

Office Closed

West River Cooperative Telephone Company's office will be closed Friday, July 3rd in observance of Independence Day.

Happy 4th of July!

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Scholarship Winners

West River Cooperative Telephone Company (WRCTC) and Grand Electric Cooperative teamed together for the 19th year to award \$500 scholarships to graduating seniors from area school districts. All scholarship winners were notified this year via phone call, due to covid-19 and the cancellation of awards ceremonies. Alternate winners have been sent a letter by mail.

Graduating seniors receiving the \$500 scholarships are:

Bison School District –
Marleigh Hulm, Daughter of Keith Hulm, Meadow and Carrie and Brent Roth, Bison;

Lemmon School District –
Anna Beer, daughter of Ryan and Jackie Beer, Lemmon;

Harding County School District –
Jessie Collins, daughter of Craig and Joyclyn Mollman, Ludlow and Newell School District – Caleb Mutchler, son of J.D. and Danelle Mutchler, Newell. WRCTC and Grand Electric sponsor this scholarship program to help serve as an investment in the economic future of our rural area. It is used to recognize and encourage the academic achievements of students in the areas we serve.



Marleigh Hulm – Bison



Anna Beer – Lemmon



Jessie Collins – Harding Co.



Caleb Mutchler – Newell

Congratulations to these outstanding students. WRCTC and Grand Electric wish you the best of luck!

Capital Credit Refunds

WRCTC Board of Directors met in late April and approved the retirement of Capital Credits to be disbursed immediately, rather than waiting for the October Annual Meeting. Members can expect to see a bill credit on the June 1st bill if your refund was less than \$150. If your refund was more than \$150, a check was issued and mailed in late May. The COVID-19 pandemic brought additional financial burdens to many of our members; and because of this hardship, the WRCTC Directors approved the retirement of \$750,000 back to you—our members— in capital credits.



The directors and employees of WRCTC hope you are staying healthy and safe during this unforeseen time. We look forward to seeing you on Monday, October, 5, 2020, at WRCTC's annual meeting.

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As the weather warms up and more projects are started outside, make sure to call 811 or (800-)781-7474 before doing any digging. There are multiple underground utility lines that need to be marked before you start your project. Call 811 at least two business days before you plan to start construction. The picture to the left shows the colors that are used to mark the different lines you need to avoid. Remember, calling 811 is mandatory and is a step that can not be skipped. If you have any questions regarding this procedure, call 811 and they will explain the process.



SHOW US YOUR PATRIOTISM!!!



We are looking for **PATRIOTIC** photos for the 2021 WRCTC Directory. The photos can be of your favorite person, place or thing! They just need to be patriotic!

Submit your pictures to reggebo@wrctc.coop or mail them to WRCTC, %Rachel Eggebo, PO Box 39, Bison, SD 57620.

Deadline to enter the 2021 Directory Photo Contest is August 17, 2020.

PHOTO CONTEST RULES: The photo must be an original taken by a WRCTC member. If the photo contains a person who is highly recognizable and it is chosen as a winner, a picture permission form must be signed by the individual. If the subject is under 18 years of age, a parent/guardian must sign prior to receiving the money. Each customer may submit FOUR photos. Photos may also be submitted on a computer disc or e-mailed as a jpeg or pdf file. The photos must be in full-color and will not be returned to the customer. Submission of the photo releases all right of ownership of the photo and authorizes WRCTC to publish the photo on the directory cover, or use as WRCTC desires, allowing proper acknowledgment to the photographer. The winners will see their photo on the front cover of the 2021 directory and will be awarded \$100 cash prize for first place; \$50 for second place and \$25 for third place. Employees and Directors are not eligible.

Lifeline: Affordable Telephone Service for Income-Eligible Consumers

Lifeline is the FCC's program to help make communications services more affordable for low-income consumers. Lifeline provides subscribers a discount on monthly telephone and/or broadband services purchased from participating providers in the marketplace. The discounts, which can be applied to stand-alone broadband, bundled voice-broadband packages - either fixed or mobile - and stand-alone voice service - will help ensure that low-income consumers can afford 21st-century broadband and the access it provides to jobs, education and opportunities.

The History of Lifeline

The FCC established the Lifeline program in 1985 to ensure that qualifying low-income consumers could afford phone service and the opportunities and security it provides. Congress supported and strengthened Lifeline in the Telecommunications Act of 1996, requiring that affordable service and advanced communications be available to low-income consumers across the country. In March of 2016, the FCC modernized Lifeline for advanced services by beginning a transition toward support of broadband service.

