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NEWS RELEASE

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WSTA Announces Bi-Partisan Excellence in Legislative Leadership Awards

Lawmakers Champion Efforts to Increase Competition and Consumer Choice

MADISON – On Wednesday, May 21, 2008, the Wisconsin State Telecommunications Association (WSTA) proudly presented Sen. Jeff Plale (D-South Milwaukee) and Rep. Phil Montgomery (R-Ashwaubenon) with their *Excellence in Legislative Leadership Awards* for the 2007-2008 Biennial Legislative Session. The lawmakers received the awards while attending WSTA's 98th Annual Convention in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. Rep. Montgomery received the award for the second time and Sen. Plale was a first-time recipient. More than 350 employees of Wisconsin's local telephone companies and representatives of telecommunications vendors and consultants attended the four day event.

Sen. Plale, Chair of the Senate Commerce, Utilities and Rail Committee, and Rep. Montgomery, Chair of the Assembly Energy and Utilities Committee, were the lead authors of WSTA's top legislative priority this past session, Senate Bill 285. According to Bill Esbeck, WSTA Executive Director, Senate Bill 285 would have allowed Wisconsin's telecommunications utilities to adapt quickly in an ever increasing competitive marketplace where "bundles" and "packages" of services are the norm. In exchange for this additional flexibility, competitive providers would have gained easier access and quicker entry into all Wisconsin markets.

“These awards reflect WSTA’s appreciation for their leadership, dedication and support for pro-competition, pro-investment and pro-consumer legislation,” Esbeck said. “Sen. Plale and Rep. Montgomery led the efforts to develop this compromise proposal arrived at only after months of careful and thoughtful negotiations.”

According to Doug Wenzlaff, WSTA President, “those who witnessed their leadership, subject matter expertise, backbone, and political skill in action on the closing days of session, or at any time in the process, could only draw one conclusion – they are true friends of the industry and to WSTA. They stood with us throughout the legislative process and WSTA is truly fortunate to have them as our strongest advocates in the State Legislature.”

WSTA looks forward to working with Sen. Plale, Rep. Montgomery and other likeminded lawmakers in the future to update Wisconsin’s outdated telecommunications statutes. The winners will ultimately be Wisconsin consumers who will see the benefits of competition from all of their telecommunications providers – both new ones and familiar ones.

WSTA is a Madison-based trade organization representing more than 70 of Wisconsin’s local telephone companies, Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and wireless carriers.

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