

**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
LIFELINE/TRIBAL LINK UP ADVERTISING/OUTREACH  
ANNUAL REPORT  
JULY 1, 2022**

Company:

Address:

Telephone number:

Company contact:

Study Area Code:

Lifeline/Tribal Link Up Advertising/Outreach Activities:

Advertise in media of general distribution.\* (See attached advertisement(s).)

Letter to existing and new customers regarding the availability of Lifeline/Tribal Link Up within 1<sup>st</sup> 30 days of service.\* (See attached letter.)

Company's Lifeline/Tribal Link Up information in directory.

Company's Lifeline/Tribal Link Up information available on Company website.

Company's information posted on USAC website.

Other (describe):

\*Required

## **PUBLIC NOTICE - Cooperative**

Interstate Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc. (ITC) is designated as the “Eligible Telecommunications Carrier” for its service area for universal service purposes. The goal of universal service is to provide all citizens access to essential telecommunications services.

ITC provides the supported services -- voice telephony service and broadband Internet access service – throughout its designated service area. These supported services include:

- Voice grade access to the public switched network;
- Minutes of use for local service provided at no additional charge;
- Access to emergency services provided by local government or other public safety organizations, such as 911 and enhanced 911, to the extent the local government in ITC’s service area has implemented 911 or enhanced 911 systems.; and
- Broadband Internet access service which includes the capability to send data to and receive data from the Internet but excludes dial-up service.

Voice telephony service is provided at rates which start at \$22.50 per month for residential customers and \$22.50 per month for business line customers. Broadband Internet access service is provided at rates which start at \$39.95 per month for residential customers and \$39.95 per month for business customers. ITC would be pleased to provide you with specific rates for voice and broadband for your area upon request.

ITC also offers qualified customers Lifeline service. Lifeline is a non-transferable, federal benefit that makes monthly voice or broadband service more affordable. The program is limited to one discount per household. Eligible households may apply the monthly Lifeline discount to either broadband service (home or wireless) or voice service (home or wireless) but not both. The Lifeline voice service also includes toll blocking to qualifying customers without charge. The current discount provided under the Company’s Lifeline service is \$9.25 for broadband or \$5.25 for voice per month for each month that the customer qualifies.

A household is eligible for the Lifeline discount if the customer’s annual household income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines. You may also qualify for the Lifeline program if a customer, a dependent, or the customer’s household participates in one or more of the following programs:

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income; Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8)
- Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit.
- Other Programs for Tribal Lands.

Questions regarding any of the above services should be directed to ITC at 1-800-417-8667.

July 2021

Public Notices also published –  
Brookings Register 7/16/21  
Watertown Public Opinion – 7/23/21  
Grant County Review 7/14/21



# Bell Ringer

Volume 56, No 2 June 2022  
Clear Lake, South Dakota 57226

## E-STATEMENT IS EASY!

Easy, efficient, as well as eco-friendly... Why wouldn't you sign up for E-Statement from ITC? If you currently mail your bill or drop it off at one of our offices, we would like to encourage you to sign up for Auto-Pay and go paperless with E-Statement. Sign up for both services now, and we will give you a one-time **bill credit of \$20**. The best part about signing up for both services is you never have to leave home to pay your bill or worry about it being late. If you only sign up for one of these services, we'll still give you a one-time \$10 bill credit.

When you sign up for Auto-Pay, your bill amount is deducted from your account every month. If you pay using your checking account, your bill will be deducted on the 10th of the month. If you pay with a credit or debit card, you can choose the date (from the 1st to the 17th of the month). Call ITC's offices at 1.800.417.8667 to sign up.

When you sign up for E-Statement and go paperless, ITC will notify you via email that your bill is ready each month. You can log in to see the information, save it, or print it if you want a paper record. Your monthly newsletter, the Bell Ringer, will also be delivered via email. To go paperless, sign in to [www.itcebill.com/estatement/login](http://www.itcebill.com/estatement/login) and follow the instructions below.

ITC will also be doing five drawings for a one-time \$20 bill credit from current paperless customers to thank them for using E-Statement.

