

ViaSat-3 on Earth  
**GROUND  
BREAKING**

Reimagining our ground systems  
for tomorrow's expanded capacity

## Leadership evolution

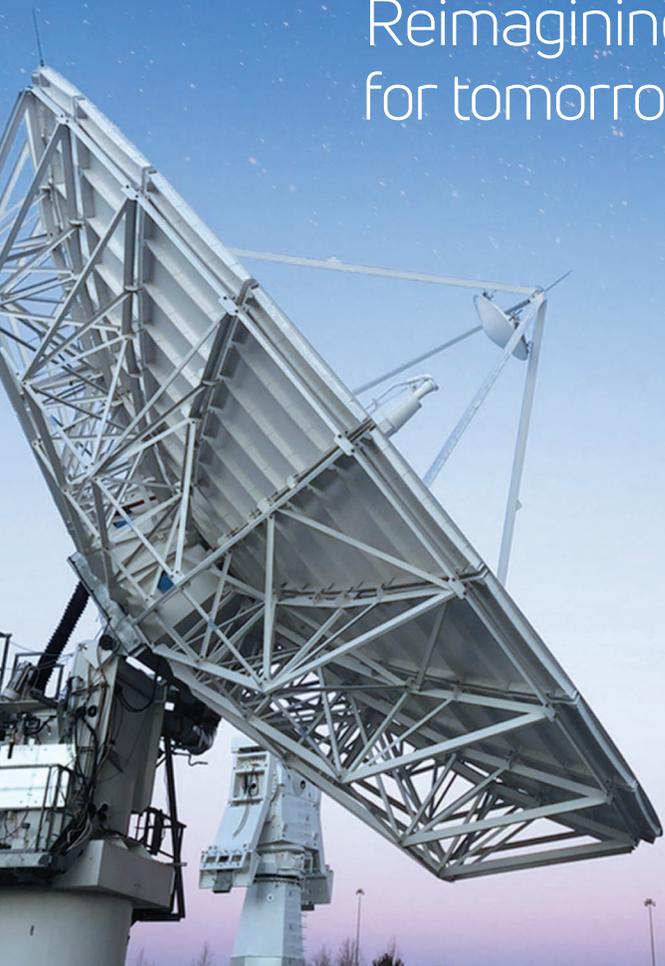
Viasat's top execs transform roles  
to prepare for global expansion  
page 5

## Pandemic pivot

Virginia retailer meets his  
customers' shifting needs  
page 4

## Marketing news

Trost chosen as Viasat's  
preferred partner  
page 6



Our goal is to provide tips, information and marketing ideas to boost your business, plus interesting features on retailers.

We welcome story ideas and suggestions. Had an unusual installation? A sales or installation tip to share with other retailers? Let us know!

You can reach us at [viasatvision@viasat.com](mailto:viasatvision@viasat.com).

## Viasat grants

### help small businesses through coronavirus

**MIDWAY THROUGH 2020**, as the reality of the coronavirus and its impacts set in, Viasat Business Internet started the *Ready. Set. Grow.* small business grant program. The idea was to give some of our business customers a small financial boost to help them through the coronavirus pandemic.

Through the program, five small businesses each received a \$5,000 grant, and five others each received a \$1,000 grant. Recipients were selected based on their responses to a short series of essay questions, including how COVID impacted their business, how they'd use the funds and the

importance of their Viasat Business Internet service.

Meredith Totten, senior marketing manager for Viasat Business, was the driving force behind the program. She was motivated by data and news stories that showed the devastating impact of the pandemic on businesses. Time and again, what business owners said they needed most was financial support.

"While we wish we could have helped even more businesses, we're proud that we could take this step to deepen our relationship with our customers," Totten said. "I was able to personally call each of the winning business

owners to give them the good news and I got every type of reaction, but especially yelps and cheers. For me, that made all the hard work worthwhile.

"Each of these businesses provides a special, essential role in their community, which Viasat Business Internet helps enable. At a time when many of us had our hope wane, the *Ready. Set. Grow.* grant helped bolster these 10 organizations and the communities they serve."

Viasat featured each of our \$5,000 grant winners in individual blog stories, and highlighted the five additional businesses who each received \$1,000.

#### The \$5,000 winners included:

##### Adolios

**A family-owned Brownsville, Texas restaurant.**

The restaurant had fallen behind on its rent, and planned to use the funds to get back on track and keep the business running.

