



1st Place
Gabiella de Ornelas
[Pemtel]

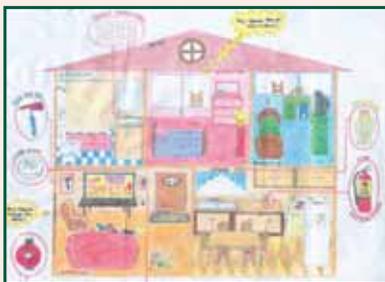


2nd Place
Lea Sison
[Cordova Telephone
Cooperative, Inc.]



3rd Place
Ferrin Garrett
[Community Telephone
Company]

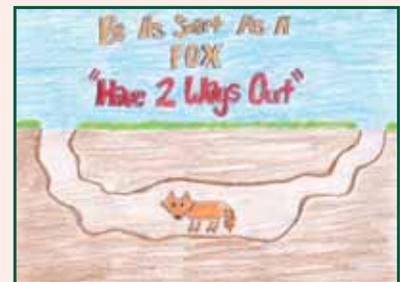
11-14 years old



1st Place
Ferdinand Sison Jr.
[Cordova Telephone
Cooperative, Inc.]



2nd Place
Lillian Bowlby
[KanOkla]



3rd Place
Oakleigh Nickel
[KanOkla]

(Prizes: 1st place \$100; 2nd place \$75; and 3rd place \$50 by age category)

Safety Matters

By Tina M. Wynter

Backing Safety

While we drive thousands of miles going forward, most drivers cover less than a mile or two per year in reverse. The National Safety Council reports that one out of every four accidents can be blamed on poor backing techniques and the cost of a typical backing accident is presently estimated at an average of \$7,400 per occurrence.

Backing up isn't easy: the driver's seat faces forward, making it tough to turn to look and see behind the vehicle; many cargo carrying vehicles create giant blind areas where you can't see; and mirrors (and even TV camera systems) while helpful, can distort views and don't cover every area unless positioned properly.

What Leads to Backing Accidents?

Here are a few conditions or situations that many contribute to back accidents: moving backwards without first looking to be sure that the area behind the vehicle is clear – no one can assume that it's safe to back-up; lack of, or inadequately designed, mirrors (size, shape, configuration); improperly positioned mirrors (mounting locations); improperly adjusted mirrors (line of sight, blind spots); blind spots, which cannot be easily corrected with mirrors (the area located immediately behind large vehicles); view blocks (signs, shrubs); turning while backing (body of vehicle or trailer obscures target area); distractions caused by bystanders, traffic, improper signaling of helper, etc.; low visibility conditions (weather, night, enclosed docks, dimly lit garages); hard to see physical barriers behind the vehicle (posts, cargo, pallets, etc.); physical barriers which move behind the vehicle prior to, or during, the backing maneuver

Tips to Help

These collisions are avoidable/preventable and while most only involve simple auto damage, some lead to very serious injuries or even tragic fatalities. You've probably heard many of these tips, but they are worth repeating, since it is possible to slip into a comfort zone of backing your vehicle.

- If your vehicle has a rear window (sedan, SUV, pickup, van, etc) use defoggers (if available) to melt snow and ice and to keep the window clear
- Take the time to walk around your vehicle and look for people, vehicles, or other objects that may obstruct your start-up/back-up path, placing cones behind your vehicle will help remind you to do this. Having a cone policy can help reinforce this tip
- After the walk-around check, have no delay in moving the vehicle. Don't enable another hazard to approach your vehicle while you are getting ready to move, this is especially important when you use cones
- Minimize distractions (turn off music or talk radio so that you can hear what's happening around your vehicle)
- Avoid "blind side" backing (backing and turning simultaneously where the vehicle blocks the driver's view)
- Check your mirrors and make sure they are both clean and adjusted to minimize any blind areas
- Start up slowly at first to allow other vehicles and pedestrians, who may have unexpectedly approached, to safely move away
- Tap horn in congested areas or recruit a signalman (if permitted by your company's policies, and practice hand signals to avoid confusion)

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"the cost of a typical backing accident is presently estimated at an average of \$7,400 per occurrence..."