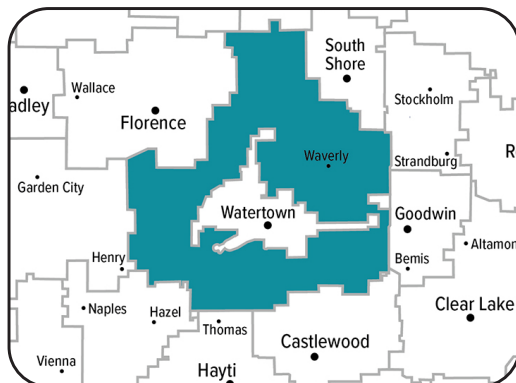
It's easy to save time, paper, and money. Go paperless with E-Statement and sign up for Auto-Pay to get a \$20 credit off your next bill! Do it today!

### To Go Paperless:

1. Log into E-Statement.
2. Go to "Settings" & click the "General" tab.
3. Under "Invoice Preference, choose "Web Bill Only."
4. Then click "Change Preference."



## ITC IS EXPANDING IN CODINGTON COUNTY



ITC continues to expand its network to ensure area residents have access to world-class telecommunications services. Currently, we are expanding in areas of rural Codington County. This new fiber-optic connection will offer residents and businesses a reliable, unlimited, Fiber-Fast Internet connection along with an option for local phone service. Broadband is vital for economic development in rural areas, providing an always-on connection to the rest of the world.

Along with ITC's investment in the fiber-optic expansion, this project was also awarded a ConnectSD grant from the State of South Dakota to make this project a reality. The ConnectSD program aims to bring sustainable, high-speed service to every home and business in South Dakota.

Tracy Bandemer, ITC's CEO, adds, "With ITC's current customers upgraded to fiber-optics, it was the right time to look at expansion opportunities. The Board of Directors, management, and staff are excited to proceed with this expansion in rural Codington County. It is an excellent opportunity to expand ITC's territory and bring this cutting-edge technology to locations that are considered underserved." Construction for this expansion will start soon.

# IS YOUR ROUTER UPDATED?

*By Michael Martinell, Network Broadband Technician*

Not a month goes by without some new router exploit. The website routersecurity.org, which helps track exploits, shows recent exploits in many popular brands of routers. The issues include outdated operating systems, old versions of software, and hardcoded credentials that can be used from anywhere in the world. Unfortunately, many users who own their routers don't keep them updated.

While it is true that some newer router models automatically update themselves, many times, that feature must be enabled. Older routers may not have that feature at all, and sadly many popular routers have been completely abandoned by their creators without any security patches.

### What is the danger?

A few years ago, when criminals broke into routers, they used it to host websites of stolen programs or pornography. While this might still be the case, these days, hacked routers are used by criminals to spy on network traffic, hack your DNS settings, steal your passwords, and mine cryptocurrency. Another popular tactic is to present you with a phony technical support page, complete with a fake phone number.

### What can you do?

The first thing to do is make sure your router's firmware and other software are up to date. How to do this will vary depending on your router brand. You can refer to the documents that came with your router or do an Internet search if you aren't sure how. Check to see if your router supports automatic updates. If it does, turn it on to automatically get the security fixes that keep the bad guys out.

One thing to keep in mind is that the update process needs to run without losing power. Once you tell your router to update, don't unplug it or expect to use it until it is finished. You may see random flashing lights, and the router might even reboot multiple times.

Another thing to consider doing is to purchase a new router. If your router is more than 3 or 4 years old, the router may be no longer supported. You should check your router's website to be sure. Your device won't get any critical security updates if it is no longer supported by the company that made it. That will leave you vulnerable to security flaws and other issues.

### What can ITC do?

**If you want to avoid the hassle of updating your router and managing your connections, you could also consider leasing a router from ITC. One significant advantage of our Blast Wi-Fi routers is that we work to keep them as up-to-date and secure as possible. We take care of things like firmware updates and other security measures so you can rest assured knowing that your router is secure.**

# FACEBOOK TUTORIAL

*By Holly Stormo, Marketing Communications Specialist*

Since 2020, ITC University has been on hiatus except for a few Zoom classes. To make up for the absence, we will be posting a "Facebook Tips" ITC University class on our website to watch at your leisure. To find this class, go to [www.itc-web.com/news](http://www.itc-web.com/news) and click on ITC University-Facebook Tips 2022.

## AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM

The FCC has approved ITC as a provider for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which is an FCC program to help low-income households pay for Internet service and connected devices like a laptop or tablet. If your household is eligible, you could receive a monthly discount on Internet service. For more info or to see if you qualify, visit [www.affordableconnectivity.gov](http://www.affordableconnectivity.gov).