Adolios' marketing manager Nelson Amaro said the extra funds allowed him to offer the restaurant's 19 staff members some reassurance.

"Telling the employees we're not going to close down in the next week or month, and letting them know you have a job and are able to feed your family, is invaluable," he said. "This grant will be a little breath of fresh air that will keep us going."

##### Bizzy Beez Academy

**A California daycare center that stayed open during the pandemic to serve its working parents.**

The owners converted an unused classroom into a space in which elementary-aged children could do distance learning while their parents worked. Viasat's grant helped fund the distance-learning classroom, including paying student teachers who weren't typically part of the center's budget.

"Accommodating students who are doing distance learning is not something we're required to do," school director Shantel Marrero said. "But our hearts jumped in and we wanted to do it because these kids need us right now."

See Viasat grants on p.10

# Viasat's

## ground network evolution

Along with our next generation of satellites, newly reimagined ground systems are also part of Viasat's greatly expanding capacity

**SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS** require three main components to work: The spacecraft in orbit, the user terminal and the ground network — a collection of earth stations connected to the internet by fiber optic cable.

These locations, often called gateways, have large antennas aimed at the satellite and serve as the intermediary between the user and the internet. Traditionally, gateway antennas are quite large — 7 meters or more in diameter. A nationwide network like those Viasat manages might have dozens of gateways, often in remote locations, to serve one satellite. And the cost to build and operate this ground segment — including servers, backup generators and other infrastructure — can be significant.

Much of this, however, is changing.

Viasat's goal to continually push down the cost of bandwidth while also improving our overall performance and capacity depends in large part on the satellite advances we've made. But the ground segment is every bit as important.

Just as mobile network capacity

improves with more cellular towers, higher capacity satellites need more antennas on the ground. We changed the traditional model a great deal with ViaSat-2, drastically reducing the size and cost of each ground station while increasing the number and improving the performance.

When our next generation of satellites, ViaSat-3, are launched, they will be connected to an even more sophisticated ground network with a great many more gateways — also known as satellite access nodes (SANs).

### Smaller is better

One big reason many satellite networks have large antennas on the ground is to accommodate high-powered signals that are able to cut through weather. Rain and clouds can hamper performance, so when you only have a small number of gateways, it's important they're all working at optimum performance levels.

To get the breakthrough increases

in capacity from our new satellites, we use more SANs and distribute them around a geographic area. As a side benefit, when bad weather affects the performance of one or two of them, or even if one of them goes down, the multiple redundancy from having many more SANs easily makes up for it. So adding more sites means you can get the performance required out of much smaller antennas.

Another way Viasat reduces the size of each SAN is by relocating many of the processor functions to a nearby data center — essentially a private cloud. That eliminates a lot of the space required for the servers and all the infrastructure needed to power and cool them, as well as backup generators and redundant fiber lines.

The importance of all this can't be overstated: By driving down the cost of the ground system while improving it at the same time, we're able to provide better service and increase capacity over the network.

In this photo of the gateway near our Viasat Denver office, you can see the difference between the ViaSat-1 antenna on the right and the ViaSat-2 antenna on the left. The upcoming ViaSat-3 ground network will have even smaller antennas and more stations.



# Virginia retailer's business meeting customer needs through pandemic

Northern Neck's Mike Dotson says niche market and Viasat engineering keys to success

**VIASAT RETAILER MIKE DOTSON** has spent most of his life surrounded by the beauty of Virginia's Chesapeake Bay. In early 2020, as the coronavirus began to sweep the U.S., the area underwent a transformation — one that proved a major boon to his business.

Second homes that sat empty much of the year abruptly converted to primary residences as people fled cities for less densely populated areas. Dotson, who owns Northern Neck Satellite Services, was ready to meet their needs.

"When COVID hit, people started hunkering down in their weekend places and decided they needed TV and internet," he said. "We're booked up a month in advance now and haven't had a break in over a year. I feel very fortunate."

He also credits decisions Viasat made in the early days of the pandemic.

"The engineers at Viasat have done an incredible job shifting throughput and managing the service," Dotson said. "We have continuously met or exceeded promised speeds during this challenging time."

## Niche market

Northern Neck is a small, family-run operation with four employees, including Dotson, his identical twin sons and an office manager. The 8-year-old business has always done well, a fact Dotson attributes to his niche market and upfront approach to doing business.

