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What the Industry Reads First

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Women in Technology Winner

Theresa Hennesy Comcast

SCTE Expo Preview—page 2

**Q&A with WIT Winner
Theresa Hennesy—page 3**



Expo: Innovation on Display

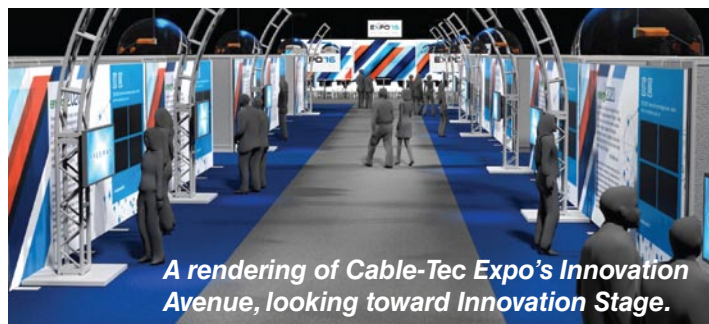
Philadelphia is ready to get its tech on as **SCTE/IBSE's Cable-Tec Expo** descends on the city Sept 26-29. Organizers are taking the theme "Innovation Meets Here" quite literally and transforming how the show is presented by introducing "Innovation Avenue" and "Innovation Theater."

"We needed to create a greater bond between the exhibitor audience and the MSO partners that come and typically take advantage of the workshops," explained *Terry Maloney*, SCTE's vp, marketing and business development.

Enter Innovation Avenue—a 30-foot wide, 120-foot long lane that goes right down the middle of the exhibit floor. "The purpose of the Avenue is to showcase the applied science of what we do at SCTE. We wanted to highlight the innovations coming to play now and in the very near future and in the next 5 years or so," Maloney said.

The avenue opens up into Innovation Theater, a theater with about 200 seats and a 36-foot wide stage with monitors. Here's where industry-wide presentations will be front and center, showcasing tech that will be shaping the industry in the next 4-5 years. The theater and avenue literally create a link between the exhibitor floor and the MSO communities that typically attend the workshops. Cable-Tec Expo will open with a ribbon cutting at the exhibit hall entrance with what we're told will be a "Philly-style" fanfare procession down Innovation Avenue. "We're really getting back to a tradition of working with our partners for industry announcements that are really material and beneficial for our industry," pres/CEO *Mark Dzuban*.

Four weeks before the annual conference's kickoff, SCTE already had about 400 exhibitors signed up for the floor's 3K+ incremental square feet. That includes 55 new exhibitors. "We've got some in the energy area. Some are in areas that are developmental for our industry. It's really a peek at the current science and applying sophisticated broadband networks," Dzuban said. New exhibitors in the developmental space include some looking at big data and how it can be used in network operations and predictive alarming. There are also several exhibitors focused on operational efficiencies, wireless and DOCSIS. Another hot area for the show will be virtualization, such as putting more intelligence virtually in lieu of firmware within the deployed technology. Operators can use virtual reality to diagnose problems in the plant from thousands of miles away. "Some of the activities we've had recently with some of our webinars and things like that, it's the virtualization aspect



that has really taken off like a rocket," Maloney said. "You'll see that technology heavily represented along the Innovation Avenue as well as on the show floor. There are several exhibitors, and even some discussion around it in the workshops as well as on the Innovation Theater stage."

Wireless also will presence at this year's show, starting with Tues' opening session keynote, **Nokia** CTO *Marcus Weldon*. He'll share his thoughts on the future, including observations from his recent book "The Future X Network: A Bell Labs Perspective." Attendees will hear other perspectives in the panel afterwards, which features **Liberty Global** CTO *Balan Nair*, **Shaw** CTO *Zoran Stakic* and **Charter's** evp of engineering and IT *Jim Blackley*. There are also several workshops on the topic, including wireless security and taking wireless beyond WiFi.

