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PRESS RELEASE

Bill Teague Receives Lifetime Achievement Award for over 25 years of Service

August 19, 2008, Missoula, Mont – Bill Teague received the Montana Telecommunications Association's (MTA) Lifetime Achievement Award for his 25 years of service on the Board of Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative (Blackfoot), and for his contributions to the telecommunications industry locally and statewide.

At the MTA Annual Meeting on August 5, Geoff Feiss - the MTA General Manager – presented the award to Teague in front of 100 Montana telecom executives. Feiss remarked that the award is given to a person that exemplifies the spirit of rural telecommunications, and has demonstrated a long history of promoting rural economic development and community involvement.

Each year, MTA has the task of selecting one Montanan for the award, and this year it was clear that Teague was not only qualified but deserving. "Bill spent decades leading the evolution of telecommunications technology in rural Montana through his service at Blackfoot and as a board member for MTA," says Feiss, on why Teague was selected for the prestigious award.

In 1951, the community of Clinton shared one telephone that was located in a general store, one mile from Bill Teague's ranch. As a young man, he and other forward-thinking Montanan's went door to door, soliciting the sum of \$50 to help fund the dream of bringing telephones to the Clinton, Helmville, Rock Creek and Ovando areas. That dream came to fruition in 1954 when Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative was formally organized.

Teague worked on the family ranch in Clinton until enlisting in the Navy in 1944. He returned to Montana in time to solicit the \$50 memberships to start the Cooperative. Teague was appointed to the Blackfoot Board of Trustees in 1983, and still remains an active member. During Teague's tenure on the Board he has helped usher in such milestones as Blackfoot being the first rural Montana company to introduce an all VoIP telephone and broadband network in Montana, implementation of equal access to all long-distance carriers, local number access to the Internet, and complete conversion to digital switching. In Teague's many years at Blackfoot he has also seen the roll out of digital PCS cellular services, Blackfoot's competitive entry into the Missoula market, and the creation of TeleSphere which offers software services for the utility industry, as well as the acquisition of telephone service areas from both Continental Telephone and US West.

"I've seen Blackfoot grow tremendously during the last 50 years. But I never imagined that it would grow into what it is today. And to think, in 1951, all we wanted was a phone. Today, we have faster broadband speed than you see in most urban communities," stated Teague. "I am honored and proud to receive this award."

Montana Telecommunications Association was established to foster the provision of modern telecommunications services and products to Montana consumers, and to provide services that add value to its members' business operations. To learn more, visit www.telecomassn.org.

About Blackfoot Telecommunications Group

Named after the Blackfoot River running through much of the territory it serves, the Blackfoot Telecommunications Group ((Blackfoot) was originally established in 1954 as Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative. Blackfoot offers state-of-the-art telecommunications, Internet and data solutions to customers in Missoula and throughout Montana and Idaho. Headquartered in Missoula, Montana, Blackfoot employs more than 165 Montanans. Blackfoot can be reached at 406-541-5000 or through its web site at <http://www.blackfoot.com>.

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