Claims Matters

By Cheri L. Condee, AU

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome and Workplace Ergonomics

The ergonomics related to Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS) and Workers' Compensations claims are a workplace concern due to the rising numbers of people suffering from Carpal Tunnel Disease, which can be directly related to workplace ergonomics. Ergonomics is the scientific study of people at work. The goal of ergonomics is to reduce stress and eliminate injuries associated with the overuse of muscles, bad posture, and repeated tasks. This is accomplished by designing tasks, work spaces, controls, displays, tools, lighting, and equipment to fit the employee's physical capabilities and limitations.

Carpal tunnel syndrome is a painful condition caused by compression of a key nerve in the wrist. It occurs when the median nerve, which runs from the forearm into the palm of the hand, becomes pressed or squeezed at the wrist. Symptoms usually start gradually, with pain, weakness, or numbness in the hand and wrist, radiating up the arm. As symptoms worsen, a person may notice decreased grip strength that may make it difficult to form a fist, grasp small objects, or perform other manual tasks. The risk of developing carpal tunnel syndrome is especially common in those who perform repetitive work tasks. (**National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)** www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/carpal_tunnel)

The National Centers for Disease Control (CDC) states:

- In 2010, an estimated 3.1% of employed adults aged 18-64 years had carpal tunnel syndrome in the past 12 months. The percentage of employed adults with carpal tunnel syndrome increased with each age group. (National Health Interview Survey,

2010 data. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis.htm>)

Carpal tunnel affects the hands, arms, fingers and even the back of the sufferer causing serious problems. CTS is related to:

- Repetitive and/or prolonged physical activities
- Forceful exertions, usually with the hands
- Awkward positions of the upper body, including reaching above the shoulders or behind the back, and bending the wrists, at an angle, to perform tasks
- Localized contact areas between the work or work station and the workers body; i.e. contact with surfaces or edges
- Excessive vibration from power tools

Any of these situations can be a contributor to Workman's Compensation cases, ranging from minor claims to major ones. The following examples are from Telcom Insurance Group's claim history:

- Injury: Repetitive Motion to the wrist: type of work-cable splicer (tendon release) (\$34,890)
- Injury: Bi-lateral Carpal Tunnel Syndrome: type of work, billing clerk. Ergonomics study was suggested by the carrier and done to help eliminate future problems for this employee and others in the same office. (\$40,969)
- Injury: Bi-lateral Carpal Tunnel Syndrome: type of work, data entry. (\$31,847)
- Injury: Repetitive motion: type of work: computer tasks, accounting supervisor uses the computer and calculator; surgery for Carpal Tunnel Release: (\$13,000)
- Injury: Bi-lateral Carpal Tunnel Syndrome: type of work-combination technician. (\$51,370)



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"In 2010, an estimated 3.1% of employed adults aged 18-64 year had carpal tunnel..."

Underwriting Matters

By Janice Y. Johnson, AU, ASCR

CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE Answers and Scenarios

Often times, you are asked to provide a certificate of insurance or you ask for a certificate of insurance from contractors doing work on your behalf. Why? What is its purpose? Let's examine some terms and their definitions.

What is a Certificate of Insurance? A certificate of insurance is a document that provides an informational snapshot as evidence of insurance coverage that is in place at the time the certificate of insurance form is issued. Certificates of Insurance list one or more lines of insurance, the limits associated with those coverages and the name of the insurer providing the coverage(s).

Certificate Holder – is a third party, an organization requesting the certificate of insurance. Generally, the Certificate Holder name and address is listed on the bottom left of the Certificate of Insurance form.

