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NEA streamlines communications

The Missouri National Education Associate, a state-wide advocacy agency for faculty, staff and students in Missouri's public schools, recently found a way to save money, time and effort by revamping the way it communicates.

MNEA has locations in six cities across the state, including Kansas City, Jefferson City, St. Louis, Festus, Springfield and St. Peters. Prior to its communications overhaul, Jay Hall, Manager of Information Systems for MNEA, had to juggle six different telephone and Internet bills from three separate companies.

"We couldn't find one company that was able to provide all of our locations the services we need," said Hall. "We were paying in-state long distance charges whenever someone from one office needed to talk to someone from another office. That meant we literally had to pay to talk to each other. It was also very difficult to figure out which company to call if a certain location was having communication problems. It was time to find a different answer."

The key that unlocked MNEA's communication problems came from Socket, a Missouri-based telephone and

Internet service provider.

"It's not an uncommon problem," said Carson Coffman, vice president of sales and marketing at Socket. "There are different incumbent telephone companies serving different areas of the state. Socket is the only business telephone company that can work within all three territories to provide our clients one company, one service and one bill when they are dealing with multiple state-wide locations."

Socket now provides MNEA with local telephone service, wide area networking dedicated Internet access and long-distance telephone services. MNEA retained all of its original phone numbers and the conversion was virtually undetectable to MNEA's staff and clients. Using Socket's managed wide area network, MNEA was able to converge Internet access, voice over IP, and data sharing for all their statewide office locations. The solution enables six geographically diverse locations to operate as if they are under one roof.

"Not only could Socket provide us the Internet and data services we needed, they were able to provide all of our locations one telecommunications solution," said Hall. "Their bundled solution completely solved all of our

confusion, eliminated the triple-billing situation we were facing, and got rid of our in-state long distance charges."

The Missouri National Education Associate is an advocate for public schools, public students and public school employees. MNEA protects employment rights of its more than 33,000 members. It also promotes and helps build support for public education, offers a full program of professional development opportunities, and provides an effective presence in Jefferson City and Washington D.C. as policies affecting children and public education are debated.

Founded in 1994, Socket is the largest Missouri-based telephone and Internet service provider in the state. Socket is a privately held company that provides business customers a choice for local and long-distance phone service. It combines the highest quality customer service with in-depth technical knowledge to provide customized phone service packages. Socket also provides high-speed DSL and accelerated dial-up Internet service to both business and residential clients. For additional information, please visit: <http://www.socket.net>.