Also notable is that Expo takes place in **Comcast's** backyard. That will be on full display Wed when networking event/celebration "Expo Evening" gets underway in Xfinity Live!, a dining and entertainment district with the outdoor area centered on the Xfinity On Demand Theater, a 24-foot wide, **Sony** LED video board.

For those who need a break from the cable tech for a while, we got the inside scoop from well-known technologist *Tony Werner*, SCTE/ISBE chmn and Comcast Cable pres technology and product. "Officially, as SCTE Chair, I'd tell everyone to stay put at EXPO and experience the incredible range of panels, keynotes and exhibits that the team has put together for EXPO 2016. Unofficially, I'll just say that if you do get a few moments off the convention floor, Philadelphia has an amazing amount to offer," he said. "History buffs will be awed by Independence National Historical Park and The Liberty Bell Center; art lovers can lose themselves for hours at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Barnes Foundation or the Rodin Museum; and foodies... well let's just say you may need to book a longer trip. I will note that our world famous Reading Terminal Market is just steps from the EXPO venue, and is a great way to get a taste and feel for Philadelphia."

2016 WIT Winner

The 2016 Women in Technology Award goes to Comcast Cable's svp, group technical advisor Theresa Hennesy. Presented jointly by WICT, SCTE/ISBE and Cablefax, the award goes to one woman whose professional achievements have advanced the cable telecomm industry. Here is a chat we had with Hennesy about her fruitful career.

How do you feel about receiving this award?

It's humbling. When I think of some of the past honorees—Nomi Bergman, Vibha Rustagi, Sherita Ceasar, Jennifer Yohe, Susan Adams, Yvette Kaufman, Leslie Ellis and Charlotte Field—these are incredibly accomplished women, who are strong, confident leaders in our industry. These amazing women leaders provide us with daily examples of the WICT Touchstones. All of these past award winners inspire me. They have all persisted and overcome their own challenges to get where they are today. I'm grateful that I've been able to work with them, learn from them and call them friends.

When did you first know you'd be involved in technology?

When I was going to school, shop class was for boys and home economics for girls. I already knew how to bake cookies, so I lobbied with the school and won the right to be admitted into what was then an all-male course. Shop class was the closest thing we had back then to an engineering class, and it allowed me to build things and experiment. I have always been interested in physics and in understanding the basic concepts that help to explain why things work the way they do, so working at companies that were finding practical applications to scientific principles was a natural progression for me.

Our industry offered me an opportunity to be part of a worldwide transformation around communications. I was personally fascinated with the dynamic new technologies that were changing how people lived and worked. For someone like me who learns by doing, being part of this industry is fantastic! There always seems to be a new skill or technology that one can learn; to test and experiment with how to do things bigger, better and faster.

Was it ever difficult being a woman in technology?

I have been fortunate to have worked with people who can recognize talent in whatever form it comes. The engineers and technologists that I've been privileged to call colleagues have always valued facts and results more than how many Y chromosomes I had. I never felt like I was held back because I was a woman. I believe women are underrepresented in technology fields because of the limited exposure they have to these roles, and they did not always have the same opportunities as men—but I believe this is changing. We need to assist other women so they can see the opportunity.

Sometimes a colleague will underestimate my talents, but I do not let it discourage me. The lessons I learned throughout my career have taught me to never accept what someone else says about your abilities. I love the Albert Einstein quote: "If you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid." Only you have the power to persevere. Respect yourself and your talents, and the results will come through.

Are there enough women in tech today?

I think we are moving in the right direction as demonstrated in the WICT PAR reports, but we still have some opportunities. We have seen an increase in WIT over the years, however I believe there is more we can do to encourage further investment in developing our technical women. I hope our industry continues to accelerate its embrace of gender diversity in technology as I would love to see us outpace our friends in other technology industries. One of the more tempting attributes of our industry is that we continue to rapidly evolve to meet the demands of our customers. These expectations are driving innovation, and we need more talented women at all levels in cable technology. It has been proven in recent studies that companies with

SCTE ISBE



Congratulations

Theresa Hennesy

Recipient of the
2016 Women in Technology Award

The Women in Technology award is a joint effort of WICT, SCTE/ISBE and Cablefax.

