

**For Release  
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## **Telecom Executive Receives Major Statewide Recognition**

**Award celebrates distinguished service to consumers and telephone industry**

Hershey, Pa. (June 20, 2006) - Today, the Pennsylvania Telephone Association (PTA) will honor Richard Hrip, of Mechanicsburg, PA, for his outstanding contributions to the telecommunications industry, the Association, and the customers he serves. Hrip is vice president of EMBARQ's External Affairs Department. He will receive his award at a ceremony following PTA's annual banquet this evening. The awards ceremony is part of PTA's 104<sup>th</sup> annual conference being held June 18-21 at The Hotel Hershey in Hershey, PA.

Hrip joined People's United Telephone (later known as "United") in 1968 and worked in various management positions in central Pennsylvania. In 1999, he moved to Overland Park, KS, and was named Senior Manager-State Regulatory. In 2000, he returned to Harrisburg and began working in his current position as Vice President of External Affairs. During his chairmanship of PTA's Board he provided guidance that culminated in the milestone legislation Act 183 of 2004; A major accomplishment for the industry. He had been responsible for legislative, regulatory and public affairs for Sprint's local, long distance and wireless (Sprint PCS) divisions in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

In addition to his duties on the PTA board, Hrip currently serves on the Boards of the New Jersey Utilities Association, Pennsylvania Business Round Table, Team Pennsylvania and the Jake Gittlen Memorial Golf Tournament.

A 1968 graduate of Indiana University of Pennsylvania in Indiana, PA, Hrip

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earned a bachelor's degree in natural sciences. He served in the U.S. Army and is a veteran of the Vietnam War receiving three army commendation medals including two with valor.

Hrip was the 1968 National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) individual golf champion and played on the First Team NAIA golf All-American Team selected to play in the 1967 and 1968 NCAA East/West golf matches. He was inducted into the Butler Area Sports Hall of Fame in 1977 and named to the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Athletics Hall of Fame in 1997. He was named the 1985 Man of the Year by the Greater Area Harrisburg Golf Association.

He and his wife, Sue, reside in Mechanicsburg. They have two sons, Andrew and Max.

According to PTA President David Freet, "This prestigious award recognizes an outstanding individual's service to the telecommunications industry, his contributions to the economic development of his region and his service to local telecommunications company consumers. Richard has provided countless hours of exceptional service to our association. His leadership and commitment to PTA, through participation on the board, has an impact on legislative issues and technological contributions benefiting every citizen in Pennsylvania. He is one of the reasons that EMBARQ, formerly Sprint, and the local telecom industry, are so successful today."

Distinguished service awards were inaugurated in 2002, during the Association's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, to honor those pioneers who have helped pave the way to make PTA and the telecommunications industry in Pennsylvania a critical component of the state's infrastructure.

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PTA represents the 37 local telephone exchange providers that serve nearly 8 million business and residential lines throughout the Commonwealth. Born under a different name in the early 1900's and today based in Harrisburg, PTA has provided Pennsylvania's smallest and largest telephone companies with a clear voice for more than a century. Committed to the future of telecommunications, the PTA serves as an informational clearinghouse for its members, as an advocate with state regulators and legislators and as a watchdog of consumer protection. For more information about PTA, visit [www.patel.org](http://www.patel.org).

EMBARQ, brings common-sense ideas, reliable service and a renewed commitment to the communities it serves. EMBARQ focuses on offering its customers practical, innovative products and competitive pricing. The company has approximately 20,000 employees and operates in 18

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states offering local and long distance voice, data, high speed internet, wireless, and entertainment services. For more information about EMBARQ, visit [www.embarq.com](http://www.embarq.com).