"We've been an elite dealer ever since I've had my store," he said. "We've done a good job for a long time, so we have a good reputation."

"My area's also a bit unique. It's rural but all waterfront, with million-dollar homes.

Our customers are widely made up of weekenders and transplants from Northern Virginia, Washington D.C. and southern Maryland, which include many successful and wealthy people."

While Dotson is a fan of Viasat's service, he ensures prospective customers understand how it differs from cable or fiber-based internet.

"My tagline is it's a good dependable service, but it is a metered service," he said. "There are a lot of people off the grid out here, and I tell them that if you can't get cable, Viasat Internet is by far the best service you're going to get."



Mike Dotson

"Then we go above and beyond and really explain the service to folks so they can decide in an educated manner whether or not it will work for them."

A resident of Virginia since the age of 12, Dotson has worked as a trainer for a major manufacturer and, when that market dipped, a sales manager for a wireless

internet service provider. He lived and worked in Boston for a while, but never stopped yearning for Virginia and the family and friends he'd left behind.

Returning to Virginia, Dotson worked for several years as a HughesNet installer. While he was successful in that role, he wasn't satisfied working for others.

In 2012, Dotson founded Northern Neck Satellite Services. He opened a storefront in Kilmarnock, VA in 2017, offering television, home automation and security services in addition to internet.

Kilmarnock is the commercial hub of Virginia's Northern Neck, the northernmost of three peninsulas on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay.

---

See Virginia retailer on p.10

# Viasat top executives transform their roles in leadership evolution

## **VIASAT'S TOP EXECUTIVES** Mark

Dankberg and Rick Baldrige have forged a strong partnership over the years.

As Chairman and CEO, Dankberg, one of the company's founders, managed the company's overall direction and technology while President and COO Baldrige handled operations. In November 2020, the two made that arrangement more formal, with Dankberg assuming the new role of Executive Chairman and Baldrige stepping into the CEO role.

Dankberg continues to serve as Chairman of the Board for Viasat.

The transition is also part of a strategic alignment as Viasat grows into a global company, and the need to create a long-term succession plan became more apparent.

"This represents a natural evolution and will best serve the interests of Viasat's long-term future, as we execute against our plan to deliver ubiquitous, affordable connectivity that will help close the global digital divide," Dankberg said.

As President and CEO, Baldrige will continue his executive and operational leadership, with a focus on building and growing a customer-centric organization that will continue to deliver compelling global services and products. Baldrige will maintain his seat on the Viasat Board of Directors.

"I am honored to lead Viasat, a company that I have devoted many years to help build," Baldrige said. "We have leading technology, strong business segments, exceptional people and the resources needed to make the



**Mark Dankberg**, left, and **Rick Baldrige** are shifting their leadership roles to prepare for Viasat's global expansion.

company a formidable global player in broadband communications."

Along with his day-to-day role running the company, Baldrige will be highly focused on the execution behind Viasat's upcoming global constellation, ViaSat-3. Strengthening the Company's customer-centric approach will also be a key focus for Baldrige, who's been with Viasat for 21 years.

Dankberg, who's been a visionary technology driver in the satellite industry for many years, says he's excited to focus more exclusively on providing technical thought leadership and strategic oversight of the Company's innovation roadmap and technical advocacy.

"I'm very pleased Rick has agreed to take on the CEO role," Dankberg said.

"We have built a close relationship through the years that is reflected in every part of Viasat – from our company culture, to our business strategies and operational execution."

Baldrige echoed that sentiment.

Pursuing ever more advanced technology to improve Viasat's reach and performance is the other key part of the equation.

"In working with the Board of Directors, Mark and the global Viasat team, we will continue to embrace new and emerging technologies that enable us to elevate our customers' experiences, extend our market leadership and deliver long-term, differentiated value for our stakeholders," Baldrige said.

# TROST MARKETING

## as preferred partner

**VIASAT RETAILER JOHN PRICE** is always thinking about marketing.

He drives the country roads near his home base of Frankston, TX, scanning rooftops and talking to residents to determine what services they use, and if the area might be a good fit for a direct mail campaign.

Whenever his company, All Advanced Media Communications, does an installation, Price ensures at least two yard signs are put up in that same neighborhood.

“I do direct mailers, radius mailers and yard signs, but it’s not just spray-and-pray and hope it’ll work,” he said. “I’ve got my own method.”

And when he needs marketing materials or advice, he calls Trost Marketing.

