



Connecting Alaskans: Telecommunications in Alaska from Telegraph to Broadband

Heather E. Hudson

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“Alaska is now open to civilization.” With those six words in 1900, the northernmost territory finally had a connection with the rest of the country. The telegraph system put in place by the US Army Signal Corps heralded the start of Alaska’s communication network. Yet, as hopeful as that message was, Alaska faced decades of infrastructure challenges as remote locations, extreme weather, and massive distances all contributed to less-than-ideal conditions for establishing reliable telecommunications.

Connecting Alaskans tells the unique history of providing radio, television, phone, and Internet services to more than six hundred thousand square miles. It is a history of a place where military needs often trumped civilian ones, where ham radios offered better connections than telephone lines, and where television shows aired an entire day later than in the rest of the country.

Heather E. Hudson covers more than a century of successes while clearly explaining the connection problems still faced by remote communities today. Her comprehensive history is perfect for anyone interested in telecommunications technology and history, and she provides an important template for policy makers, rural communities, and developing countries struggling to develop their own twenty-first-century infrastructure.

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