

# ASTAA Conference Recap

By Chris Bell

The Atlantic States Telephone Answering Association (ASTAA) held its annual conference October 10-12 at the Wyndham Resort Hotel in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The property also adjoins a nearby Courtyard Marriot, two restaurants, and the Gateway movie theater, which is within



easy walking distance to the hotels. There were fifty-three attendees. Sponsors included Agility Recovery Solutions, Amtelco, Professional Teledata, Startel, and Telescan.

Events began on Monday afternoon with a group tour of the battlefield, complete with a volunteer historian to fill in the details of the three days of fighting along the battlefields. Three days of intense fighting would result in over 50,000 casualties, making this field the single deadliest of any American war.

The opening reception Monday night, sponsored by Startel, featured a surprise guest

speaker (compliments of Telescan). An Abe Lincoln reenactor and look-alike visited the reception. He gave a brief thirty-five-minute presentation, answered questions, and then posed for photographs.

The Tuesday morning keynote speaker was Professor Carol Reardon, the Harold K. Johnson visiting professor of Military History at the U.S. Army War College in nearby Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Professor Reardon gave a spellbinding presentation on wartime communications between Lincoln and his generals during the time of the Gettysburg Campaign. She often tied in interesting side stories about military leadership and how these qualities relate to business. Amtelco sponsored the opening breakfast.

ASTAA had a dual track conference, with content for owners, managers, and supervisors. Content included sessions led by Donna West of Focus Telecommunications, titled "It's Not What You Say, It's How You Say It," followed by "Monster Accounts – Mission Creep," presented by MedCom's Katherine Reinhold and Peter Brousseau. During lunch, Civil War speaker Ed Guy provided some interesting commentary on those often-seen black-and-

white photographs of soldiers.

Vendor presentations were interspersed between speakers. In the afternoon, Jannemieke Keener spoke on "Selling Custom Service to Your Clients" and Joe Waldholtz and Patty Smith from Teleplex held a session on "How to

Go from Friend to Boss" for supervisors and managers. After the evening wine and cheese reception, the contingent walked over to the Gateway Theatre to see the Fields of Freedom movie.

*(Continued on page 2)*

Connections Magazine Presents



(Continued from page 1)

On Wednesday, ATSI and CAM-X presentations were held, along with the ASTAA business meeting. Heidi Black will be the incoming ASTAA president and Gary Edwards will replace Jannemieke Keener, who is rotating off after many years of dedicated service. Debbie Bibber was elected vice president/president elect.

After the business meeting, Tom Sheridan of MedCom presented “Growing Smaller: Getting More Out of Your Existing Clients in a Difficult Economy,” and Doug Robbins gave a session titled “Cut My Bill” to discuss how to handle the difficult conversation many of us have been experiencing lately.

After lunch at Garabaldi’s, Heidi Black presented a session titled “Managing Stability 24/7” and Debbie Bibber spoke on “The Logistics of Remote Locations.” Following that, Lee McAteer of Focus Telecommunications spoke on “Managing and Training Remote Staff” and Chris Bell of MedCom concluded with a session titled “Best Practices to Next Practices.”

Heidi Black and Chris Bell were the conference cochairs. ASTAA board members Doug Robbins (president), Lee McAteer, (secretary), Jannemieke Keener, and Debbie Bibber worked throughout the year with the conference chairs and Dan L’Heureux to make this conference a “one-of-a-kind” event. The Gettysburg theme was on prominent display throughout the conference, with attendees learning many facets and facts about the great battle at Gettysburg.

Be sure to check out the photographs taken from the conference and the battlefield tours. ☞

## Answer Midwest Named Business of the Month

The RiverBend Growth Association named Answer Midwest, Inc., of Alton, Illinois, its Small Business of the Month. The RiverBend Growth Association selects a small business to honor each month. Winners are selected based on a scoring system that awards points for number of years in business, number of employees, overcoming adversity, and community service.

Answer Midwest, Inc., is a 24/7 live operator call handling outsourcer for any size business need. The company provides improved customer service and response,

emergency dispatching, order taking, and appointment and reservation scheduling, while generally improving productivity and effective call handling. Answer Midwest can gather, encrypt, and transmit data, messages, and any information required as well as serving as a level-one help desk. According to Gary Tedrick, president and CEO of Answer Midwest, after being in business sixty-four years and winning the ATSI Award of Excellence for Customer Service for the last ten consecutive years, their slogan is “Our Only Limitation Is Your Imagination.”

