

**Inside this Issue:**

NeuStar Enhances  
Measurement  
System ..... 2

NPAC Hosting  
Training ..... 3

Surveys to Gauge  
Performance ..... 4

Cross Regional  
Meeting Held ..... 6

## Continued Certification Process Required for NPAC Users

With each new release of NPAC/SMS software there comes a multitude of functionality changes. As the application software and interface become more complex, it also requires that all Users (service providers with connections to the NPAC) certify that their systems are compatible and continue to operate per the NANC requirements.

Effective with Release 3.0, all Users must certify (i.e., perform a minimum set of tests) their system. This is called the Continuing Certification Process (CCP). Having all Users certify their system ensures that LNP network will continue to operate at the best available level. The inability of one User to effectively port numbers or receive broadcasts can have ripple effects throughout the entire User base. These impacts are costly and consume precious resource in terms of time, people and end-user dissatisfaction.

Each User is required to satisfactorily complete User Continuing Certification Testing. No User will establish or maintain an active association with the NPAC following the production release of the software version unless and until that User has satisfactorily completed the Continuing Certification Testing. The consequences of not

*(Continued on page 3)*

## State Pooling Update

With the FCC's recent ruling on State Commission's petitions for delegated authority, there are now 26 states that have been granted jurisdiction over numbering resource issues, including 23 states that were granted pooling authority. Of those 23 states, six have implemented thousands block number pooling in 14 NPAs. Two additional states will soon follow and new NPAs will be added, bringing the total to 21 NPAs.

NeuStar serves as the number pooling administrator in all states and NPAs that have turned up pooling, and will also be responsible for the new NPAs. Below are highlights of recent State Commission activity regarding number pooling.


### New York

Pooling for 516 began on July 1; 16 blocks have been assigned. Only uncontaminated blocks will be used until October 2. The New York Public Service Commission (NYPSC) is continuing to look for contaminated blocks so new CO codes do not need to be

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Help Desk Creates New Technical Position

The Number Portability Administration Center (NPAC) in Chicago has created a new position within the Help Desk staff, the Customer Technical Specialist (CTS), who will handle more complex technical issues during the initial call from customers. To date, three people are now handling the CTS functions as part of the USA team.

For the more technical calls that come into the NPAC Help Desk, the CTS will be responsible for creating the ticket and providing the technical resources necessary to close the ticket immediately, rather than forwarding the call to another group. NeuStar's goal in creating this position was to increase the number of calls that are solved at the Help Desk level and minimize those that need to be passed to the NPAC's Technical Operations group. This allows more time for the Tech Ops group to focus on more complex technical issues within the NPAC. 



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## Pooling by State

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opened. However, if NeuStar receives a code request and there are no contaminated blocks available, the commission has indicated that the codes can be opened. In the 516 NPA, 1/3 of the CO codes have been set aside for pooling. Pooling for 518 is scheduled to begin on September 15.

### Connecticut

On June 14, the Connecticut Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC) ordered thousands block number pooling for the 860 NPA (Docket No. 96-11-10RE03). NeuStar was named as the pooling administrator. On July 26, the DPUC re-opened the docket to investigate motions filed against the decision. Implementation is scheduled for October 6.

### Texas

The Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT) implemented number pooling in the 512 NPA on August 1. There have been a total of 8 blocks assigned.

### Florida

An implementation meeting was held for the 561 NPA on August 3. For both the 561 and 954 NPAs, the industry will be protecting contaminated and non-contaminated blocks – uncontaminated blocks will be donated first, and it will be determined later when contaminated blocks will be donated. The mandated pooling date for the 954 NPA is January 22, 2001, and for the 516 NPA, February 5, 2001.

### New Hampshire

Pooling for the 603 NPA began May 1, and there have been 55 blocks assigned.

### California

Number pooling began in the 415 NPA on July 29; nine blocks have been assigned. The 714 NPA is scheduled to turn up pooling on October 6, followed by the 909 NPA on December 8. The CPUC issued a recent decision on July 20 that stated that imminent exhaust criteria will apply for those pooling carriers submitting growth requests, including Months to Exhaust being under 3 months. For Initial requests, Carriers must show they are licensed and/or certified to provide service in the area, as well as appropriate documentation that they will be in place to provide service within 60 days. The Utilization fill rate established for 310, will end on September 1.

For a complete list of the pooling timelines, please visit the [numberpool.com](http://numberpool.com) web site.



## NeuStar Enhances Performance Measurement System

### 75 Measures Used for LNPA

In March, NeuStar has established the Operations Performance Team charged with developing a performance measurement system that will identify, measure and improve customer service processes in local number portability administration (LNPA). The Team is part of a larger initiative, managing organizations by project teams, which was undertaken to ensure NeuStar's focus on those initiatives that are critical to our customers' needs, and thus, our success.

On June 30, the team completed its first deliverable, which included having 110 performance measurements in place throughout the company. The team met and exceeded the company's goal by implementing 135 measurements that cover NeuStar's internal and external processes in LNPA, the North American Numbering Plan Administration (NANPA), and number pooling administration.

