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Profile of Rhonda Parson

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Rhonda Parson is Manager of the Occasional-Use Sales and Traffic division at EchoStar Satellite Services in Denver, Colorado. At EchoStar, she is responsible for the business units' many success stories they have enjoyed during their three years in the Ku-band space segment arena. Before joining EchoStar, Rhonda was Manager of Sales and Traffic at Verestar in Texas where she was responsible for many aspects of the business including Full Time and Occasional-Use Satellite and Teleport services. Rhonda was at the teleport for 10 years before coming to EchoStar in 2006 where she built the occasional-use business from the ground up.

1) How did you get started in the satellite business?

In 1995 I was in the banking industry and was in need of a change so I answered an ad in the paper (this was before the internet!) for an office manager at a teleport in Dallas. I got the job and since it was a small company I was involved in much of the day to day operations. I was involved in the billing, collecting, marketing, HR, payroll, commissions, accounts receivable and accounts payable etc. I was able to learn the business by being involved in everything and I just kept working my way up. I loved the many hats I was wearing and learning new things and feeling that I was helping the bottom line.

2) How have you been involved in changes brought about in or by this business (innovations, technologies, services)?

I was involved in the microwave to fiber transition at the teleport in Texas, as well as the switch from the ground intensive Cband to smaller dish size Ku band for broadcasters. I have seen many changes, the transition of microwave to fiber, the switch from analog satellite to digital satellite, and MPEG 2 & MPEG 4. When the technologies change, it opens up new doors and new customer bases.

3) What do you think was the greatest event/situation/opportunity you experienced?

In 2006, I was presented with the opportunity by EchoStar to move to Denver and build the Occasional Use Traffic Department from the ground up. I had been in this business for over 10 years and had seen many changes; I had also worked with many vendors and competitors. I was able to see what worked and what didn't and was given the freedom to build a business model that worked. A good example of how well this business model worked is Election Day 2008. EchoStar scheduled **52 transponders** of election traffic for national broadcasters! Over

500+ accesses with no incidents. This was the most amazing day of my career! No one in this industry can say that they had over 500 accesses in one day. It was a huge undertaking and was flawless!

4) What advice do you have for women interested in entering the industry?

My advice is to get your foot in the door and work your way up from there. The experience you will gain from working your way up and learning all facets of the business is worth more than an MBA in this industry! Work hard, always be willing to jump in and help. One of the most important things is to protect your reputation, by working hard, being ethical and hardworking.