Plant and Technology Workshop 2026 SESSION 1

December 7 – 8, 2026 - Highland Conference Center, Mitchell, SD

Monday, December 7

10:00 am Welcome – SDTA and Mitchell Tech

10:15 am **The Modern Wi-Fi Toolset: New Approaches to Network Design - Calix**

Modern Wi-Fi mapping has evolved from static heatmaps into a more dynamic approach that spans planning, deployment, and validation. New tools are making it easier to visualize environments, iterate on designs, and understand real-world performance across a wide range of use cases. This session will explore how Wi-Fi mapping technologies have changed over the past few years, what problems they're solving today, and how operators and network teams can use them to design, deploy, and manage networks more effectively.

11:00 am **VENDOR INTRODUCTIONS AND PRIZE DRAWINGS**

11:15 am **Data Center Facts**- Sean Kelly from Light Brigade will talk through data center facts and the impact (or potential impact) on our networks.

12:00 – 1:00 pm **LUNCH**

BREAKOUT SESSIONS: 1:00 – 4:00 pm

Central Office Topics	BROADBAND FIBER TECHNICIAN TRAINING
1. SDN Update - Speaker TBA **2. Innovative Systems** - how to leverage GIS maps in FCC reporting. **3. Vantage Point** – Regulatory Topic – TBA **4. EastPenn – Reserve Power Division:** Chris McFarland - Batteries are critical to telecom network reliability, providing backup power during outages and ensuring continuous operation. This presentation explores how batteries are used, which technologies are best suited for telecom applications, and the latest advancements driving improvements in performance, efficiency, and total cost of ownership.	**Sean Kelly, RCDD, CFHP**| General Manager Light Brigade® Go beyond the specs and drawings and discover the design decisions that drive reliable FTTH networks. Built for technicians, this session reveals the practical reasoning behind key design principles—and shows how emerging requirements may reshape the way networks are planned and deployed. Explore FTTx point-to-point and point-to-multipoint passive optical networks (PON), including homerun, centralized, and distributed topologies. See how customer take rate, density, network configurations, design benchmarks, and installation parameters directly affect field performance. Then put it all together in a focused deep dive on troubleshooting fiber-network failures and disruptions—so you can diagnose issues faster, make stronger field decisions, and keep every deployment performing at its best.

4:15 – 5:00 pm **South Dakota 911 Update – Jason Husby**

5:00 – 7:00 pm - Evening Social and Tech Challenge!!

Tuesday, December 8

7:30 – 8:30 a.m. **BREAKFAST - provided**

8:15 – 10:45 am **The Miracle of Teamwork: Together We Can Do the Impossible - Derek Deprey**

South Dakota's technicians, installers, and plant crews are the backbone of rural connectivity. This interactive workshop will strengthen teamwork, break down silos, and connect participants to SDTA's shared mission of strengthening connections and empowering rural communities.

Participants will learn how to: build high-performing, high-trust teams; improve reliability, safety, efficiency, and customer experience; collaborate across departments, locations, and companies; strengthen pride and positive energy on the job; and support SDTA's mission of keeping rural South Dakota connected.

15 min BREAK

11:00 – 12:00 pm **Online Safety**: This presentation will cover trends affecting South Dakota children and vulnerable adults, how exploitation happens, how to talk to youth in your life about staying safe in a variety of situations, how to handle a disclosure and how South Dakotans can work together to help our communities be stronger.

Mary Beth Holzwarth is the Human Trafficking State Coordinator and Analyst for the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation and Attorney General's Office. Drawing on personal advocacy, prevention education, and re-entry coaching experience, she works to protect vulnerable populations and strengthen South Dakota's response to child maltreatment and human trafficking.