“Alexis Stephens (sales account manager) will bend over backward to find good areas for you to market in,” Price said. “If you’re successful, she’s successful, so it doesn’t seem like she’s just doing her job.

“It’s a great company. I wouldn’t give them up for the world.”

Viasat recently selected Trost as its preferred marketing partner. Retailers can still use Armstrong Print & Promotional Services, Lorex or Regency Marketing. But as the preferred partner, Trost will be best positioned to help them with their marketing plans and will have dedicated Viasat marketing specialists ready to serve retailers.

The decision to designate Trost as a preferred partner grew out of Viasat’s recent changes to retailers’

said the designation ensures retailers have access to not only high-quality marketing resources but the best possible pricing.

Trost President Evan Uyetake said his company will focus on helping retailers make good use of their marketing budgets without relying on co-op funds.

“We’ve always been a strong proponent of creating consistency in marketing, which creates consistency in sales,” he said. “One of the reasons we were selected is we’ve been able to craft that ongoing marketing strategy for retailers, so they’re not being reactive and saying, ‘I need to start advertising because I don’t have any sales.’”

Uyetake said Trost will work with retailers to promote their entire product line, not just Viasat.

“We’re going to have a very close working relationship with Viasat, but we’ll work with the retailers to help them develop their brand more across all the products they sell,” he said. We build relationships with retailers, and strategies that fit their individualized needs.”

Trost will also focus on helping retailers find “sticky customers,” Uyetake said, those who provide a high ARPU and will remain subscribers for an extended period.

The company will also prepare retailers for the boom in business that will accompany ViaSat-3.

“Much of our marketing focus in 2021 will be foundation work for 2022,” he said. “Retailers will be well-positioned and already have the relationships they need when Viasat-3 service begins to dramatically expand their business.

“I’m excited about having an even closer working relationship with Viasat, and expanding our wonderful relationship with the retailer base to put us all in the best position for success.”

commissions, which included eliminating the co-op marketing program to help increase commissions.

“By naming Trost our preferred marketing partner, we have ensured that retailers will benefit from a more integrated partnership that will result in better data sharing, faster recognition of trends and ultimately, access to a marketing partner as well equipped as ever to help each retailer grow their business,” said Viasat Head of Partner Performance Matt Shearer.

Shearer also



### Your Preferred Source For Viasat Marketing

- If you want the **best tools and marketing** to promote your Viasat Business...
- If you want the **best service** from Viasat Marketing Specialists....
- If you want **lead generating designs and quick turn around** times...
- If you want **Viasat and PerfectVision’s choice** for the marketing that puts you in the best position for growing your business...

Look no further than Trost Marketing.

**866-492-7820**

[www.satleads.com](http://www.satleads.com)  
[trostinfo@trostmarketing.com](mailto:trostinfo@trostmarketing.com)

## FS Tech Support app yielding higher quality installations

**AN APP VIASAT INSTALLERS** use to visually document their installations is resulting in higher-quality work. That means fewer service calls, happier customers and more money in retailer and installer pockets.

As of Dec. 1, Viasat requires all SI dealers to use the FS Tech Support app, which it introduced in mid-2020. The app allows installers to capture the 11 required photos to document the critical steps of each installation, using one of two possible methods.

The first and most likely method technicians can use to take photos is via the app's camera.

The second method is using the app's Live QC video streaming functionality that connects a technician to a quality control agent. The agent takes screen shots of the 11 required photos from the video feed, and conducts a real time quality audit of the order.

Any orders processed using the Live

QC method will include a \$6 fee; there is no fee for uploading photos using the app's camera.

Regardless of which option a technician uses, the photos are then uploaded for review to Field Service Management (FSM) — the order management system used by both Viasat's retail and fulfillment partners.

Bottom line results show the FS Tech Support app makes a difference for both technicians and customers.

"If you use the app and start uploading photos, you're going to have a much more positive result in customer satisfaction scores, early churn, service calls, and escalations," said Viasat Senior Project Manager Adam Cutler. "When an order goes through a Live QC treatment, those positive outcomes are even better, and the audit pass rate is higher.

"It's up to each individual retailer whether to use Live QC or to virtually

capture photos. The most important thing is that they use the FS Tech Support app."

Audits include reviewing the required 11 photos: Back assembly, cable run, cable type, ground block, ground run, ground source, line of sight, location, mount, overall ODU and point of entry.