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women in leadership have increased profitability, and deliver better products for their customers. I see the evidence of that research every day as I work with brilliant women in my company and our industry. The future is bright. If our industry is going to continue delivering the cutting-edge experiences that our customers demand, we're going to need smart, dedicated women of every level of experience to ensure we stay one step ahead.

Are there any ways to inspire more women to join the field?

I think it is important for us to give back to other women by being engaged and observant through active mentorship, coaching and guidance. We need to engage our existing early and mid-careered women, connecting with and assisting those who ask for help, as well as those that may be unintentionally overlooked. As leaders, we can and should identify women at all career levels, and expose them to all the broad and diverse technologies within our industry. It is not enough for us to say we want to inspire women to join the industry; we need to search them out and actively pursue new undiscovered talent. We must continue to invest in the internship, STEM and WICT Tech It Out programs. I also strongly believe in embracing girls' groups like FIRST Robotics, TechGirlz, Girls, Inc., and Girls Who Code, to introduce young women to the various opportunities available to them in technology. This is a long-term endeavor, but I believe our investments will significantly pay off in the years and decades to come.

How do you tackle the issue of work/life balance?

I don't believe in the mythological concept of "having it all." There is certainly no way to have an "equal" balance between work and one's personal life. To give more effort to one side comes at a cost to the other, and trying for a perfect mix can often come at the cost of both. I have made many sacrifices to support my family financially, and my husband gave up his career as an artist to raise our two boys. I feel very lucky to say that we have few regrets and count our many blessings. Everyone moves toward what they value the most, and I think that part of the journey is learning to recognize what's important, and give ourselves permission to make the choices that work for our families. I love sharing my experiences, especially with other women working in technology, but in the end everyone needs to make their own choices. No one's story is the same. We must learn from others, use all the information we can gather, and then plot our own course.

With that said, in recent years, it's been great to see companies recognizing the value of creating tools and policies that support work/life balance, particularly as it relates to women and mothers. Our industry is as intense and fast-paced as ever, but I think there's been a growing under-

standing on the part of companies that attracting the best, most diverse talent means creating an environment where people can thrive.

What advice would you give to up-and-coming women in tech?

Being technically talented is great, but to get a technology implemented and executed, you need to sell the idea. Communication is key to that success. Make sure you know how to communicate your ideas. Stay technologically relevant and network with others, both inside and outside your company. Be resourceful—learn, read, and attend seminars, webinars, and networking events with other successful technologists. There are many organizations that offer opportunities to discuss topics and issues to gain an understanding of how new technologies are evolving. I encourage women to join organizations that offer training and networking events, such as WICT, SCTE, IEEE, WIE (Women in Engineering) and WIT (Women in Technology). It is paramount that women understand their corporate strategies and technologies, and I believe that networking is a great way to find out how others view and are using them, thus expanding your own perspective and enabling you to see other possibilities. Develop meaningful relationships with a diverse network of individuals. Diversity of thought is important for evaluating all options before selecting the optimal path forward. Through the exchange of ideas, we can inspire each other and help each other achieve our full potential and aspirations.

You created the Comcast Engineering internship program. How is it helping advance the industry?

It is crucial for any industry to have a pipeline of qualified candidates. Especially in the technology sector we need a constant flow of, fresh, innovative thinkers, and what better way to develop good, long-lasting relationships with the leaders of tomorrow than through having them come in and work along side us? Young people need to see the practical application of their degrees, the path from academia to the real world. We don't have them doing "busy work" or the jobs that we don't want to do. We have them working on fundamentally important projects so that they can get a feel for what our industry is all about.

How do you keep ahead of the relentless pace of technological innovation?

Always be learning. The moment you assume you know everything, the technological world will pass you by. New ideas are blossoming exponentially every day, and I try to take in as many of those ideas as possible, but that can be like drinking from a fire hose. Another great way to stay ahead of technological innovation is to be the person making those innovations. You can't fall behind the line if you're leading it.