

Summer 2018



# THE LINK

## 67TH ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, June 6, 2018  
Foster County Fairgrounds

Registration 3:30 PM

Business Meeting 4:30 PM

Dinner will be served following  
the meeting until 6:30 PM



## OFFICIAL NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL MEETING: *Dakota Central Telecommunications Cooperative*

**N**otice is hereby given, that the 2018 annual meeting of the members of Dakota Central Telecommunications Cooperative, Carrington, North Dakota, will be held at the Foster County Fairgrounds on Wednesday, June 6, 2018, at 4:30 pm, to take action on the following matters:

1. To elect board members in the districts of Grace City, Medina and Windsor
2. To present reports for the 2017 fiscal year.
3. Transacting such other business as may come before the meeting.

Individuals were nominated by petition to represent the members in their respective districts.

Following are the candidates nominated:

**Grace City Exchange, Kathy McCracken**

**Medina Exchange, Craig Hoffmann**

**Windsor Exchange, Rodney Suko**

Each member of the cooperative present at the meeting shall be entitled to vote for one candidate from each district. The candidate from each district receiving the highest number of votes at the meeting shall be considered elected as a board member.



# SPOTLIGHT

## BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: *Petals and Stems*



**“I love making pretty things.”**

Brenda Bush, owner of Petals and Stems floral shop in Carrington, has had her work cut out for her starting a business from the ground up. Working with plants and flowers has always been something she enjoyed, but finally made it a profession and a business in January of 2018. The main focus of the business is to make custom floral arrangements for weddings, special occasions or any occasion. For those with a sweet-tooth, Petals and Stems will make candy bouquets and other unique gifts, all with a personal touch. A fun and unique item Brenda recently started carrying by request, are air plants. These plants grow without soil and have air-purifying qualities – but still need to be watered.

Brenda’s favorite part about running her own business is the design process and the ability to be creative, all while serving the people in the community. “I love being able to create beautiful things for people, especially when I know exactly what colors and style they’re going to

like,” Brenda said. “I want my customers to tell me about the person they’re ordering for, so I can make their gift extra special.”

Petals and Stems also features other local artists and their products, and her goal is to showcase more of that in the future. Brenda also is planning to host floral classes, like how to grow succulents, as well as classes just for kids. “I’ve started out small and will continue to grow and build the business as I go,” Brenda said.

Brenda said that learning how to manage the business tasks by herself has been the most challenging part of it all, as she has no background in that aspect. Most of the time, Brenda is a one-woman show, but does have part-time help on occasion. When asked how Dakota Central services help Petals and Stems, Brenda was quick to reply that the Managed Wi-Fi service has been extremely beneficial. “I have orders coming in through the website, phone, e-mail and even Facebook messenger, so if an issue ever comes up I can call the office anytime and there’s always a quick response.” Petals and Stems subscribes to Managed Wi-Fi for business, which means we provide the router and remote troubleshooting and support. “I am already the accountant, designer, delivery woman, janitor, and everything else, so it helps to have some IT support,” Brenda explained. Dakota Central is happy to provide service and support for Petals and Stems, so Brenda can focus more time and energy on her favorite jobs!

To see what Petals and Stems has to offer, visit [petalsandstems carringtonnd.com](http://petalsandstems carringtonnd.com), or find them on Facebook.



## A LETTER FROM OUR GENERAL MANAGER

In 2017, we focused our construction on the Jamestown Reservoir for the most part. This area has a fairly dense accumulation of homes and cabins compared to the rural area, where we often have to plow miles of fiber to serve the next customer. This spring, we will spend a few weeks finishing up the construction on the West side of the reservoir that we began last fall. After that is completed, the construction crew will move to Spiritwood Lake to begin there. We previously served Spiritwood Lake with a wireless broadband service that had limited bandwidth capabilities, and has now reached end of life.

In the last few years we have worked diligently to expand our network and reach rural residents not served by fiber. With the completion of Spiritwood Lake and the Jamestown Reservoir projects this year, we will have constructed fiber facilities throughout our entire designated service area, as well as a majority of the area nearby that has sufficient density to support the cost of construction. There are few areas left that will support the cost of the fiber investment without some form of universal service fund or grants to aid with construction costs. However, we continue to hope that funding will be appropriated that would allow us to continue to build-out the areas not yet served by fiber.

