

THE LINK DAKOTA CENTRAL



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Upgrade Your TV

Joel Onsurez
OWNER OF THE LODGE

SPRING 2022
dakotacentral.com



**DAKOTA
CENTRAL**

A letter from our **General Manager**

We have seen many highs and lows in our winter weather this year with rain one day and sub-freezing temperatures the next. Some days have presented an almost impossible challenge for our employees to navigate their drive to work as many of them reside in the rural areas we serve.

On severe weather days it seems as though our customers are also stuck at home and needing services. On those days particularly, our highest priority is making sure our customers have support should they need it. Where the employee's job lends itself to working from home, we have equipped them with computers and phones so they are able to answer the phone and support customers without driving in dangerous conditions

to Carrington or Jamestown. We have experienced a number of those days this winter and are hopefully on the downslide of inclement weather.

In industry news, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) recently implemented the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) which replaces the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBBP) enacted last year. The ACP provides a \$30 per month credit towards residential broadband service to eligible households. The ACP is considered a long-term program, where the EBBP was temporary and related to the COVID-19 pandemic. More details regarding the program eligibility are provided on page two. We encourage anyone that may qualify for the program to contact our office for assistance with the application process.

We are continuing to work on transitioning internet traffic from our old transport network to the new 200 Gigabit system we began installing in 2021. In addition to installing all the hardware, it is a long complex process to provision the software so that we do not interrupt service to the customer. In addition to upgrading our transport system to the world, we are working towards introducing 10G PON technology which connects the premise to the transport network. We are upgrading the larger communities first and then

migrating to the smaller ones.

Although we do not have any major outside plant construction projects in the works this summer, we always have a number of new service drops in the spring that require burying fiber and installation. We continue to transition traditional IPTV subscribers over to our upgraded Streaming TV platform, as more and more customers are wanting the ability to easily switch between live, local programming and the streaming services they subscribe to, such as Netflix or Paramount+. We also expect our Field Technicians to be busy locating cable this summer as there are a few large utility projects planned in our area.

We continue to strive to provide you with the most reliable and fastest network available. Thank you for all your support and we wish you great spring!

Keith Larson
CEO/GM

Company News

Dakota Central's New Faces, Moves, & Retirement

Following a few recent retirements we've had among the team, we are excited to announce more new team members and other changes among employees.

Amy Becker and Kiahna Vennes have joined us in Jamestown as Customer Service Reps. They are both jumping in and excited to learn more about the industry!

Ben Steinolfson has recently moved out of the Customer Service department and is transitioning to an Account Executive position. You'll see him out and about the business community saying hello and meeting people! He will be your main point of contact for any business needs.

Larry Gilge is also transitioning to his role of Outside Plant Coordinator from his previous Field Technician role. Larry will oversee construction projects and will be your go-to guy for new service drops!

Sadley, we will be saying "see you later" to another retiree, Sharon Prosser, in March of this year after 26 years of service. We wish Sharon good health and the best of luck in retirement! Sharon has been training Beth Kollman in the billing department, who will then be moving into that role. Brittany Paulson has transitioned into dispatch in Carrington to fill Beth's position.



Amy Becker
Customer Service



Kiahna Vennes
Customer Service



Ben Steinolfson
Account Executive



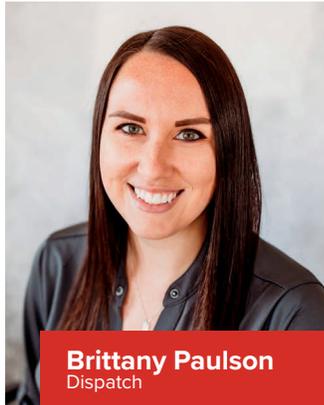
Larry Gilge
Outside Plant Coordinator



Sharon Prosser
Retiring



Beth Kollman
Billing/Accounting Assistant



Brittany Paulson
Dispatch



Affordable Connectivity Program
Helping Households Connect

The Affordable Connectivity Program is a Federal Communications Commission program that helps connect families and households struggling to afford internet service. This new benefit provides a discount of up to \$30 per month toward broadband service for eligible households.

Eligible households can enroll through Dakota Central or directly with the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) at <http://acpbenefit.org/>.

You can learn more about the benefit, including eligibility and enrollment information, by visiting www.fcc.gov/ACP, or by calling 877-384-2575.

Business Spotlight: The Lodge

It's mysterious. Grand. Historic. Unique. There are many words used to describe the 18,000 square foot landmark located on the corner of First Avenue and Third Street in downtown Jamestown. What used to be The

Masonic Lodge and social club, is now in the renovation process. The 100 year old, full of character, landmark owned by Joel and Barbara Onsurez will soon be shared with the community. The Lodge will be an event venue for things like weddings, corporate events, fundraisers and parties.

The building itself was never something the Onsurezs pursued, but was meant to be nonetheless. The building went up for auction, and Joel attended out of curiosity, without intention to bid. The future of the building wasn't looking promising, so



Joel and Barbara ended up purchasing the building to save it from destruction. After purchasing they planned to make it their home, but after so much interest from the community they decided to preserve the history and create a space that the whole community could enjoy. Joel explained that it had always been a mystery as to what was inside the building. This was not only due to the privacy from the stained glass windows, but also because in the past, only those that belonged to the Masons were allowed in. "We saw an opportunity to invite others to come in and enjoy the history and uniqueness of the architecture."

While it has been a rewarding journey for the Onsurezs, it hasn't come without obstacles. "From the beginning we have run into many unexpected challenges," Joel said. From water in the basement to determining the most efficient heat source, they had to get creative and do some problem solving. Fortunately, issues have had their way of working themselves out and many things have ended up being a blessing in disguise.

