

THE

LINK



**DAKOTA
CENTRAL**

TMT Farms Bean & Seed Co



Concept

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PAGE 1

A Letter From The General Manager

PAGE 3 | BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

TMT Farms Bean & Seed Co.

PAGE 10 | TECH TIPS

Top Google Questions: Internet Security

SUMMER 2022

dakotacentral.com



A letter from our General Manager

With the cold, wet weather, it's been a slow start to the year. Fortunately, we are not experiencing the drought and early fires the Southwest portion of the country is experiencing. We had hoped that we would see the Covid-19 pandemic in our rearview mirror by this point, but it continues to haunt us with new variants. We're not in the clear yet, although the virus seems to be weakening as time passes.

Along with medical implications, the pandemic has also taken a toll on the economy. Many industries are experiencing supply chain issues and increased inflation. Worldwide labor shortages involved in manufacturing silicon chips have limited the supply of new

automobiles, as well as the electronics we utilize in telecommunications.

For example, the Optical Network Terminals (ONT) we use include silicon chips that are manufactured abroad. At this point, many electronics have a lead time of up to 45 weeks, and our vendors have suggested that we order all equipment that we expect to need for 2023 now. This is much different than in the past, where we've been able to get equipment within a few weeks.

The upgrade of the transport network has taken much of our network department's time this past year. This has involved changing out major equipment and has taken place in stages. The backbone structure has been built and all circuits for the cellular tower sites have been cutover. We recently cutover the Bowdon and Woodworth exchanges and will be working through the rest of the exchanges as summer progresses.

In addition to updating equipment, our focus has been on implementing a new e-mail server in order to ensure our customer e-mail accounts are protected. Cybersecurity threats are becoming a larger issue than ever before, and we are continually working to keep our network secure.

Outside plant construction season has been off to a slow start, and we are now working through the new service requests that have come in through the winter. Frost presented some issues with the fiber cable splices on the route between Sykeston

and Woodworth, so it was necessary to resplice a number of points along the route. Due to the damage and number of repairs, we anticipate needing to replace this route in the future.

In order to provide our customers with the best service possible, we ensure our offerings are in line with national broadband speed recommendations. Following the FCC's recently updated guidelines for broadband, we have recently increased our Basic Internet speed tier from 60/6 Mbps to 100/20 Mbps.

In other news, we experienced significant employee turnover this past year, as quite a number of employees retired and/or transitioned to a new role within the company. We are fortunate to have found a great bunch of talented new employees that, along with our seasoned crew, are here to serve our communities as we always have.

We appreciate your business and continued support, and look forward to serving you this year!

Keith Larson
CEO/GM



you're the best!

You're invited to join us for a customer appreciation picnic! We'll be serving up a delicious lunch and a chance to win some sweet prizes. Hope to see you here!

WEDNESDAY, JULY 20TH
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
DAKOTA CENTRAL - JAMESTOWN
604 18TH ST SW



Business Spotlight: TMT Farms Bean & Seed Co.

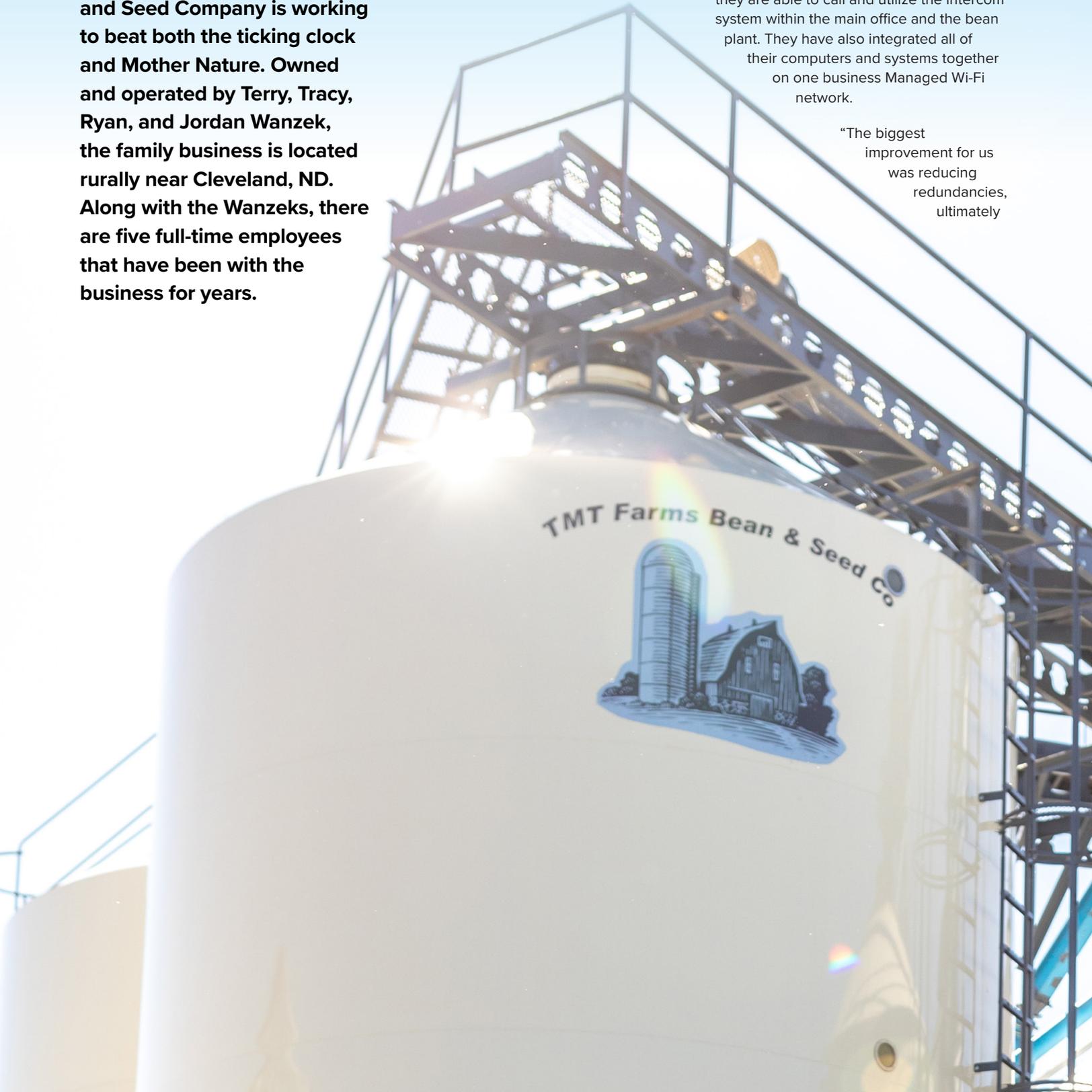
The crew at TMT Farms Bean and Seed Company is working to beat both the ticking clock and Mother Nature. Owned and operated by Terry, Tracy, Ryan, and Jordan Wanzek, the family business is located rurally near Cleveland, ND. Along with the Wanzeks, there are five full-time employees that have been with the business for years.