Aside from the fiber construction, there's another construction project we are undertaking in Jamestown. During the month of May, we broke ground on a 4,300 square foot addition to our Jamestown headquarters building. As our customer base of Daktel Communications has grown to be the largest segment of our operations, we have outgrown the space needed by our Jamestown personnel. Our customer service and commercial operations, as well as a training room, will be included in the new addition allowing us to dedicate the existing structure to the technical staff and operations. We hope to move into the new addition during the month of December.

In order to better assure the security of our network, we are working with a firm to perform a cybersecurity assessment. They will perform an in-depth analysis of the controls we currently have in place to protect our network and information. Following the analysis, we will be provided a plan of action with prioritized recommendations as to how we can better secure and protect our network from a breach.

This spring Governor Burgum announced that North Dakota would be the first state in the nation to connect every school and institution of higher education with Gig (gigabit) service. Gigabit Internet is approximately 100 times faster than most residences in the United States have today. The FCC defines "broadband" as being 25 megabits per second downstream and 3 megabits per second upstream, or 40 times faster than the U.S. Government's own definition of broadband. North Dakota's telecom cooperatives and small commercial companies offer gigabit service in 288 communities today. Those 18 companies serve 96 percent of North Dakota's geographic territory and employ over 1,000 men and women that are committed to providing residents of North Dakota with a fiber-based broadband infrastructure.

We look forward to the many exciting projects on the table this year. As always, we thank you all for your support!



*Keith Larson, CEO/GM*

## AWARD DAKOTA CENTRAL RECEIVES NTCA TELECHOICE AWARD



**Dakota Central has been honored for excellence in communications from the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA).** The cooperative was awarded a TeleChoice Award at the PR & Marketing conference in Nashville, TN in May. The first place award was for a Complete Branding Campaign, in which Dakota Central implemented in 2017. Brianne Partlow, Marketing Coordinator, accepted the award on behalf of Dakota Central.

This year 28 member companies were honored for excellence in member telco public relations and marketing. Entries in six categories—complete branding campaign, complete marketing campaign, customer newsletter, local video content, single-target print publication and website—were judged on innovative strategies, design, writing, creativity and other elements specific to each category. In each category, a winner was selected from three divisions based on the number of access lines served by the entrant and two production divisions: "in-house" and "outsourced."

## MEET THE NOMINEES...

Nominations for the Dakota Central Board of Directors were recently made to elect board members for the Grace City, Medina and Windsor Exchanges. In accordance with the cooperative's bylaws, nominations for board members were made via petition to represent the members of their respective districts. Following are the members who were nominated and whose names will appear on the ballot at the annual meeting on June 6th.

Grace City Exchange, Kathy McCracken  
Medina Exchange, Craig Hoffmann  
Windsor Exchange, Rodney Suko



### GRACE CITY EXCHANGE

**Kathy McCracken** has served on the board of directors for 18 years, previously in the Director-at-Large position, and is seeking re-election to represent the Grace City Exchange. Kathy is the Director of the Central Dakota Distance Learning Consortium, which provides distance learning opportunities to

students in rural schools throughout central North Dakota. Kathy serves on the Grace Lutheran Church Council and as the church organist, as well as the Tri-County Parish Ministry Council. Kathy enjoys working in her yard and garden, doing puzzles, playing cards as well as traveling.



### MEDINA EXCHANGE

**Craig Hoffmann** is seeking re-election as a director representing the Medina Exchange. Craig lives north of Medina where he works for Western Products Sales. Craig serves on the Losco Township Board of Directors, the UCC Church Board and is a member of the Jamestown Shriners. One of his goals for

the company is to continue to provide options for TV customers while keeping costs down.



### WINDSOR EXCHANGE

**Rodney Suko** has served as a director on the Dakota Central board for 36 years, representing the Windsor exchange. As a farmer, Rodney is also a director at the Country Grains Cooperative, a member of the Jamestown Lions Club and serves on the North Dakota Telephone Company Board.