While every new process requires an adjustment period, Viasat leaders say using the app to upload photos for review will quickly bring better results through higher quality installations and improved order documentation.

"FS Tech Support is really supporting what we've always set as the requirement, which is our Viasat installation standards," Cutler said. "It's a great opportunity for the SI network to improve their quality program."

The updated training module for FS Tech Support is available at Viasat Discover. Technicians can also access this FS Tech Support FAQ on the eGuide.

## Viasat introduces TextLine service for technicians

Viasat launched a new texting service in November, aimed at creating more effective communications with its technicians. To sign up for the Viasat TextLine, text "Viasat" to 833-948-2449.

The service will let technicians know about national outages, changes to programs or products, trainings, TechTalks, Tech Bulletins, videos and other critical updates.

Tech Bulletins will continue to be sent by email as well, but will now also be sent as a link included in a TextLine notification.

Texting is a highly effective communications tool. Research shows

98% of texts are opened, compared to 20% of emails. And 95% of texts are read within 3 minutes of being sent; just 23% of emails are opened an hour after they were sent.

Technicians are not required to provide any personal information to sign up for the service, and can opt out by texting "stop" anytime they'd like.

The easy sign-up also allows anyone who may have a need for the service to

Text **VIASAT**  
to **833-948-2449**

use it.

"We believe it's not just technicians who could benefit from this," said Field Services Manager Paul Getler. "It could be a dispatcher, manager or owner who may not have a tech ID but supports the technician. Using TextLine, they can get this information as well.

"It's a free tool that we believe is purely an asset to the industry."

Questions about the service? Email [field.questions@viasat.com](mailto:field.questions@viasat.com)

# Costa Rica Trip

# Silver Linings

## Despite trip cancellation, retailers still benefit; kids still get new playground

**DUE TO CONTINUING HEALTH CONCERNS** about traveling during the pandemic, Viasat leaders made the difficult decision to cancel its Club Viasat Costa Rica retailer incentive trip. Each retailer who earned a place on the trip will receive financial compensation equivalent to the cost of the trip.

The company will also honor plans for its charitable project. Instead of retailers building a playground at a Costa Rica school, it is arranging for local volunteers to complete the work.

The trip, a biennial award for the company's top-performing retailers, was originally planned for June 2020.

Viasat had hoped to reschedule it in 2021, but ultimately decided the health risk remains too high.

"These are prizes they should have earned last year, and it has always been our intention to recognize how hard people worked for them," said Matt Shearer, Viasat's head of partner performance. "Rather than risk having to delay the trip again, we reluctantly opted to cancel it and reward these retailers in another way."

Retailer Joshua Buck, owner of Georgia-based CommuLink, said he's happy with the compromise.

"With COVID, it only made sense;

nobody expected that to happen," he said. "It would have been cool to meet up with other retailers and learn some new tactics, but instead I'm going to take my wife and kids to Disney World."

When retailer Robert Riley got a phone call about the check that would be issued to him as compensation, he made an immediate decision.

"I was in the car with my wife when I got the call, and my wife said, 'Who was that?'" Riley said. "I said, 'That was somebody telling me we're going skiing.'"

Riley, who owns Georgia-based Superior Communications Services, spent a week with his wife at Lake Tahoe's Heavenly Ski Resort, which he said lived up to its celestial name.

"It's always great to get together with peers and with people from Viasat," said Riley, who attended the 2018 Mexico trip. "The last one was held at one of the nicest places I've ever been. So I would rather go on the trips, but all those things are just extras. As long as I can make money and pay my bills, that's great."

Viasat has already paid for and shipped the playground equipment to Costa Rica, and expects the playground will be completed sometime this year.

Escuela De Mata Palo is a K-6 school located in a low-income neighborhood, with limited funds available for recreation. Viasat partnered on the project with the nonprofit that works with organizations to build playgrounds in poverty-stricken communities.

As retailers did in Tahiti during the 2016 trip, Viasat will build a playground for children in Costa Rica in 2021.





# Winners of Club Viasat Costa Rica

The contest period for the Costa Rica retailer incentive trip ran from March 2019 to February 2020. Retailers were selected based on a combination of sales volume and survivability.