The RiverBend Growth Association is both the Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Organization for the communities of the Riverbend area, serving the following communities in southwestern Illinois: Alton, Bethalto, East Alton, Elsah, Foster Township, Godfrey, Grafton, Hartford, Roxana, South Roxana, Wood River, and Wood River Township. The mission of the Growth Association is to provide the leadership required to attract, promote, and support new and existing enterprise growth throughout the Riverbend community. ☞

## Barbara Bradbury Inducted into CAM-X Hall of Fame

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*“Innovation is saying ‘no’ to 1,000 things.”*  
– Steve Jobs

*“A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.”*  
– Greek proverb

*“When in doubt, mumble; when in trouble, delegate; when in charge, ponder.”*  
– James H. Boren



# A Message from CAM-X President Brad French

*At the recent CAM-X meeting, incoming president Brad French shared this with fellow members in anticipation of his term as president.*

“CAM-X is an amazing organization, and I am proud to be a member of it, let alone the president. The willingness of the membership to share their ideas, their successes, and their failures show how much we all want to better ourselves and our businesses!

“I would like to thank Tom Sheridan for all of his hard work as president this year. I would also like to thank Gary Blair who is leaving the board this year after his third stint on the board and being convention chair three times.

“I look forward to working with Linda Osip and Ida Rowlands, our board, past president Tom, Denise Reynolds, Tim Carwell, Doug Swift, Debbie Iacovone, and our new board member Bill Tucker and vendor board member Steve Newall. We are always looking for committee volunteers, so please volunteer your time; it is well worth it!

“This year I want our theme to be Communicating the Message. I am not talking about what we do every day with our callers and clients; I am referring to how we communicate our message to our team members, to our prospective team members, to our clients, to our prospective clients, to our callers, and to each other. As

communication experts, we need to learn how to communicate to all people: the baby boomers, the Gen Xers, the Gen Yers, and the young up-and-coming Gen Zs. With all the new methods of communication that are available, we need to adapt to them for the betterment of our businesses.

“I will keep this brief but if you wish to get a hold of me, Tweet me, email me, Facebook me, BBM me, text me, Linked In messenger me – you can even call me, but please do not fax me!

“Thank you, and have a great night!” ☎

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My name is Robert Porter and with over 40 years experience and 11 locations, we can leave your call center in place along with YOU, your management, and employees. I have bought over 30 answering services. As a result 1-800 We Answer can buy - and buy fast. If you need my assistance or would just like to chat, call me on my cell at **212-560-5366**. I can arrange quick, generous, cash transactions.

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or just email me at [rob@weanswer.com](mailto:rob@weanswer.com)

[www.weanswer.com](http://www.weanswer.com)



## Alan Hamer Joins AnswerNet

Alan Hamer joined AnswerNet as senior sales executive for Indirect Partner Programs; he will be working on third party relationships, including other call centers that work with AnswerNet as their telecommunication partner. Alan is not new to the industry, having previously owned and operated Exchange Network Inc. for twenty-six years prior to its acquisition by AnswerNet in 2010. “We are so excited to have Alan sign on with the AnswerNet team,” said AnswerNet’s CEO and president Gary Pudles. “Alan joins a growing number of company owners who sold their businesses to AnswerNet and later joined us when they saw how pleased their former employees are to be a part of our family.”

## Telescan Unveils New Products

Telescan unveiled several new products at this year’s TUNe meeting to a record-setting attendance. Two new programs are Telescan’s Spectrum Messenger iPhone App and Telescan’s business continuity program. The latter is a disaster-hosted program available to all Telescan platform users. Information was also shared on Telescan’s latest two non-platform-specific programs: Appointment Scheduler and Virtual Observer, a screen logging software. Roger Young, Telescan president, said, “Telescan always looks forward to this conference. Our interaction with TUNe makes us a better company.” One of the main objectives of the conference was to provide technical updates, stat reviews, and marketing ideas from Telescan.

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**ATSI Awards Gold**

ATSI announced that Main Line Telecommunications has received Gold 24/7 Call Center Certification. Main Line is the first to be certified on the Amtelco Infinity platform (through NAEO). In addition, Towne Answering Service received Gold 24/7 Call Center Certification for the third time. Towne was the first to be certified for the CadCom AccuCall platform in 2005, followed in 2008 with certification on Professional TeleData's Pinnacle platform, and re-qualifying this year. Certification indicates that Towne and Main Line have met or exceeded high standards in the following areas: business practices, life safety, operations (including normal and emergency procedures), personnel hiring, training, and ongoing evaluations through a peer review program focusing on 99.9 percent annual run time.

**Professional Teledata Adds Secure Messaging**

Professional Teledata added a "secure message" delivery method to its Pinnacle Platform, in response to HIPAA/HITECH regulations requiring that sensitive information be secure during transmission from the call center to the recipient. Secure message functionality is available for iPhone, BlackBerry, and Android smart phones and iPad and Android tablets. Agents submit secure messages for delivery and then are notified when the message has been delivered to the device and again when it is read. Recipients of these messages can "reply" directly back to the call center. The history for each message is updated with all activity to provide a detailed audit trail. Additionally, secure messages can be configured to be sent automatically.