## HELP DESK STRAIGHT FROM THE HELP DESK



The extremely long winter we experienced had our customers peaking out network streaming usage, because what else is there to do? Even though summer has finally arrived and we are spending more time outdoors, it doesn't mean the streaming will stop. Which is why we wanted to share a few tips to help you make sure you are streaming seamlessly!

### 3 STEPS TO SMOOTH STREAMING

#### Step #1

Check your connection: are you wired or wireless? Although it is convenient, if you are connected via Wi-Fi that leaves more room for interference. If you are able to connect your device directly with an Ethernet cable, we recommend going that way. For example, we have found that the wireless technology in Smart TV's can be weak, so if it's possible try to connect yours with an Ethernet cable!

#### Step #2

Do a speed test. If your device is directly plugged in with an Ethernet cable, you should be close to your subscribed speed. If you are connected via Wi-Fi, you should be getting around 80% of your subscribed speed. So, if you subscribe to 100 Mbps, you should get around 80 Mbps when connected to Wi-Fi. If you are not reaching the speed you are subscribed to- give us a call!

#### Step #3

Check the location of your router. You'll want to make sure your router is located centrally within your home, or closest to where you use your devices. This way, any devices that are trying to connect over Wi-Fi should get a decent signal. Anything in between the device and router can limit signal and speed, like walls and cabinets. In a perfect world, the device should have a direct line of sight with the router. We know that isn't always possible, but getting as close to that as you can will help. If you have a large or long house, you may want to consider adding one or more access points throughout the home.

After all that, if you still seem to have a slow connection or buffering, check the age of your router. If it is more than three years old, we recommend replacing the router (or ask us about our Managed Wi-Fi!).

If you've done these three steps and still don't feel like your streaming experience is up to par, you may need to increase your speed. **Our Support Team is here to help you decide. Give us a call at 652.3184 or 952.1000!**

# COMPANY NEWS

## CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

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**After a long winter and late spring**, we are excited about summer and all the new things that are moving and shaking! We are geared up for another busy construction season, and are excited to bring fiber to more residents along the Jamestown Reservoir and Spiritwood Lake. Of course, this is a tentative timeline for construction and installation, and actual timing will depend on weather and any unforeseen circumstances.

Wiring in homes was done this winter and spring to prepare for the new service, and the construction phase is in full swing. Burying fiber is almost complete along the Jamestown Reservoir, and services are expected to be connected in June. Construction at Spiritwood Lake has begun, and we hope to start connecting customers as the crews are completed, versus waiting until all construction and splicing is done. Services should start to be connected in mid-June, through July and August.



Don't worry, we didn't forget about the Spiritwood Lake campground! After surveying the campground tenants last summer, we determined the best solution would be a Wireless Internet service that users can purchase daily, weekly, or monthly. We will install multiple access points throughout the campground in order to provide sufficient coverage throughout the area. This means there will be no equipment (router, switch, etc.) inside the campers, and users will connect directly to the system from their devices. We think this will be a great solution for both full-time and part-time campground tenants!

We are excited to begin another construction project in Jamestown – although this one will be above ground. We will be adding on to the existing Jamestown office, which will allow for more workspace and storage, as well as a larger training area and conference room. Construction began in the beginning of May, and the project is expected to be completed by the end of the year. Customer parking should remain the same, but there will be a new customer entrance to look for, on the East side. We apologize in advance for the mess and any inconvenience throughout the process.

## SERVICES

### BUSINESS SERVICES

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Business owners – small or large – are you lacking expertise for things like IT Support, Hardware/Software and Network Management? Do you struggle to find advice for certain IT projects, but can't afford to hire an IT expert on-staff? We hear you, and we're here to help. Let us help you get your IT Network in order, or simply have the peace of mind to know we have your back if you're ever in a pickle! Stay tuned for more information on Dakota Central's Managed Business Services!

# CONGRATS!

## DAKOTA CENTRAL AWARDS \$5,500 IN SCHOLARSHIPS

Dakota Central is proud to announce the 2018 Dakota Central Scholarship winners! Five \$1,000 scholarships have been awarded to outstanding graduating seniors whose parents or guardians are customers of Dakota Central. The Jerry Eissinger Memorial Scholarship of \$500 has been awarded to the top scoring applicant, in addition to the \$1,000 Dakota Central Scholarship.

