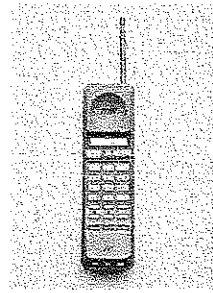




WOODHULL COMMUNITY TELEPHONE COMPANY



FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE

The Articles of Incorporation of the Woodhull Community Telephone Company were filed with the State of Illinois on July 10, 1950. The incorporators listed were Louis Kness, Ivan Granberg, Lawrence Nelson and Homer Horner. They authorized 1000 shares, with the intention of issuing 400 shares at \$25 per share to raise \$10000. Their purpose was to provide telephone service to Woodhull and the surrounding community.

The first stockholders' meeting was held on September 18, 1950, at which there were eighty people present. The first Board of Directors elected were Lawrence Nelson, Louis Kness, Ray Luallen, Homer Horner, Frank Peterson, and Theodore Johnson.

In January 1951, the Woodhull Community Telephone Company (WCTC) made an agreement to purchase the Woodhull Village Company for \$4500 and 130 shares of WCTC stock. The officers of the Woodhull Village Company were President George Bitts, Secretary George E. Swanson, and directors Charles Heflin and W.L. Craycraft.

In April 1951, the WCTC made agreements with nine rural companies surrounding Woodhull to trade their companies for shares of WCTC stock. The rural companies were Clover Mutual, Maple Ridge, Woodhull-Ontario, Woodhull-Alpha, High Point, Rio-Woodhull, Union Hill, Nekoma-Woodhull, and Ontario. These agreements were not signed until February 1952, when details were worked out, and Illinois Commerce Commission approval was received.

WCTC took over operation of all of the companies above, along with the Woodhull Union Switchboard Association, on March 1, 1952. Lawrence Gingery was hired as operator and maintenance man of the switchboard and lived in the house where the switchboard was located. Arland Asplund was hired to keep books and collect payments at Luallen Motor Sales.

In 1954, the Company was having customers work on lines, and were at times giving one share of stock for each three days of work.

At the Annual Meeting in 1955, two-thirds of the Stockholders voted to convert to dial by "whatever means necessary." That same month, the Board accepted a proposal to buy a switch from Stromberg-Carlson for \$29,000 and borrow \$75,000 from Stromberg-Carlson to buy the switch and make outside plant improvements. During 1955, the Company paid customers the following: \$1.50/hour to set poles, \$4.00/hour for a man with a tractor and post-hole digger, and \$3.00/hour for a man with a truck.

In April 1956, a bid was accepted from Gene Wooley for \$8095 to build the Company a new office and switch building. The building was finished by November and the new Stromberg-Carlson switch was being installed. In January 1957, the Board held its first meeting at the new building.

Times were very tough for the company in the early going, but things must have been looking up in 1959 as the Directors decided to have oyster stew at the Annual Stockholders Meeting. The first feast was prepared by Mrs. J. B. Anderson. At that time the Annual Meetings were still being held at the high school in Woodhull.

In 1968, the Company began having the Annual Meeting at the Methodist Church, and the ladies of the Church began preparing the oysters.

By late 1971, both the Village and the rural had been converted to private lines. During that year, the McViettys, along with some help, buried 54,000 feet of telephone cable. Touchtone service was added in 1976. In 1980, the Company purchased a Cuckler Building from Alexanders, which was constructed on a lot one block north of the office by Carlson Construction Company.

During 1981, the Board decided to split the common shares three for one. Also that year, in anticipation of the beginning of 911 service, the prefix was changed from 934 to 334.

In 1984 and 1985, Woodhull Cellular Company was created, and Woodhull, along with ten other companies applied for a license to provide cellular telephone service to the Quad Cities area. The FCC awarded this license by lottery, which Woodhull did not win.

In 1987, WCTC accepted a bid from Northern Telecom to provide a new digital switch for the Company. It was delivered in January of 1988, and was made operational in March 1988. Also in 1988 and 1989, a fiber cable was installed from Woodhull to Milan to carry toll calls. It was a joint project with WCTC, New Windsor Telephone Company, and Viola Home Telephone Company sharing the ownership.

Also in 1989, the FCC held lotteries for licenses to provide cellular service to rural areas of the U.S. Woodhull joined in a partnership to provide service in Knox, Warren, Henderson, Adams, McDonough, Hancock, Schuyler, and Fulton counties. Forming this partnership allowed the companies to avoid a lottery where each company would have had only a one-in-fifteen chance of winning.

In 1993, WCTC formed its second subsidiary, Diverse Communications. In 1994, the Shareholders approved the purchase of the cable television system serving Woodhull, Alpha, and New Windsor. Negotiating and awaiting the proper FCC approvals took all of 1994. Diverse took over operation of the system in January 1995.

Also during 1994 and 1995, the company's main office and switch building was renovated and an addition was built. WINS, or Western Illinois Network Services, was formed during 1995 to provide internet access to several counties in western Illinois. WINS is a partnership of eight companies.

In January 1996, New Windsor's portion of the cable television system was sold to the New Windsor Telephone Company. TRIO was formed and began operations in 1996. TRIO provides long-distance service, and is owned jointly by Diverse Communications, New Windsor Telephone Company, and Viola Home Telephone Company.

During 1999, members of the RSA 3 Cellular Partnership decided to sell the business to Alltel. Funds received from this sale were used to help Diverse Communications build a telephone plant in Alpha during 2000 and south of Alpha during 2001. Donations were also made to several local organizations including the AlWood Academic Foundation and the Village of Woodhull. A scholarship fund for AlWood graduates was also created.

The goal of the Woodhull Community Telephone Company continues to be providing the best communications possible for the Woodhull, and now the Alpha communities. We also hope to do whatever we can to make the communities thrive and be a good place for people to live.

The following is from the April 17, 1952, printing of *The Woodhull Dispatch*: "*Sunday and holiday phone service is to be provided to patrons, with the hours on those days probably from 7 A.M. to 7 P.M., although a definite schedule has not been set up as yet.*"--- We have come a long way.