**Pat Vos Is 2011 Tom Ryan Award Recipient**

Congratulations to Pat Vos of Intercon Messaging Inc. for winning the 2011 Tom Ryan Award for Ethics, Integrity, and Quality Above All. This honor was accepted at the 47th Annual CAM-X Convention and Trade Show held recently in Montreal, Quebec. The award is presented annually in memory of one of the contact management field's most ardent advocates, Tom Ryan. This industry-specific award honors companies that exhibit quality service with a commitment to ethics and integrity. Also considered are dedication to maintaining a cohesive working environment, practicing ongoing customer service initiatives, and industry and community involvement.

**OnviSource Rolls Out OnviCloud**

OnviSource announced OnviCloud, a tiered on-demand and cloud-based service for telecommunication, hosted PBX, and contact center solutions. Cloud services are provided through company's newly established Texas data centers in Dallas and Plano. OnviSource has successfully deployed OnviCloud services for its own offices and contact centers in Texas and Oklahoma. OnviCloud is supported by OnviCare Customer Lifecycle Assistance Services, a package of customer support solutions to manage customers' operations that includes trials, professional services, customizations, customer relation management, and hands-on training. In other news, OnviSource's business process outsourcing services division was named 2010 Top Partner by CenturyLink, a provider of telecommunications services. OnviSource earned the top honor by outperforming nearly 250 other partners.

**TAS Association Directory**
**ASTAA - Atlantic States Telephone Answering Association**

Dan L'Heureux  
763-473-0210  
www.ataa.org

**ATSI - Association of Teleservices International, Inc.**

Charlene Glorieux  
603-362-9489  
www.atsi.org

**CAM-X - Canadian Call Management Association**

Linda Osip  
800-896-1054  
www.camx.ca

**GLTSA - Great Lakes Telemessaging Services Association, Inc.**

Dan L'Heureux  
763-473-0210  
www.gltsa.org

**NAEO - National Amtelco Equipment Owners**

Andy Shelp  
800-809-6373  
www.naao.org

**OEO - OnviSource Equipment Owners Association**

Dan L'Heureux  
763-473-0210  
www.theoee.org

**PIN - Professional Inbound Network**

Dan L'Heureux  
763-473-0210  
www.pinetwork.net

**SNUG - Startel National Users Group**

Dan L'Heureux  
800-317-8529  
www.teamsnug.com

**STA - Southern Telemessaging Association**

Daniel L'Heureux  
800-475-0857  
www.sta-assoc.org

**TUNe - Telescan Users Network**

Dan L'Heureux  
763-473-0210  
www.tunegroup.net

**WSTA - Western States Telemessaging Association**

Daniel L'Heureux  
877-754-4103  
www.wstaonline.org

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Left to right: Charlie Crown, President  
Deb Crown, Vice President  
Nate Gefvert, Systems Administrator

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**New Equipment For Sale:** Voice logging recorders; easily record all conversations – just click and play. Call 574-848-5322 for Record/Play Tek, Inc., www.recordplaytek.com.

**Executive Recruiting:** Premier Executive Search Specialists: Search consultants to most of the top ten service agencies in the US and over 50 of the Fortune 500 companies. Small companies, too. All custom searches using a 25,000 resume file, plus extensive proactive calling. Dedicated telesales/customer service searches since 1981 – the first and the best. Contact R. L. Bencin & Associates at 440-526-6726, rlbencin@netzero.net, or www.RLBencin.com.

**Seeking Acquisitions:** We pay cash for your TAS. We, ACCC, have been in business for 21 years. Confidential; call Doris 800-785-9436. References available.

**Seeking Acquisitions:** Reputable TAS, in business since 1967 and still owned by the founding family, seeks a small TAS acquisition in Eastern US. Ideally, you're billing under \$20K per month. Smaller is better. We'll treat you right, AND your employees and customers. Let's talk. Contact Doug at 888-693-7935 or douganswerphone@gmail.com.

**CAM-X**, the Canadian Call Management Association, represents telephone answering services across North America. Call Linda Osip at 905-309-0224 or visit www.camx.ca for more information.

**Seeking Employment:** Virtual assistant seeking to conduct customer service follow up calls. If you are searching for a reliable virtual office as-

sistant with an excellent phone presence who has the drive, enthusiasm, and self-discipline to work independently, you may contact me at the information provided. Contact John D. Lewis at 717-541-0517 or jdlewis59@verizon.net.

**Seeking Employment:** Charlie Vargas 281-852-1740 or 832-858-1740. Over 15 years' experience Operations Manager; over ten years in the Telecom industry, and the last six years in a TAS/Call Center environment.

**Help Wanted:** Family owned call center in California is looking for an outstanding manager to: (1) expand the business and bring on new accounts; (2) handle customer service; and (3) manage the employees. Base salary, benefits, and commission. Email resume, experience, salary requirements to: cdowning@pesc.com. No calls, please.