Joshua Buck, CommuLink

Hvertime

Go Pro Technical Solutions

Grant Odom

GFI Signal Solutions

Future Vision Enterprises/  
John Dawson

Microcom

Hardy Mill

Down to Earth Media

Pitbull Computers

Fusion Communication Services

Davis Brothers

Northern Entertainment &  
Communications/Zach Richie

Dish Express

Central Protection Services

Superior Communication  
Services/Robert Riley

Northern Home Satellite

Rural Satellite Services

Johnston Communications

Bennett Services

Dean's Satellite & Security

Dant Morris

TNT Satellites/Nick Golarte

Veer Group

Advanced Internet Technology

Big Island Satellite/Rico Ferrari

Everett Satellite  
Communications

Zander Net

Northern Neck Satellite Services/  
Mike Dotson

AirWave Communications

M&A Tech Solutions

Holmes Satellite and Electronics

JR Communications

WIREFREE USA/Bill Teevens

Satellite Alaska

Chad Owens/Williston Custom  
Installations

All Advanced Satellite Systems/  
John Price

Timeless Communications

Harmer Radio and Electronics/  
Mark Harmer

Sell Well Marketing



## The \$5,000 winners continued:

### Westbrook Counseling

**A Missouri-based organization that provides in-person and telehealth services to active duty soldiers, veterans and their family members.**

Founder Sarah Westbrook planned to use the grant funds to add psycho-educational marriage clinics and COVID-related support groups for community members, including technology needed for HIPPA-compliant video conferencing, furniture to eventually transition to in-person clinics, and marketing to let people know about the clinics.

“We’re in a rural community, and we don’t have the same mental health resources as they do in Springfield or St. Louis,” she said. “We are lacking in service providers. There are hard days because a lot of people are in pain. So that email (from Viasat) really sparked the idea of how I can help more people without burning myself out.”

### Urban Tree Connection

**A Philadelphia nonprofit that helps members of a disadvantaged community cultivate and distribute food grown on vacant or abandoned parcels.**

UTC grows about 6,500 pounds of food each year, involving community members in distributing and selling the food. Proceeds are re-invested in UTC programs. The grant helped keep several of its programs going through year’s end, including continuation of a food distribution program that in a typical year ends by Nov. 1.

“This is the kind of year where business as usual is out the door,” UTC Executive Director Noelle Warford said. “But we’ve seen a growing need around food insecurity in the neighborhood and coronavirus has further exacerbated that. We are preparing so that we can continue to be a resource to people over the winter.”

### Manchester, Inc.

**An Indiana millwright services company.**

The 12 employees of this small business repair, construct and install industrial equipment. But because their jobs require workers to be in other companies’ facilities, work ground to a halt in early 2020.

Despite having no income, owner Cindy Hall said, “I made the move before the government did to go ahead and pay my employees for 20 hours a week out of the company funds so they could feed their families.”

The grant funds helped offset operational costs and credit card bills required to help pay the company’s employees when they were unable to work. A portion of them will also go to help a member of the Manchester work family who sustained a life-changing injury in 2019.

“God has blessed us beyond belief,” Hall said. “This will be a fantastic gift for him.”

## The \$1,000 winners included:

- › **All About Grooming** — Sanger, Texas
- › **Youth Futures** — Ogden, Utah
- › **Brew 66** — Luther, Oklahoma
- › **Ray O’ Sunshine Food & Garden** — Dorchester, South Carolina
- › **Lady Veterans Connect** — Winchester, Kentucky

## Virginia retailer from p.4

In addition to his local roots, and high-quality customer service, Dotson believes in marketing to keep his business name front and center.

“I’ve tried everything, and the yard signs are the biggest bang for the buck,” he said. “I resisted doing them at first, but if a consumer drives down their street and sees that yard sign, and they just left their house and are frustrated with their internet, they’re

going to call you.

“We literally own neighborhoods out here just because of word-of-mouth.”

Dotson also has a genuine belief in the products he sells, one based on his own observations and experiences. Years ago, his Viasat representative described the then-still-futuristic ViaSat-2 in glowing terms; Dotson was skeptical.

“After being in the industry for a while, you’re hesitant to believe it until you see it,” he said. “But I saw it. I can only hope it’s going to get even better

with ViaSat-3.”

Viasat’s service, and Dotson’s own efforts have helped create not only a thriving business, but a happy life.

“Ours is a family business and I don’t believe bigger is always better,” he said. “We’ve been lucky to have found a niche here and make a good living, and I’ve created something I can give to my sons. I am very happy with the role we play in our community.”