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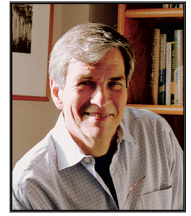


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Chairman-Elect Kruse: “Word Is Getting Out . . .”



The next leader of the Council brings a range of skills to her role

FTTTH Council Chairman-elect Diane Kruse is talking about the big picture, and the story is compelling. There is also no question that she is “passionate about FTTH.”

“We are gaining momentum,” Kruse says. “You can feel the groundswell . . . The technology has been validated by municipalities and Verizon . . . Developers are understanding there’s a new and better way . . . The word is getting out.”

It is easy to get immersed in the minutiae of FTTH, trying to sort out the competing interests and rival technologies and the confusing welter of legislative and regulatory obstacles.

But Kruse makes clear her priorities are focused on areas of common ground for the Council’s members. She sees a Council that can provide “the vision for the whole industry and other areas impacted by advanced broadband networks.”

Hearing her describe the mission of the Council and the role it can play in education and awareness was like zooming out for a wide-screen view. Unexpectedly, I found myself recalling the words of a venture capitalist I once interviewed on what he looks for in a growing enterprise.

“I want to hear about something powerful, and persuasive, and exciting, and potentially enormous,” he said. “It has to be real, not imaginary. And the words have to come from someone who is solidly credible, who has the relevant experience, who can say in regard to the challenges ahead, ‘I’ve done that.’”

I am not suggesting that running a business as a hard-driving entrepreneur is all it takes to be an industry leader — which in Kruse’s case entails representing the 100 or so companies who are “leading the FTTH revolution.” But Kruse’s role as a small company founder — and the tough-minded self-reliance inevitably derived from that experience — is rounded out by her big-company background, notably at Sprint. She points out that she has been “a pioneer of technology my whole career” and has been involved in introducing a number of “industry firsts.” These include the first

prepaid calling card with American Express and the first NNI (network-to-network interface) gateway, a cooperative effort of Sprint and US West.

Her springboard into FTTH came as a consultant for the Glenwood Springs (CO) Broadband Project in her hometown, one of the first 12 municipalities in the country to build an FTTP network. She wrote the business plan and the financial plan for the city. She was later hired by the state of Colorado to duplicate what she had done on a statewide basis.

The work left Kruse with a multi-dimensional awareness of the importance of FTTH. She knows it will be crucial in economic development, for distance learning, for streamlining e-government, and for homeland security. There are also “all kinds of medical applications — one of the key points for a municipality to deploy fiber is its impact on medicine.” She speaks with the conviction of someone for whom FTTH is a lot more than just a job. “I got so excited about this technology partly because my husband is a doctor.” She adds that FTTH “impacts every area of our life,” and even helps her be “a better mom” to her children, ages 7 and 5. While demonstrating an easy expertise with the issues, she also gets enthusiastic about the colorful human stuff, such as the virtual classroom demonstration she witnessed with live interaction with kids from Korea. As for ZoomyCo, the business she founded in December 2002 — it is the third company she has launched — “we could not run a business in a small mountain town without FTTH. We exchange large CAD files and engineering files. We couldn’t do that.”

Kruse says the time is right for the Council “to crank it up a couple of notches” — going beyond technical white papers to raising awareness and reaching out to a wider audience. Certainly, it is the ideal time. And to many she sounds like the ideal leader.

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