Although farming is the focus, TMT Farms also operates a seed company, which often adds to the chaos during the peak season. When not farming or distributing seed, they also sell and ship pinto beans domestically and around the world.

“Over the years we have expanded into other value-added businesses,” Ryan Wanzek explained.

With such a diverse operation, it’s important for things to function as simply and streamlined as possible for TMT Farms. In the past, they have faced a lack of efficiency and missed transactions between the office and the bean plant. By implementing a Cloud Voice system throughout the facility, they are able to call and utilize the intercom system within the main office and the bean plant. They have also integrated all of their computers and systems together on one business Managed Wi-Fi network.

“The biggest improvement for us was reducing redundancies, ultimately



improving day-to-day operations,” Ryan said.

After they found their groove and increased production, the Wanzeks realized they needed a way to keep an eye on the facility. They needed a reliable security camera system that would cover the grounds and allow them to keep track of what was going in and out every day. Because time is of the essence for their business, they decided the best option was a Dakota Central commercial camera system.

Dakota Central technicians installed three outdoor cameras, giving them a view from all angles. The cameras also have recording and playback capabilities, which they utilize for security purposes, as well as comparing trucks to paperwork to make sure transactions are accurate.

“It’s one of those things you hope you never need, but you’re glad it’s there just in case,” Ryan said.

“The biggest value we see is accessibility,” Ryan said. “When we need something, we can call and they’ll be right there.” As a local business themselves, TMT Farms understands the value of working with other local partners like Dakota Central.

When productivity is essential, having the right technology and systems in place can make all the difference.



Ryan Wanzek
Co-Owner & Operator



2022 Service Award Winners

We believe in connecting our customers to the world through cutting edge technology, while also delivering exceptional customer service. We take pride in providing local, reliable customer support, whenever you need us. It is our commitment to serve the communities we call home, which is why we go the extra mile for our customers. We would like to recognize the following employees and directors for their years of service and commitment to Dakota Central. Thank you for all that you do!

EMPLOYEES

Brad Skytland
30 years of service

Deedra Aasand
25 years of service

Ryan Larson
20 years of service

Christopher Schmid
15 years of service

Dustin Horejsi
15 years of service

Kent Johnson
15 years of service

Jordan Berg
5 years of service

DIRECTORS

Rodney Suko
40 years of service

Company News

Rural Development Finance Corporation Awards Grants in Dakota Central's Service Area

Dakota Central Telecommunications Cooperative is a member of the Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC). As a result, communities in our service area were eligible to apply for a grant of up to \$2,000 for community-based projects. RDFC is making these funds available in order that more people become aware of their larger loan program that funds community-based projects and non-profit entities with low interest loans.

RDFC has recently granted \$1,000 to the Carrington Youth Center. The Youth Center

provides an after-school gathering space for youth, as well as a movie theater for all ages. Grant funds will be used to renovate the back room to include a custom designed play area for preschool aged children in the community.

Another \$1,000 grant went to the Cathay Fire Department. Grant funds will be used to help update the aging PPE equipment, as some equipment is over 20 years old.