**Equipment for Sale:** Five stations, email, faxing, patching, voice announcement (12 trunks), paging, voice logger. Window based system by TASECO. T-1 PRI System is up and running for inspection. I'm located in New York City by Madison Square Garden. Call for appointment. Eric 917-805-2622 or email erickube@aol

**Businesses for Sale:** Medical TAS billing \$55,100 per month averaging \$2.62 per call. With 215 customers, this service is asking only 11.8 times or \$650 k cash.

### CORRECTION:

The description in the October issue for Steve Michaels and TAS Marketing was last year's information. TAS Marketing has been serving the TAS industry for thirty-three years and has sold over 425 businesses.

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## Garage Sale

TAS Trader is providing this "garage sale" listing section to help you find a home for old and obsolete, but still working equipment. This will also free up storage space and keep harmful electronics out of the landfill.

**Tascom Legacy** with dual distributors, 12 hard drives at least 3-4 formatted and tested, extra controllers, 2 sets of spares, 2 899's, pc software and 2 gateways, DID Link software, plus lots of extras. \$2,500 OBO 800-340-4350.

**Infinity Voicemail**, Amtelco EVE systems and parts, Startel parts, Infinity parts, and Cad Com parts. Call Rick Yocum, RLY Associates, 800-841-0841.

**Glenayre equipment** for sale: Paging system GL3000 & GL3960; all functional. New hard drive and 5 full workstations monitor and keyboard. Interested buyers call to discuss pricing; will sell open stock as needed. Call Alert Answering Service 203-387-8332.

**557B switchboards:** Three total, one in use, all going. Free to someone who will disconnect and remove them and related equipment. Contact Paul Hayes at 617-266-5605.

To list your old equipment for sale there is a \$50 onetime fee. If you are willing to give it away, then your ad will be free. Go to [www.tastrader.com/advertise](http://www.tastrader.com/advertise) and place your ad today for our next issue.

**The TAS Trader Website** has over 14,000 page views a month. Contact [Valerie@TAStrader.com](mailto:Valerie@TAStrader.com) to have your banner ad included.

**Your Submissions Make TAS Trader Possible!**  
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## TAS Conference Calendar

**December 8-12, 2011**  
**WSTA Annual Meeting**  
Westin Hotel – Maui, Hawaii  
For more information: [Dan@CallConsult.net](mailto:Dan@CallConsult.net) or [www.wsta.biz](http://www.wsta.biz)

**February 7-9, 2012**  
**OEO Annual Meeting**  
The Inn on Bourbon, New Orleans, LA  
For more Information [dan@callconsult.net](mailto:dan@callconsult.net) or [www.theoio.org](http://www.theoio.org)

**February 19-22, 2012**  
**NAEO Annual Conference**  
The Cosmopolitan Hotel, Las Vegas, NV  
For more information: 800-809-6373, [management@naeo.org](mailto:management@naeo.org), or [www.naio.org](http://www.naio.org)

**March 11-14, 2012**  
**SNUG Annual Meeting**  
Hotel Andaluz – Albuquerque, NM  
For more information: [Dan@CallConsult.net](mailto:Dan@CallConsult.net) or [www.TeamSNUG.com](http://www.TeamSNUG.com)

**June 12-15, 2012**  
**ATSI Annual Conference**  
Omni ChampionsGate, Orlando, FL

## TAS Vendor and Supplier Listing

<b>1-800 We Answer</b> 212-560-5366 <a href="mailto:rob@weanswer.com">rob@weanswer.com</a>	<b>Professional Teledata, Inc.</b> 800-344-9944 <a href="http://www.proteledata.com">www.proteledata.com</a>
<b>Alston Tascom, Inc.</b> 866-282-7266, 909-517-3660 <a href="http://www.alstontascom.com">www.alstontascom.com</a>	<b>Skystream</b> 303-304-3044 <a href="http://www.skystreambb.com">www.skystreambb.com</a>
<b>Amtelco</b> 800-356-9148, 608-838-4194 <a href="mailto:callcenter.amtelco.com">callcenter.amtelco.com</a>	<b>Startel</b> 800-782-7835 <a href="http://www.Startelcorp.com">www.Startelcorp.com</a>
<b>MAP Communications</b> 800-955-9888 <a href="mailto:gsibley@mapcommunications.com">gsibley@mapcommunications.com</a>	<b>Szeto Technologies</b> 888-421-3737 <a href="http://www.szeto.ca">www.szeto.ca</a>
<b>OnviSource</b> 800-311-3025 <a href="http://www.onvisource.com">www.onvisource.com</a>	<b>TAS Marketing</b> 800-369-6126 <a href="http://www.tasmarketing.com">www.tasmarketing.com</a>

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