How Lifeline Works

Lifeline provides a discount on monthly telephone and/or broadband services of \$9.25 per month for eligible low-income subscribers. Subscribers may receive a Lifeline discount on either a wireline or a wireless service, but may not receive a discount on both services at the same time. Lifeline also supports broadband and broadband-voice bundles. FCC rules prohibit more than one Lifeline service per household.

Lifeline is available to eligible low-income subscribers in every state, territory, commonwealth, and on Tribal lands.

To participate in the program, subscribers must either have an income that is at or below 135% of the federal Poverty Guidelines or participate in certain assistance programs. You can see if you are eligible with the Lifeline Eligibility Pre-Screening Tool on the Universal Service Administrative website at <https://www.checklifeline.org/lifeline>.



Securing Your Account

To protect the privacy of information contained in your telephone account, WRCTC is only allowed to discuss account information with the person(s) listed on the account. This includes businesses. We must authenticate you (confirm your identity) before sharing account information. This is done by asking you two questions pertaining to your account that only you, as the account holder, would know. We can add more security to your account by adding personal questions that only the authorized users would know.

If the account is listed ONLY in your name or the business' name, you might want to consider adding an authorized user. For instance, if you are a parent or individual who relies on someone else to discuss account changes, payments or any other account data with our company, you will need to have the person's name added to your records as an authorized contact before our customer service representatives are able to assist them.

If you need to add an authorized user to your account, the form can be found on our website, www.wrctc.coop, or you may call our office at 605-244-5213.

(continued on page 4)

New WRCTC Members

Buffalo

Johnson, Stuart DR 375-3528

Lemmon

Butler, James 374-8960

Wilmot, Harold 374-7124

SECURE PAY

Make a payment on your bill over the phone
using a debit/credit card or check.

Available 24/7!

844-252-5267

INTERNET HELP IS ONLY A PHONE CALL AWAY

(24/7 Support)

SDPlains Help Desk
888-464-9513

Find Your Phone

Ten telephone numbers were hidden in last month's newsletter. Those members who hunted and found their number were: Duane Buckmeier, Prairie City; Thomas (Tucker) Kane, Thunder Hawk; Keith Morell, Vale; Jane Denzin, Buffalo and Deloris Sperle, Buffalo. Hidden in this issue are ten new numbers. If you find YOUR number, all you have to do is notify our office. The \$10 will then be deducted off your telephone bill. New connect numbers do not count. **Deadline is June 19, 2020.**

\$10 bill credit

Lifeline (continued)

How Do I Qualify?

The following is a list of assistance programs that qualify a participant for Lifeline:

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamps or SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)
- Veterans Pension or Survivors Benefit Program

How Tribal Link Up Works?

Tribal Link Up provides eligible low-income consumers living on Tribal lands with a one-time discount of up to \$100 on the initial installation or activation of a wireline or wireless telephone for the primary residence. Tribal Lands Link Up also allows consumers to pay the remaining amount that they owe on a deferred schedule, interest-free. Federal rules prohibit eligible low-income consumers from receiving more than ONE Link Up discount at a primary residence. Eligible consumers may be eligible for Link Up again only after moving to a new primary residence. Link Up support is only offered to carriers who are building out infrastructure on Tribal lands so not all carriers may discount their activation fee. Enhanced benefits are provided to low-income consumers who live on a federally recognized Indian Tribe's reservation.

Tribal Lifeline takes up to an extra \$25 off your monthly bill, for a total Lifeline discount of up to \$34.25 per month. You can get Tribal Lifeline if you live on Tribal lands. Tribal lands include any federally recognized Indian tribe's reservation, Pueblo, or colony, including former reservations in Oklahoma, Alaska Native regions, Hawaiian Home Lands, or Indian Allotments. The following is a list of Tribal assistance programs that also qualify a participant for Lifeline:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) General Assistance
- Tribally-Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- Head Start (if income eligibility criteria are met)

How Do I Sign Up for Lifeline?

If you qualify for any of the above programs, you must complete a Lifeline Assistance Application. You can find the application online at www.wrctc.coop.

Submit applications to:

USAC
Lifeline Support Center
P.O. Box 7081
London, KY 40742