Additional Insured – an Additional Insured is generally a person or entity doing business with the named insured. An Additional Insured has fewer responsibilities and rights than a Named Insured under the policy. The Additional Insured is not responsible for premiums, and have no direct control over the terms of the policy. When adding Additional Insured language within the Description of Operations on the certificate of insurance, the agent will specifically reference the scope of work as described per written contract. In many instances, a contractual agreement will require the certificate holder/requestor to be named as an Additional Insured on the certificate of insurance form. Naming the certificate holder as an Additional Insured on the certificate of insurance form, is a request in which Telcom can comply. As our insurance program provides a Blanket

Additional Insured endorsement to satisfy the contractual agreement requirement, it is easy for us to offer.

Telcom Insurance can satisfy your certificate of insurance forms requirements with the following Acord Certificate of Insurance Forms - Certificate of Property Insurance; Certificate of Liability Insurance; Evidence of Property Insurance; and Evidence of Commercial Property.

There are many instances when you may be required to provide a certificate of insurance. Below are a few scenarios:

- A building owner may request a tenant to provide information about their existing liability insurance coverage.
- A mortgator of building may request information about the existence of property insurance coverage upon settlement and/or insurance coverage renewal.
- Leased Equipment – the owner of the leased equipment may require a certificate of insurance as evidence property insurance coverage while the equipment is in possession of the client.
- Other instances you may be required to provide a certificate of insurance form when signing a contractual agreement.
- Others may require evidence of workers compensation insurance coverage in order to obtain a contract.

Telcom Insurance Group is in compliance with insurance regulatory requirements, we provide Certificate of Insurance forms using the current form edition dates. Some old contracts still have language requesting an old certificate form, and it is against the law to provide a certificate using that outdated certificate form.

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“There are many instances when you may be required to provide a Certificate of Insurance.”

Safety Matters

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- Stop before loading dock contact, get out and check the final distance to dock (serious injuries can occur when bystanders are pinched between vehicles and docks)
- Don't forget to look overhead to ensure a safe clearance

Again, most backing collisions are avoidable and preventable. It takes a commitment to be vigilant and consistent in your driving duties to avoid these collisions.

To help with your company's commitment to be vigilant and consistent with driving duties, Telcom Insurance Group recommends that you have a Vehicle Backing Cone Company Policy. If you don't already have this policy in place, contact us and we'll be happy to send you a sample. Contact Tina Wynter at TMW@telcominsgrp.com for some sample policies and/or videos that you can share with your employees to help prevent backing accidents.

Claims Matters

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- Injury: Bi-lateral Carpal Tunnel Syndrome: type of work-imaging and indexing clerk; claim had permanent restrictions that prevented return to work: (\$55,726)
- Injury: Carpal Tunnel Syndrome and Triangular Fibrocartilage (tear in a segment of cartilage in the wrist joint): type of work-pulls cable, lifts heavy objects, digs using a shovel; two injuries and two surgeries and the result was, the employee did not return to work. (\$133,000)

Finally, when the claim is filed, or before it happens: Telcom provides information and help with claims and risk management matters for our policyholders. If you need help with a claims matter, or need additional information and resources for Carpal Tunnel Syndrome and the work environment; please visit the Telcom website: www.TelcomInsGrp.com or call 800-222-4664 and ask for Cheri Condee (ext. 1082) or Marilyn Blake (ext. 1085).

Underwriting Matters

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In addition, to your Underwriting Tech providing the requested Certificate of Insurance form, Telcom Insurance Group offers Certificate Insurance On-Line software. **ECerts Online** is available for your use 24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year—no matter when you need a certificate. If you need additional wording, it will automatically send your assigned Underwriting Technician an email indicating that they need to complete the certificate for you.

Current insureds have an active account on line. From our website www.telcominsgrp.com, you can select the eCertificate log in and issue a standardized certificate

of insurance form, specific to your coverages and Certificate Holders. Once you complete the certificate of insurance issuance workflow, the certificate form can be emailed and/or faxed to whomever you choose. A copy of all certificate forms issued is automatically emailed to you as well.

If you would like the ability to issue your own certificate of insurance forms, contact the Underwriting Technician assigned to your account to get you started. Telcom Insurance Group stands ready to assist with all of your questions and certificate needs. Let us know if we can help.