Approximately 75 performance measures focus on LNP, including the NPAC Help Desk, NPAC Technical Operations, Billing and Collections and Industry Representation. (The remainder relate to NANPA and number pooling administration.) Measurements are grouped into several performance areas, including customer satisfaction, service quality, operations/productivity and financials.

While the LNP performance measures include all of the 27 traditional SLRs against which NeuStar reports performance monthly, the others are designed to improve service provided to the customer, which is the team's central focus.

The Operations Performance Team used various information sources, including industry surveys, to identify performance areas important to the customer and created processes to measure and report that performance. Thus measures of responsiveness and timeliness were important for the Help Desk; accuracy and clarity for Billing and Collections; availability and accessibility for Technical Operations; and meeting commitments for the Customer Relations Group.

*(Continued on page 3)*


# NeuStar Enhances Performance Measurement System

(Continued from page 2)

New performance measures include:

- Percentage of problems solved by Help Desk (HD) agents
- Percentage of customers updated with their issue status within 1 hr (HD)
- Percentage of customer issues solved within 3 days (B&C)
- Timeliness of invoice delivery (B&C)
- Initial post mortems provided within 24hrs of event (Technical Operations)
- Percentage of commitments met (Customer Relations).

Though not inclusive, these are some of the areas NeuStar has identified as important to customers and therefore important to the company.


The Operations Performance Team continues to meet and develop additional measurements, as well as improve processes associated with serving the customer more effectively. NeuStar will report progress and results regularly, and will consult with customers for valuable feedback. In every case, these performance measures must be relevant to NeuStar's customers concerns. 

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## Continued Certification Process Required for NPAC Users

(Continued from cover)

completing the Continuing Certification Testing at least five days prior to a new production release of the software is that User's association may be suspended. If the User does not complete their certification testing within 30 days that User's User Agreement may be terminated.

NeuStar is committed to provide the highest level of service and to work with each User to ensure they complete the necessary testing. Ensuring that all systems operate as designed and according to the requirements is in the best interest of the industry. 

## LNP/Pooling/LTI Training Schedule for August-October

The Number Portability Administration Center (NPAC) in Chicago will host 1½ day training classes in August and September for LNP Pooling and Low Technical Interface (LTI) users. Classes will be held in at the NPAC on August 23-24 and September 13-14, 27-28. October classes will be scheduled, based on demand.

The class provides an overview of LNP and Pooling, which covers what LNP is and how it works, what Pooling does and how it is part of LNP. Other topics that will be covered include:

- **Signing on to the NPAC SMS** - how to sign on to the NPAC SMS LTI system
- **Navigation** – hands on training to navigate via the LTI.
- **Subscription Management** - how to create, modify, delete and view subscription versions using the LTI.
- **Reporting** – how to create and view a variety of reports available via the LTI, including the LRN Report, the NPA Split Report, the NPAC Customer Report, the Open NPA-NXX Report, the Subscription Report, and the System Tunables Report.
- **Audits** - how to launch an audit, what an audit does, and why and when to use it.
- **Error Handling** - how to respond to screen errors and obtain support when necessary from the NPAC User Support Staff.

For more information on the training classes, please contact Lynne Bowman, NeuStar's Training Manager in Chicago, at 312-928-4542 or by email at [lynne.bowman@neustar.com](mailto:lynne.bowman@neustar.com).

# NeuStar Conducting Customer Surveys to Gauge Performance

With a strong commitment to customer satisfaction, NeuStar has implemented four separate customer surveys, focusing on Billing and Collections, the Number Portability Administration Center (NPAC) Help Desk, Training, and Industry Representation. The purpose of their surveys, which are ongoing, is to sample a cross-section of NeuStar's customer base and solicit their thoughts and suggestions regarding different services NeuStar provides. Regularly surveying customers and gathering their input is a key part of improving customer service.

In mid-April, NeuStar began its' initial, two-month survey of NPAC users to gauge their satisfaction with the service provided by the NPAC Help Desk. The objective of the survey was to measure the Help Desk's response to customer issues and to assess its ability to meet customer needs, through questions concerning timeliness, responsiveness and knowledge. The survey will be conducted every two months, with the next round beginning in August as a follow up on the changes made, and to determine if the improvements are having an impact. In addition, there may be some enhancements to the survey and the way it is administered.


By the end of June, NeuStar had received at least one survey response from every company that called the NPAC Help Desk during the two-month period, for a total of 121 responses. The Help Desk achieved an overall rating of 4.2 on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest and 5 the highest rating. A good portion of the most common comments were positive. Even though customers are generally "satisfied" with the service provided by the Help Desk, there's still plenty of room for improvement, as indicated by the survey answers and customer comments. In general, the NPAC Help Desk must improve in providing service during non-business hours, providing regular status updates to customers on progress made in resolving their issues, and continuing to upgrade the staff's knowledge level on more technical or complex issues.

NeuStar has already made progress in addressing each of these issues. The User Support Analyst (USA) training program has been enhanced into a more robust system with regular skill assessment. The Help Desk has been restructured to reinforce on-the-job skills training. Internal processes have been redesigned and implemented, which require Help Desk staff to provide periodic progress updates to customers. The effectiveness of these changes is being measured for appropriate results.