Applicants were judged on community activities, school activities, financial need, grades and achievement. Consideration was also given to those looking to pursue a career in the telecommunications or technology industry, as well as those looking to return to a rural area after college. This marks the 18th year of the scholarship program having awarded over \$90,000 to date. Dakota Central is proud to offer the scholarship program to show its commitment to area youth.

**HATS OFF TO THIS YEAR'S DAKOTA CENTRAL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS AND TO THE ENTIRE CLASS OF 2018!**



**BAILEE FINCH**  
JERRY EISSINGER SCHOLARSHIP WINNER  
Daughter of Mark & Chelee Finch



**VICTORIA CHRISTENSEN**  
Daughter of Frank & Laurie Christensen



**EMERSON HOORNAERT**  
Daughter of Chad & Jennifer Hoornaert



**ADDIE LIPETZKY**  
Daughter of Robert & Tracy Lipetzky



**MACEY ZIESCH**  
Daughter of Marshall Ziesch & Terry Hesch



## FOUNDATION FOR RURAL SERVICE

# GRANT

## FRS GRANT PROGRAM

As part of its ongoing commitment to rural communities across the country, the Foundation for Rural Service provides annual grants for rural communities served by NTCA members. The goal of this program is to support local efforts to build and sustain a high quality of life in rural America.

Applicants may request grants in the range of \$250 to \$5,000. Each grant is a one-time award. Projects may be funded at a lesser amount than requested.

The foundation supports organizations and projects that fit into the following grant categories:

### **BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Entrepreneurship and job creation programs.

### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Outreach programs that promote technology learning and innovation. Programs that encourage rural development through arts and tourism.

### **EDUCATION**

Technology in the classroom (computers, smart boards), curriculum development, extracurricular activities and distance-learning programs.

### **TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

Broadband adoption projects; applications of broadband, including in healthcare, agriculture, and education; and technology infrastructure, such as community hot spots.

For more information on the FRS Grant Program or to obtain an application, visit: [www.frs.org/programs/grant-program](http://www.frs.org/programs/grant-program).

# UPDATE

## VIDEO SERVICE UPDATE

We are pleased to introduce the newest addition to our line of set-top boxes, which happens to be the first to have wireless capabilities. This means that if it is not possible to wire a cat5 run in a specific location, the set-top box can be connected wirelessly. Now, this alternate method will provide a slightly lesser quality, and a direct Ethernet connection will always be the preferred method, but at least the option is available!

# BUMP YOUR SPEED AND YOUR STATS



## **GOT GAME?**

Increase your speed and there's a good chance your stats will increase with it. No buffering or delays, just game.

**Upgrade before July 31** and receive your choice of a PlayStation or Xbox gift card, on us!



**dakotacentral.com**  
**652.3184 or 952.1000**

*Restrictions apply. Residential customers only. 12 month agreement required or early termination fee applies. Offer ends July 31.*



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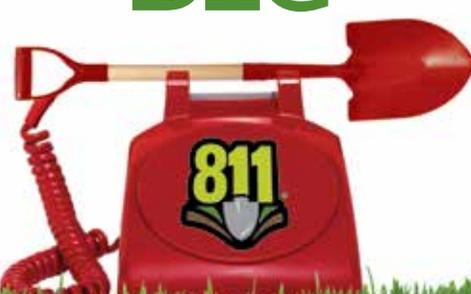
# Win credit on your Dakota Central bill!

Win a **\$25** credit on your Dakota Central bill.  
Just return this coupon by July 31, 2018, to be  
eligible for the drawing.

Congratulations to last issue's winner:  
**Lyle Jerome, Jamestown.**

Name:

Phone #:



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TRAVELERS  
Common Ground Alliance

CARRINGTON OFFICE  
630 5th St. N Carrington, ND 58421 p: 701.652.3184 f: 701.674.8121

JAMESTOWN OFFICE  
604 18th St. SW Jamestown, ND 58401 p: 701.952.1000 f: 701.952.1001

OFFICE HOURS  
8am-4:30pm M-F To report trouble call your local office and follow prompts.

INTERNET HELP DESK HOURS  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

