



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Stephanie Patton, 202/659-5990  
Date: February 2, 2004

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### NEW MEMBERS APPOINTED TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED) is pleased to announce the addition of Carri Bennet of Bennet and Bennet PLLC and Steven Meltzer of John Staurulakis Inc. (JSI) to its Board of Directors.

Ms. Bennet is a partner at Bennet and Bennet PLLC, a Washington, D.C.-based law firm that specializes in telecom law. She received her J.D. in 1987 from the Columbus School of Law at Catholic University. Since 1987, Ms. Bennet has represented primarily rural wireless carriers, telephone companies, cellular carriers, PCS providers and CLECs before the FCC, state regulatory agencies, the courts and Congress. Ms. Bennet is volunteering as *pro bono* legal counsel to the Foundation.

Mr. Meltzer is Vice President of Operations at JSI. His responsibilities include the direct supervision and oversight of the Network Services, Management Services, New Business Services, Separations and Settlements and Tariff departments. He is a 1976 graduate of the American University and has been employed at JSI since 1977. He will serve as Treasurer of the Foundation.

In addition, Sandy Brinley of Sierra Telephone in Oakhurst, Calif. was appointed to the Board and Brian Brown of Optical Solutions was named a Presidential Appointee. Also, the following slate of officers was approved at the Board meeting during the 2004 OPASTCO Winter Convention:

Paul Downs, President  
*Nexicom Telecommunications, Inc.*  
Mississauga, ON

Christopher Becker, Telco Vice President  
*The Middleburgh Telephone Company*  
Middleburgh, N.Y.

Diana Gradert, Past-President  
*WTC Communications*  
Wilton, Ia.

Lonnie Ross, Secretary  
*Communications Data Group*  
Champaign, Ill.

Daniel Hatzenbuehler, President-Elect  
*Ritter Communications, Inc.*  
Marked Tree, Ark.

Robert West, Associate Vice President  
*CoBank*  
Greenwood Village, Col.

Steven Meltzer, Treasurer  
*John Staurulakis Inc.*,  
Seabrook, Md.

FRED is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that is affiliated with the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO). Additional information about FRED is available at [www.fred.org](http://www.fred.org).



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
November 29, 2004

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### THREE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS AWARDED

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Through the Ethyl Grant program, the Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED) recently awarded a total of \$6,500 in community development grants to projects located in Louisiana, New York and Wisconsin. This program provides funds to worthy community development projects that are located in areas served by local telephone companies that are members of the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO). Grants are distributed twice a year in October and May.

The first project to receive funding was nominated by Dunkirk & Fredonia Telephone Company in Fredonia, NY. The Dunkirk Free Library will use the \$2,500 grant towards automating the Children's Room. Currently, the Children's Room has a collection of 15,000 books. The equipment needed to automate the library would be completely funded by the Ethyl Grant and the matching funds from Dunkirk & Fredonia Telephone Company.

Lafourche Telephone Company, LLC, located in Larose La., and the Bayou Civic Club are working on providing the community with and handicapped-accessible playground. Lafourche Telephone Company built the current playground in 1982. Even with maintenance the equipment has deteriorated and is not ADA compliant. The \$2,500 Ethyl Grant as well as matching funds from the telephone company will partially cover the \$11,000 total expenditures for the project.

The third project to receive an Ethyl Grant in this round of awards is located in Pulaski, Wis. Nominated by Northeast Telephone Company, the grant of \$1,500 will partially fund a project to build a new playground at Glenbrook Elementary School. Northeast Telephone Company has a long-standing relationship with the school district by sending mentors into the classrooms, providing scholarship funds and also assisting with technology improvements.

FRED is a 501 (c) (3) foundation, as determined by the IRS, affiliated with the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO). For information about FRED or the Ethyl Grant program, go to [www.fred.org](http://www.fred.org). For more information about OPASTCO, go to [www.opastco.org](http://www.opastco.org).

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
January 13, 2004

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### FIFTEEN STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN 2004 LEADERSHIP THROUGH LEARNING PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED) is pleased to announce that for the third year, fifteen high school juniors from around the country will participate in the Leadership Through Learning Program, sponsored by NECA.

This weeklong program provides students with an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. Activities are organized by the Close Up Foundation, a non-profit with 30 years of experience hosting youth programs. Students will learn about American history, federal government and current events; meet with government officials and members of Congress; visit historic landmarks; and attend social events with other Close Up participants.