FUN FACTS

The Festival of Lights

Hanukkah, the “Festival of Lights,” starts on the 25th day of the Jewish calendar month of Kislev and lasts for eight days and nights. In 2012, it begins at sundown on December 8th with blessings, games, and festive foods. Hanukkah celebrates the triumphs--both religious and military--of ancient Jewish heroes. It ends at sunset on December 16th.

New Year's Traditions Involve Food:

In many countries, New Year's celebrations begin on the evening of December 31—New Year's Eve—and continue into the early hours of January 1. Revelers often eat specific foods that are believed to bring good luck for the coming year. Here are a few examples:

- Many cultures all over the world, not just the U.S., believe it's important to eat black-eyed peas on New Year's Day for good luck.
- In Holland, they eat donuts on New Year's Day because the round shape is believed to express a full circle of life from one year to the next.
- Many people from Oriental countries will eat sticky rice around midnight on New Year's Day to ensure a year of prosperity and good fortune.

Check-Out These Holiday Websites!

www.noradsanta.org (track Santa)
www.northpole.com (Santa's secret village of kids activities)
www.claus.com (check out your naughty and nice rating)
www.santaclaus.com (email Santa)
www.merry-christmas.com (various kids activities)

December 2012 Holiday Recipe

Chocolate Marshmallow Clusters

1/2 cup sugar

1/2 cup evaporated milk

1 tablespoon light corn syrup

1-6oz package chocolate chips (milk or dark chocolate)

1 cup walnuts pieces (optional or use raisins, peanuts or pecans)

1 cup miniature marshmallows

- In a heavy 2 quart saucepan, combine: sugar, evaporated milk & corn syrup
- Bring mixture to a full boil over medium heat, stirring constantly, and boil for 2-minutes
- Remove from heat, and add chocolate chips, stirring until the chocolate melts
- Let mixture cool for 10 minutes and stir in the nuts and marshmallows
- Drop small clusters from a tablespoon onto a waxed paper lined cookie sheet
- Refrigerate, uncovered for 1 hour or until firm.

Makes about 2 dozen clusters

HOLIDAY CRAFTS FOR KIDS

WARM BEVERAGE COZIES

These warm beverage cozies are made from colorful, inexpensive knit socks that can be found at Target or Wal-Mart. The beauty of knit socks is that the cut edges naturally roll up, creating an instant “hem” that doesn’t fray. Make a snowman cozie by gluing on buttons and a scrap of felt, a snowflake one by using self-adhesive felt sticker, which can be found at a craft store such as Michaels or Hobby Lobby, or create your own design, either way this is an easy and fun craft and makes a great gift.



FINGER PUPPETS

To make these finger puppets, cover and glue felt around coin wrapper rolls and a wooden doll head (found at Michaels, Hobby Lobby, etc) on top. Use bits and pieces of felt and pipecleaners to bring these little guys to life. You can also turn your finger puppet into a cute ornament by twisting in a small screw eye at the top of the head.





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Telcom Matters

We would like to welcome the following new members to our Telcom P&C and/or D&O family:
Medicine Park Telephone Co. (OK) and **Oak Hill Cablevision (IN)**.

Upcoming Holidays: Our offices will be closed on **Thursday and Friday, November 21-22** for the Thanksgiving holiday and **Monday and Tuesday, December 24-25** for the Christmas holidays. Please report all claims directly to the carrier. If you need claims reporting phone/fax numbers, please dial our main line at 301-220-3200 for a complete listing.

We offer our Congratulations to the following Telcom family members:

- Teresa Bennett of Atlantic Telephone Membership Corp. (NC) welcomed a new granddaughter, Scarlett Elisabeth on September 26th.
- Welcome to Terry Kucera, the new Member Relations Manager at NTCA.

We offer condolences to the following Telcom family members:

- Sheila Navis, Executive Director of RIITA, on the sudden loss of her fiancé Kevin Stalter.