The 2022 grant program is open and applications are being accepted until December 31, 2022. For an application or assistance, contact Brianne at bpattlow@dakotacentral.com.



Carrington Youth Center



Cathay Fire Department

Dakota Central Awards \$5,500 in Scholarships

Dakota Central is proud to announce the 2022 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 involvement, 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 22nd year of the scholarship program, which has awarded over \$105,000 to date. Dakota Central is proud to offer the scholarship program to show our commitment to area youth.

Hats off to this year's Dakota Central Scholarship winners and to the entire class of 2022!

Jerry Eissinger Scholarship Winner



Isabella Garr
Carrington
Ben & Sonali Garr



Tate Larsen
Carrington
Trampus & Joanna Larsen



Jayce Rivinius
Gackle
Ryan & Becky Rivinius



Jacob Rexin
Carrington
Michael & Michelle Rexin



Madelyn Orr
Jamestown
Darin & Barb Orr



MAKE YOUR WI-FI WORK FOR YOU!

Don't work for your Wi-Fi; make your Wi-Fi work for you! Enjoy built-in network security, advanced parental controls, and powerful whole-home Wi-Fi 6 coverage for uninterrupted surfing, streaming and homework, all with the CommandIQ™ mobile app.

Download the CommandIQ™ app today. From our 100% free installation to our 24/7 support, enjoy a stress-free experience fully managed by Dakota Central. Included with your Premium Managed Wi-Fi is:

- 📍 **Network Security** provides protection against viruses, malware, and malicious websites, keeping your network and devices safe from cyberattacks.
- 📍 **Advanced Parental Controls** provides you with the tools needed to enforce the Internet rules you've established for your home. Set up profiles for your children or devices, filter content, websites, and applications, and set appropriate time limits.

Call **952-1000** or
652-3184 to get
started!





3 Steps to Smooth Streaming

As customers continue to switch over to streaming platforms from traditional cable, we see record breaking network streaming usage. Even though summer has finally arrived and we are spending more time outdoors, it doesn't mean the streaming will stop. In order for you to get the most out of your entertainment experience, we have a few tips to help you make sure you are streaming seamlessly!

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 quite weak, so if it's possible try to connect yours with an Ethernet cable! The other alternative to using the apps directly on your smart TV, would be to connect a streaming device, like an Amazon Firestick, as those tend to have stronger wireless connections.

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 500 Mbps, you should get over 400 Mbps when connected to Wi-Fi. If you are not reaching the speed you

are subscribed to- give us a call! We want to make sure you are receiving the service you are subscribed to, and there could be other factors contributing to the reduced speed.

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!). Our Premium Managed Wi-Fi service includes wall-to-wall coverage in your home, so we will make sure your connection is optimized in every room of the house!

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!**

Tech Tips: Internet Security FAQs, Answered

Every person who uses the Internet must take steps to ensure that their device and their data are safe. But with all of the products and programs out there today, it can be hard to know where to start.

Today, we are sharing short and sweet answers to some of the most commonly asked questions about Internet security. If you are more of a visual learner, watch our latest Tech Tip video to follow along with Tech Expert Brianne.

What is malware?

Malware, short for malicious software, is designed to infiltrate or damage a computer system without the owner's consent. Malware is often distributed through email attachments, fake advertisements, and infected applications or websites. Once it finds a way in, it can be used to steal information, monitor user activity, and even extort money.

How can I prevent malware?

The most obvious way to prevent malware from destroying your device is to install anti-virus and anti-spyware software. But you can't stop there; update your security tools regularly to make sure they are running properly. Other ways to prevent malware include using distinct, strong passwords for all accounts and setting spam filters to reduce unwanted emails.

How can I safely browse the Internet?

The most effective ways to stay safe on the Internet are often the simplest: Avoid questionable websites. Update your operating system regularly. Only download software from sites you trust. And again, invest in antivirus software.

The Internet can be a scary place. But armed with the right knowledge and tools, it can also be a safe one. That's it for this edition of Tech Tips! Check back soon for another tip to make your technology work for you.



Upcoming Community Events

Summer is our favorite time of the year, when we are able to get out into our communities and have fun, so we are gearing up for a busy summer of events! We hope to see you around, be sure to stop and say “hi!” if you see any of our Dakota Central team members out and about!

July 4

Carrington 4th Of July Parade

July 16

Jamestown Speedway Kids Night at the Race

July 20

Dakota Central Customer Appreciation Lunch

July 23-24

Buffalo Days, Jamestown

August 11

Jamestown Arts Center Downtown Arts Market

August 24

University of Jamestown Block Party



Dakota Central employees and families handed out giveaways and door prizes while enjoying a University of Jamestown basketball double-header at the Harold Newman Arena on February 19th.

L to R: Deedra Aasand, Cody Stangeland, Rylee Partlow, Holly Utke, Brianne Partlow, Ben Steinolfson



WIN CREDIT ON YOUR
DAKOTA
CENTRAL BILL!

Win a \$25 credit on your next Dakota Central bill!
Congratulations to last issue's winner: Deborah Humes, Jamestown
Next drawing date: July 31, 2022

NAME _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

Scan here to sign up online