To be eligible, students were nominated by their local telephone service provider. That company was required to be a member of the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO) a national trade association located in Washington, D.C. Students from all over the U.S. submitted applications for this national program. The selected students hail from twelve different states and are active in 4-H, varsity athletic teams, the school paper and drama in addition to posting strong academic marks.

“I was struck by the fact that each of these students serves as a volunteer either at his or her church, school or some organization within his or her town,” Melissa Korzuch, foundation director noted. “Clearly each of them is committed to helping their local community. It will be exciting for these students to get an even broader view of the concepts of community and civic responsibility.”

FRED is a charitable 501 (c) (3) foundation, as determined by the IRS, affiliated with OPASTCO. More information about the Leadership Through Learning Program and other FRED Programs is available at [www.fred.org](http://www.fred.org). More information about OPASTCO can be found at [www.opastco.org](http://www.opastco.org). NECA, a not-for-profit membership corporation formed by the U.S. Government, helps ensure telephone service remains available and affordable in all parts of the country.

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**2004 Leadership Through Learning Program Participants  
and Nominating Telephone Companies**

Veronica Alvarado, *Pioneer Communications*, Kan.  
Mandi Beyer, *Mt. Angel Telephone Company*, Ore.  
Emma Davenport, *East Otter Tail Telephone Company*, Minn.  
Kevin Duda, *Mt. Angel Telephone Company*, Ore.  
Jackie Keller, *Sycamore Telephone Company*, Ohio  
Valerie Kraucunas, *HunTel Systems Inc.*, Neb.  
Britney Levron, *Lafourche Telephone Company, LLC*, La.  
Cord McLean, *United Telephone Company*, Tenn.  
Angela Pitkin, *Great Plains Communications Inc.*, Neb.  
Matthew Stensberg, *Wood County Telephone Company*, Wisc.  
Elizabeth Texeira, *Granby Telephone & Telegraph Company*, Mass.  
Clayton Usery, *Ardmore Telephone Company*, Ala.  
Holly Whitworth, *United Telephone Company*, Tenn.  
Abby Wolf, *Salina Spavinaw Telephone Company Inc.*, Okla.  
Kelly Wolf, *Geneseo Telephone Company*, Ill.

**Alternate**

Anna Berning, *Mt. Angel Telephone Company*, Ore.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
October 15, 2004

Contact: Stephanie Patton, 202/659-5990  
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**\$75,000 AWARDED IN TECHNOLOGY GRANTS  
FOR RURAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — With a generous contribution from Rural Telephone Finance Cooperative (RTFC), the Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED) awarded nearly \$75,000 in grants to rural public schools across the United States.

“Technology can be a powerful tool to improve learning in the classroom. Many rural public schools cannot utilize this tool to its full potential because of their limited resources,” said Hank Buchanan, vice-president for industry affairs at RTFC. “We are very proud to work in cooperation with FRED and OPASTCO telephone members to help these schools meet the growing need for innovative technology in the classroom.”

The grant program, now in its fourth year, awards funds to public schools that are working to increase the use of technology to enhance the learning experience. Of the more than fifty applications submitted, 9 schools were selected to receive funding. The technology grants ranged from \$2,680 to \$10,000. More than half a million dollars in funding was requested.

“The response to this program was overwhelming,” said Melissa Korzuch, FRED director. “The work of the selection committee was extremely difficult because of the outstanding quality of the grant proposals.”

More information about the winning applicants and how to apply for next year’s program is available at [www.fred.org](http://www.fred.org). FRED is a charitable 501(c)(3) foundation that is affiliated with the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO). More information about OPASTCO can be found at [www.opastco.org](http://www.opastco.org).

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
June 21, 2004

Contact: Melissa Korzuch, 202/659-5990  
[mak@opastco.org](mailto:mak@opastco.org)

## TWO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS FUNDED

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED) recently awarded a total of \$4,000 in community development grants to projects located in Virginia and Ohio. These grants were awarded through the Ethyl Grant program which provides funds to worthy community development projects that are located in areas served by local telephone companies that are members of the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO). Grants are distributed twice a year in October and May.

Orwell Telephone, located in Leipsic, OH, and the Edwards-Gamper Memorial Library are working to develop their community by expanding the library's community computer lab. The \$1,500 grant will go towards purchase of two new computers, a color printer, software and a digital camera. In addition to a monetary contribution to the project, Orwell Telephone employees will install and network the new computers. The new lab will allow for printing of digital photographs and high-speed access to the Internet.

