

# My Fellow Americans...Listen Up

The Broadband Party needs your support. Here's the can't-miss platform.

By Bryan J. Rader ■ *Bandwidth Consulting LLC*

**W**ith all of the political campaigning going on these days, it's important to have a thorough understanding of all sides of today's hot issues. The road to the White House is already full of traffic and candidates are lining up on both sides of the aisle with answers for every one of them. There's border control, global warming, the war on terror, health care reform, to name a few.

Well, I have answers for many of those political issues too, but I don't hail from a Red state or a Blue state. My political party represents the "Broadband" voter. My campaign is quite different from many of the other candidates. You see, I have quite a different view of the private cable process, I mean, political process than my fellow candidates.

For instance, take the border control issue. This is very important to me. We must secure our industry's exclusive right-of-entry agreements – our "borders." This is the foundation for every American private cable operator. The FCC has recently opened a notice of proposed rulemaking for comment regarding the continued need for exclusive arrangements between property owners and cable companies.

This type of border security around our communities must continue. It gives all operators – PCOs, MSOs, even the RBOCs - the right to have exclusive access to provide video services. But the world has changed in the past twenty years, and now "exclusivity" does not mean "non-competitive."

For instance, on a typical property, 10 to 20 percent of households may obtain a satellite dish. Ten to 20 percent may get over-the-air service. And just 60 percent may elect video from the signed-up exclusive provider. There is an even split among cable modem, DSL and dial-up

(still) for data services. And voice service is spread among numerous providers. As broadband expands, many will even get TV over their data link. No PCO required. Doesn't seem very anti-competitive to me.

So, this candidate believes we need to continue tightening our grip on exclusive agreements, I mean, border control, for us to be successful.

And what about global warming? Hasn't there been a big change in our environment lately, one that has caused our customers (I mean our voters) to re-think how they receive global telephone service? Phone has become more and more a commodity, as a growing percentage of our young apartment residents drop traditional dial-tone from Bell and shift to VoIP or to a wireless provider.

This shifting in consumer tastes has been going on quietly for years. But with greenhouse gases increasing, all of humankind's work has begun to really change the earth's landscape. And 98 percent of all scientists agree. Fewer and fewer consumers feel the need to obtain dial-tone from the global phone company. The cable company's new IP voice service, or a wireless-only plan, are more than acceptable. My platform supports this shift in our atmosphere.

## Mass Destruction?

I am also strongly opinionated about our war on terror. Many of our constituents are frightened by the prospect of the big phone companies (AT&T, Verizon, Qwest) terrorizing the MDU industry. So many people worry about a surprise attack that they are building fiber to the home quicker each year, and we cannot let our guard down.

I think we should take the fight straight back to the RBOCs. We know all too well that their arrogance and over-

hyped expectations will once again disappoint the real estate community. Best for us to stay focused on this "war" and not let our guard down. By the way, I have sent in weapons inspectors to look at what the RBOCs are doing. We didn't find anything too massively destructive.

Finally, I am fighting for health care reform. Yes, I know we tried this once before, but maybe our industry just wasn't ready. It is our responsibility as PCOs to take better "care" of our customers. We need to listen more, remove the bureaucratic mess, and improve faster.

There must be universal health care (everyone should get access to a help-desk specialist without a long hold time). We need to remove layers of government to speed up our installations for new customers. And we should invest in our cable system's future (I mean our country's future) by focusing on future technologies to leave a better world for our children. "Customer care" reform is vital to our industry's future.

So that's my platform. I know some of the candidates are way out ahead of me in fundraising. But remember, raising a lot of money early has not always led to success in our business. So maybe my political party still has a chance.

I hope you agree with this party's platform. With your support, I think the Broadband party can really go somewhere. **BBP**

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## About the Author

*Bryan J. Rader, former CEO of MediaWorks before selling the company last year, has recently founded a new firm, Bandwidth Consulting LLC, where he is advising operators and providers in the MDU market segment. He also remains President of IMCC. Contact Bryan at bryanjrader@yahoo.com or by phone at 636-536-0011.*