Part of the challenge has been preserving the history of the building according to the time period of the early 1900s. They have intentionally used pieces throughout the building that are representative of the time, and have incorporated many authentic relics from all over the world like light fixtures and furniture. However, there is a juxtaposition between the historic ambiance and modern technology in the building. Because it's such a large space, Joel has integrated technology and automated everything in the building, including the lights, security cameras and multiple fireplaces, the main heat source. "It makes everything much easier to manage," Joel explained. With everything connected to their Dakota Central Small Business Managed Wi-Fi network, it gives them complete control over their devices. Being connected is key for Joel and Barbara, especially when out of town or working at their other business downtown, Babb's Coffee House. "Someday this will be a story for Apple," Joel said. "Technology makes it all happen." Everything related to project management at The Lodge or other business is kept track of digitally and synced across all their devices.

Because they rely on all devices being connected all the time at The Lodge, having a local service provider is important. "If I were to call a national company, they don't always understand the issue and don't necessarily care about my business," Joel stated. "Local businesses get it; they understand the value of business-to-business within our community."

Renovation is still underway, with a goal of being ready for events by summer. Not many people would take on a project of this size, but the Onsurezs believe the work will be worth it. The way they see it, it is a way to preserve a historical landmark while giving back and sharing a piece of history with the community. Thank you to Joel and Barbara for all the hard work you have put in to make this vision a reality!



Say “Do-Not-Call” to Unwanted Telemarketers

The National Do Not Call Registry has been established to address unwelcome telemarketing calls. The registry applies to all telemarketers, with the exception of businesses with whom you have an existing relationship and certain non-profit and political organizations. You can register your telephone numbers (both landline and cell phones) online at WWW.DONOTCALL.GOV or call toll-free, **1-888-382-1222 (TTY 1-866-290-4236)**, from the number you wish to register. Registration is free.



2022 RDFC Grant Program Information



The Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC) is pleased to announce it has approved a 2022 grant allotment of \$2,000 per member-cooperative to be used to support community owned entities, non-profits and community-based projects.

Eligible projects include community owned businesses (café, grocery store, motel, other); community facilities (such as ambulance services,

fire districts, recreation, hospital/clinic, community center, etc.); or community-based projects (such as school/youth projects, other) that benefit rural areas.

The grant application deadline is December 31, 2022. For grant guidelines and the application form, contact Brianne at **701-652-3184** or bpattlow@dakotacentral.com.



THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX+

 **DAKOTA
CENTRAL**
streamingTV

Think outside the (set-top) box and upgrade to the Dakota Central TV app! Enjoy the TV experience you know, plus new features you'll love. Local channels, sports, shows, movies and more - live, recorded and on-demand - all in HD. Use your voice to find and watch on any device. It's simple, hassle-free and great for the entire family!

Call or visit us in Carrington or Jamestown to learn more about the Dakota Central TV app!



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Smart Hub

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With SmartHub you have account access at your fingertips and two-way communication with Dakota Central online or via your mobile device. How convenient! Just go to www.dakotacentral.com and click "Pay My Bill" in the top right-hand corner. You can manage payments, notify our Support Team of service issues, and receive important notifications and messages all with one easy app. SmartHub is available on Android and iOS devices as well as on the Web. To register go to www.daktel.smarthub.coop, then click on "New user" on the SmartHub log-in page.

BONUS!

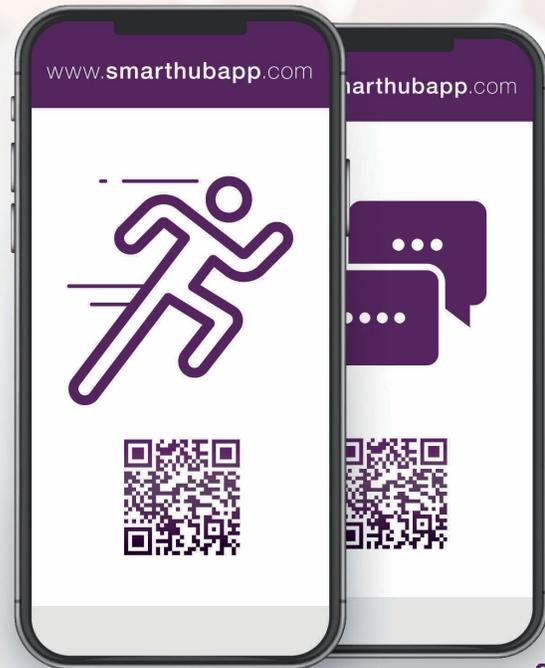
Sign up for Auto-Pay and E-Bill and receive a \$15 bill credit.

Some key features of SmartHub:

- **Bill reminders**
- **Fast and easy bill payment**
- **Customer service contact**
- **Safe and Secure Access**
- **Free to use**

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1-844-262-2425.

Sign up for Auto Pay by bank or credit card, and your Dakota Central bill will be paid automatically each month. No more wondering whether you paid your bill or not! You will then automatically receive an e-bill, unless you choose to continue to receive a paper bill statement. It's a no-brainer! Call us today to sign up!



WIN CREDIT ON YOUR DAKOTA CENTRAL BILL!

Win a \$25 credit on your next Dakota Central bill!
Just return this coupon by April 30, 2022 or scan the QR code to enter online!
Congratulations to last issue's winner: **Jerald Weckerly, Hurdsfield**

NAME

PHONE NUMBER



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