The second project to receive funding was nominated by Shenandoah Telephone Company in Woodstock, Va. The Shenandoah County Free Clinic offers healthcare to low-income, uninsured residents of the county and is staffed almost entirely by volunteers. The grant funds will go towards purchasing an AED Defibrillator, an Atria EKG machine and a Burdick Oxy 200 pulse oximeter. The entire project costs close to \$6,000. The \$2,500 Ethyl Grant will be used as leverage to solicit donations from community members both to meet the requirement for matching funds and completely fund the costs for the new equipment.

FRED is a 501 (c) (3) foundation, as determined by the IRS, affiliated with the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO). For information about FRED or the Ethyl Grant program, go to [www.fred.org](http://www.fred.org). For more information about OPASTCO, go to [www.opastco.org](http://www.opastco.org).

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Date: May 20, 2004

### RURAL TEACHER IN FLORIDA HONORED BY FRED

(Washington, D.C.) – Margaret Ellmer of Port St. Joe, Florida, was selected to be the Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED) 2004 Rural Teacher of the Year. This award is designed to recognize innovative approaches to teaching in rural areas, particularly through the use of telecommunications technology. The recipient is meant to represent the many excellent teachers throughout rural America. As a part of the award program, a \$5,000 grant will be awarded to the recipient's school system for technology upgrades and expansions. The program, including the grant, is sponsored by a donation from Nortel Networks.

Mrs. Ellmer is the Varying Exceptionalities Instructor at Port St. Joe Elementary and works with 15 moderate to severely handicapped students. She develops a program that is suited to each student's needs with the ultimate goal of moving each student into the mainstream.

A letter of recommendation from one set of parents highlights how much of a difference one teacher can make, "She enters the classroom armed with her vast experience, her unconditional love and unending devotion. Mrs. Ellmer uses them to destroy the physical and emotional barriers which are keeping her special students from learning the basic skills required in life. The level of advancement [our son] has been able to achieve under Margaret's care is astounding. Our family has been positively changed by the experiences [our son] has shared with Margaret."

In addition to excelling in her teaching role, Mrs. Ellmer also plays an active role in the school system's larger community by working with local high school students who want to intern at the elementary school. Of the eight interns who have worked with Mrs. Ellmer, five are planning to enter careers in the field of education. She is also active in her community working with various committees to develop and implement a variety of community activities ranging from establishing a Mother-Daughter Book Club to organizing a Girl's Softball League. She even volunteered as the President of the Port St. Joe Elementary PTO during her two year sabbatical from teaching. Both the community and the students know that Mrs. Ellmer is a ready resource for projects benefiting children.

A portion of the funds from the grant will be used to purchase a communication system for use by teachers and therapists to access national research in developing the Individual Educational Program (IEP) for each student. In addition it will provide access to the school network allowing teachers to enter case notes on students and track their annual goals in real time. The remainder of the grant funds will go towards a community-wide effort to build the only school playground in Gulf County that meets ADA standards. The playground will serve not only as a place for children to play but will also be used for Occupational, Physical, Behavioral and Speech therapy sessions.

FRED is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that is affiliated with the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO). Additional information about FRED and the Rural Teacher of the Year Award is available at [www.fred.org](http://www.fred.org).

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Stephanie Patton  
Date: April 16, 2004

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### **Rural America's Best and Brightest Receive \$63,500 in Scholarships**

(Washington, D.C.) – The Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED) awarded \$63,500 in scholarships to some of the most outstanding students rural America has to offer. The scholarships awarded range from \$500 to \$5,000. The 71 scholarship recipients hail from 30 different states and provinces in the United States and Canada. These students are part of the most geographically diverse class of FRED Scholars in the history of the program.

The volunteer selection committee reviewed almost 300 applications that were nominated by close to 90 rural, independent telecommunications companies and cooperatives. “It seems that each year the selection committee’s task gets more and more difficult,” Foundation Director, Melissa Korzuch, said. “This year, we awarded more than \$63,000 total in scholarships, thanks to the extraordinary generosity of the OPASTCO Member companies that support the scholarship program with their donations to the Foundation.”

For the second year, the “Everette Kneece Return to Rural America Scholarship” was awarded in the amount of \$5,000. Along with a strong academic record and extensive involvement in extra-curricular activities, the recipient is required to demonstrate a strong desire to return to a rural area in the United States or Canada after completing his or her studies. This year’s recipient is Jeffery Mason from Geneseo, Ill. Jeff was nominated by Geneseo Telephone Company.