For the Billing and Collections survey, which began in late June, NeuStar is contacting every company that is connected to or does business with the NPAC, and a sampling of the non-NPAC users. The NPAC has between 275-300 customers, but sends bills to more than 5,000 service providers. To date, NeuStar has contacted approximately 70 companies and has received 38 responses, so results are preliminary. On a scale of 1-5, NeuStar has received an overall satisfaction score of 3.95. The lowest scores were on issues solved on initial contact, timely resolution of issues, ability to understand NPAC charges and clarity and timely receipt of the invoice.

The Billing and Collections department is currently working on solutions to these issues. For example, the goal has been set to resolve 80% of issues within 3 business days and 100% within 5 business days. In June and July, 100% of all billing questions received via the hotline were answered on initial contact. The Billing Department has also begun sending a cover letter with invoices explaining the charges in each invoice. Additional improvements will be made as the survey continues.

Training surveys are conducted at the end of each training sessions held at the NPAC in Chicago and at customer sites throughout the country. July results for the Low Technical Interface (LTI) and NPAC training indicate that customers are satisfied with the training seminars, scoring 4.0 out of a possible 5.0. Again, suggestions for improvements are welcomed, especially in the areas of stable connections to the NPAC server, streamlining of presentation slides and more hands-on work.

The newest survey, which covers NeuStar's industry representatives, was implemented at the last two Cross-Regional meetings in Washington, DC and Montreal. (See related story, Page X.) Attendees were asked to provide feedback regarding the level of information in and effectiveness of the various presentations. During the Washington meeting, customers rated NeuStar's representation as being satisfactory, with a 4.3 out of 5.0; for the Montreal meeting, NeuStar was rated 4.0. 

Survey	Responses	Overall Rating
NPAC Help Desk	121	4.1
Billing and Collections	38	3.95
NPAC Training	70	4.0
Industry Representation	36	4.3

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## A Word from NeuStar's Chairman and CEO

Changes in technologies and the communications marketplace have been occurring at a remarkable rate. Competition among service providers has burgeoned, resulting in a dynamic environment where providing quality service to consumers, a competitive strategy, and the ability to effectively evolve with the industry are critical. And, during these changes, the need for a trusted administrator to facilitate information and provide a level playing field for all parties has been essential. That's where NeuStar – in its' role as the Local Number Portability Administrator (LNPA) for the US and Canada – fits in.



Jeff Ganek

For more than two years, NeuStar has steadfastly worked alongside the industry to resolve common problems and implement solutions for a myriad of areas. When the industry realized its need for a neutral third-party LNPA, NeuStar accepted the challenge and provided the solution that works. After being selected, through a tough, competitive bid process, to serve as the LNPA for the Mid-Atlantic, Midwest, Northeast, and Southwest regions, the remaining regions – West Coast, Western and Southeast, as well as Canada – asked us to serve that same role when the company they initially selected failed to perform.

Throughout our tenure as the LNPA, we have been committed – and have provided – quality customer service. We've spent the time, energy and effort to work with the LLCs and service providers when problems arose. Since NeuStar and the industry embarked on this new journey of LNP together, we know and appreciate the magnitude of the work that has taken place over the last several months and years. No other company can offer the history, proven record and commitment to the telecom industry that NeuStar does today. We will continue in the future to provide enhanced, neutral third-party services to meet the ongoing needs of the telecom industry.

In addition to successful implementations of LNP in the US and Canada, NeuStar transitioned and has managed the North American Numbering Plan Administration (NANPA) since 1998. We are assigning Central Office codes at four times the rate initially projected. And in the number pooling arena, NeuStar is the only company that can provide number pool administration functions today.

NeuStar has the proven infrastructure – designed specifically to meet the industry's needs—in place to continue the work that's already started. We have the required experience to ensure that the job is done right, during all phases of LNP. And, we have the subject matter expertise to ensure that the industry's objectives are continually met with the highest level of innovation, technology, and speed. No other company can offer that to the industry. That's something that we're proud of, but don't take for granted. We enjoy our work and are excited to be a part of the changing telecom environment. And, we look forward to continuing that partnership in the years ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Ganek". The signature is fluid and cursive.

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## Quarterly Cross Regional Meeting Held in Montreal

On July 26-27, Videotron hosted the quarterly NeuStar Cross Regional meeting in Montreal. Presentations from the meeting have been compiled and are posted to the [www.npac.com](http://www.npac.com) web site. Presentations included an update on Unresolved Trouble Ticket reporting, NPAC/SMS System Availability in 2000, Release 3.0 update, Release 4.0 proposed change orders, and LNPA Working Group and other operational updates

The Cross Regional meetings are an open forum for local number portability (LNP) users to receive updates on technical issues pertaining to the dynamic development of LNP and the interfaces between the Number Portability Administration Center (NPAC) and the user community.

In November, the next Cross Regional meeting will be held in St. Petersburg, Fla., and will be hosted by Intermedia. More information on that meeting will be provided in the September-October issue of *Portability, ink*.

## Portability, ink.

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