12:00 – 1:00 LUNCH

1:00 – 1:45 pm **Steve Wolles, TelCom Sales** – Technical training topic TBA

1:45 – 2:30 pm **Earn the Gift - Ty Eschenbaum**

Ty Eschenbaum, Founder of the Ty Eschenbaum Foundation and Partner at A1 Development Solutions, brings a powerful message rooted in personal experience, perseverance, and purpose. Growing up on a seedstock Charolais cattle operation in South Dakota, Ty went on to attend South Dakota State University as a Briggs Scholar after facing a life-changing battle with Leukemia as a teenager. That experience shaped his perspective on life and inspired him to create a mission dedicated to serving others and creating lasting impact.

Through personal stories, lessons learned, and the experiences of building the Foundation, Ty shares the importance of living life to its fullest, giving generously, and making a difference in the lives of others. His message challenges audiences to consider what it means to *Earn the Gift*.

Plant and Technology Workshop 2026 - SESSION 2

December 9 – 10, 2026 - Highland Conference Center, Mitchell, SD

Wednesday, December 9

8:45 am Welcome – SDTA and Mitchell Tech

9:00 – 10:00 am **Online Safety**: This presentation will cover trends affecting South Dakota children and vulnerable adults, how exploitation happens, how to talk to youth in your life about staying safe in a variety of situations, how to handle a disclosure and how South Dakotans can work together to help our communities be stronger.

Mary Beth Holzwarth is the Human Trafficking State Coordinator and Analyst for the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation and Attorney General's Office. Drawing on personal advocacy, prevention education, and re-entry coaching experience, she works to protect vulnerable populations and strengthen South Dakota's response to child maltreatment and human trafficking.

10:00 – 12:30 pm **The Miracle of Teamwork: Together We Can Do the Impossible - Derek Deprey**

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12:30 – 1:30 pm LUNCH – provided

1:30 – 2:00 pm VENDOR INTRODUCTIONS AND PRIZE DRAWINGS

BREAKOUT – 2:00 – 5:00 pm

Central Office Topics	**BROADBAND FIBER TECHNICIAN TRAINING**
1. SDN Update - Speaker TBA **2. Innovative Systems** - how to leverage GIS maps in FCC reporting. **3. Vantage Point** – Regulatory Topic – TBA **4. EastPenn – Reserve Power Division:** Chris McFarland - Batteries are critical to telecom network reliability, providing backup power during outages and ensuring continuous operation. This presentation explores how batteries are used, which technologies are best suited for telecom applications, and the latest advancements driving improvements in performance, efficiency, and total cost of ownership.	**Sean Kelly, RCDD, CFHP|** General Manager Light Brigade® Go beyond the specs and drawings and discover the design decisions that drive reliable FTTH networks. Built for technicians, this session reveals the practical reasoning behind key design principles—and shows how emerging requirements may reshape the way networks are planned and deployed. Explore FTTx point-to-point and point-to-multipoint passive optical networks (PON), including homerun, centralized, and distributed topologies. See how customer take rate, density, network configurations, design benchmarks, and installation parameters directly affect field performance. Then put it all together in a focused deep dive on

	troubleshooting fiber-network failures and disruptions—so you can diagnose issues faster, make stronger field decisions, and keep every deployment performing at its best.

5:00 – 7:00 - Evening Social and Tech Challenge!!

Thursday, December 10

7:30 – 8:30 am BREAKFAST - provided

8:30 – 9:15 am **The Modern Wi-Fi Toolset: New Approaches to Network Design - Calix**
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9:15 – 10:00 am **South Dakota 911 Update – Jason Husby**

10:00 am - **BREAK**

10:15 – 11:00 am **Steve Wolles, TelCom Sales** – Technical training topic TBA

11:00 – 11:45 am **Data Center Facts**- Sean Kelly from Light Brigade will talk through data center facts and the impact (or potential impact) on our networks.

11:45 – 12:45 pm **LUNCH**

1:00– 1:45 pm **Awkwardly Awesome: Doing Your Imperfect Best.**

Jason Freeman: Jason Freeman | A Speaker with a Speech Impediment
Through humor and personal stories, Jason will encourage participants to embrace what makes them unique, learn from mistakes, and move forward with greater confidence and purpose. Attendees will leave inspired to turn challenges into opportunities and bring their imperfect best to their work and everyday lives.