FRED is a national 501(c)(3) charitable foundation located in Washington, D.C., and was founded in 1989 by the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO). The mission of FRED and its supporters is to promote educational, social and economic development in rural America and Canada. The FRED Scholarship Program is made possible through the generosity of more than 1,000 small, independent telecommunications companies operating in rural areas across the United States and Canada and the companies that provide goods and services to these companies. Only OPASTCO member companies are eligible to nominate a student.

“Small telephone companies are a critical asset to the success of their rural communities. The goal of FRED is to work with these companies to create positive educational opportunities for rural America’s best resource—its young people,” FRED President, Paul Downs explained.

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

CONTACT: Melissa Korzuch  
202/659-5990

DATE: February 3, 2004

**Everette and Martha Kneece Challenge OPASTCO Membership**

(Washington, DC) - Everette Kneece, founder and Past President of FRED, and his wife Martha have sent out a challenge to all OPASTCO members. Over the dates of January 21, 2004 – January 21, 2005, they will match each donation made to FRED by 10%, up to \$1 million. Martha delivered the message last month during the OPASTCO convention in Orlando, Fla. "We believe in rural youth and want them to have the opportunity to receive an education, return to their home communities and make a contribution there," Martha stated in her remarks during the convention's general session. "Being back with all you dear people is wonderful beyond words—and we just hope and pray that you will accept this challenge by getting out and *shaking the bushes*. We love you!" The Kneece's have indicated that their donation to FRED could up to \$100,000.

Everette, along with other devoted OPASTCO members, pioneered the creation of FRED back in 1988. Today, thanks to their efforts, FRED awards more than \$250,000 each year through its scholarship and grant programs. "Everette's devotion to rural areas has been essential to FRED's success," states FRED President Paul Downs. "Back in the early 1990s, he donated \$25,000 to start the Scholarship Endowment Fund, which now stands at \$900,000. Everette is unique in that he not only steps up to show his support for FRED but does it in a way that others are encouraged to follow."

FRED is currently running its Annual Giving Campaign and all donations made starting January 21, 2004, will be eligible for the Kneece's challenge. Other donations made to FRED in the form of sponsorships and general donations will also be eligible. For more information, please contact Melissa Korzuch, Foundation Director, at [mak@opastco.org](mailto:mak@opastco.org) or 202/659-5990. Also visit the FRED Web site at [www.fred.org](http://www.fred.org).

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The Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED) is the 501(c)(3) charitable foundation affiliated with the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small

Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO). FRED's mission is to promote programs and activities that improve rural educational, social and economic conditions.

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Date: August 6, 2004

### **Second Annual Rural America Appreciation Day for Bennet & Bennet**

(Washington, D.C.) – August 2, 2004 was “Rural America Appreciation Day” at the law offices of Bennet & Bennet, PLLC. To celebrate, the firm donated all of the day’s revenue to the Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED). “Our goal is to support our clients and to help them have a positive impact on rural American communities,” said Carri Bennet, managing principle of Bennet & Bennet. “Last year we saw that effect in three community projects. This year we hope to do the same, and we hope our example will spur other companies to contribute however they can as well.”

The funds collected by Bennet & Bennet this year will again be allocated to the Ethyl Grant Program. This year four community development projects were chosen to receive a grant. The beneficiaries of this donation to FRED are the Friend of The Oakhurst Branch Library, nominated by Sierra Telephone Company in Oakhurst, Calif.; the Pierce Carnegie Library Foundation, nominated by Pierce Telephone Company in Pierce, Neb.; the Stephentown Volunteer Fire Department, nominated by Taconic Telephone Corporation in Chatham, N.Y.; and the Akeley Library, nominated by East Otter Tail Telephone Company, which is part of Arvig Communications Systems in Perham, Minn.

Melissa Korzuch, Foundation Director said, “FRED salutes Bennet & Bennet for partnering with rural telecommunications companies and for the difference their donation will make in the live of the community residents.” The Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED) is a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation located in Washington, D.C. and affiliated with the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO). FRED's mission is to promote activities that improve rural educational, social, and economic conditions. More information about the Foundation is available at [www.fred.org](http://www.fred.org). For more information about OPASTCO, go to [www.opastco.org](http://www.opastco.org)

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