## LIFELINE FUNDING AVAILABLE

Lifeline is a federal program that lowers the monthly cost of phone and Internet. Eligible customers will get up to \$9.25 toward their bill (up to \$34.25 for those living on Tribal lands). You can use Lifeline either for phone or Internet, but not both. Only one Lifeline credit is available per household. Lifeline is the FCC's program to help make communications services more affordable for eligible customers.

Contact ITC for a Lifeline application or visit ITC's website at <https://www.itc-web.com/services/residential/phone>. You can also go directly to the Lifeline National Verifier at <https://nationalverifier.servicenowservices.com/lifeline>. The following information will be needed to apply: First and last name, address, date of birth, and last four digits of your social security number (or tribal ID number). You may also need to provide one of these items: photo ID, prior year's tax return, social security card, or another document to prove your identity.

To be eligible for the Lifeline benefit, either you or someone in your household must participate in one of the programs below. The other option is to prove your income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines.

- Medicaid.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA).
- Veterans Pension or Survivors Pension.
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- Other Programs for Tribal Lands.

If your application is approved, you will need to contact ITC to receive the discount on your existing service.

If you believe you are eligible for Lifeline, call our office at 1.800.417.8667 for assistance.



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312 4<sup>th</sup> Street West, PO Box 920, Clear Lake, SD 57226

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as one service. Only one charge will apply if both video and internet are temporarily suspended. Continuation of either video or internet service will prevent the \$35.00 charge from applying.

c. Renewal of Temporary Suspension will incur the same \$35.00 charge as the initial Temporary Suspension.

i. A customer renewing both conventional dial tone Temporary Suspension and video/Internet Temporary Suspension will face only one \$35 charge, which will be assessed to the video/Internet Service.

6. There is no minimum time period for Temporary Suspension. There will be no pro-rating of the \$35.00 charge for shorter periods of Temporary Suspension.

7. No reconnect charge will be applied for restoration of services that are temporarily suspended.

**Alternatives to Temporary Suspension:**

1. Customers that do not wish to subscribe to Temporary Suspension can terminate their services entirely. Company owned equipment must be returned or customer will be responsible for the retail price of the equipment. If and when service is required again, the customer will be required to pay all service order and installation charges that apply and the customer will be given a new telephone directory number.

The revised seasonal tariff will not allow customers who utilize a sensaphone to dial their number and check the temperatures and security in their home. Anyone dialing a number other than 911 will receive a pre-recorded message stating the line status.

To sign up for this service or for more information, please contact a Customer service Representative at 1-800-417-8667.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**YOUR TELEPHONE**

**NUMBER IS IMPORTANT**

When your telephone number is prece- ded by your area code, it is the only one like it in the United States or Canada. Show your area code and telephone number on your stationery, statements, and advertising items. It makes it easier to reach you.

**TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

The customer has no property right in the telephone number or any right to continuation of service from any specific central office, and the Telephone Company may assign or change the telephone number, the central office designation, or both, as is necessary in the conduct of its business.

**TELEPHONE NUMBERS USED FOR BUSINESS**

**ADVERTISING**  
 Telephone numbers used in business advertisements will classify that number as a busi-

ness telephone regardless of the location of the instrument. The use of the service rather than the location of the telephone, determines the classification as residence or business service.

**CUSTOMER PROVIDED EQUIPMENT**

The FCC rules are designed to meet the convenience of the customer and at the same time protect the telephone network against any possible hazards to customers and Company employees.

You are responsible for the connection, operation, maintenance and repair of this equipment and should arrange for these services through the manufacturer, if needed.

A service charge may be incurred if a Service Representative from your Telephone Company visits the premises of the customer and the service difficulty or trouble is found to have been caused by the customer's equipment or facilities.

This equipment cannot be connected to coin telephone service.

**TELEPHONE SERVICES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE**

**Special Needs Center**

If you or someone you know have a disability or have difficulty using standard telephone service, call the Special Needs Center. We can recommend services for customers with hearing, speech, vision, or motion impairments, and for students confined to their homes. Or we will do our best to help design an effective solution. Customers using Telecommunications Devices for Deaf Customers (TDDs)\* may contact the Center about any aspect of telephone service — including telephone repair service. To reach us, call 1-800-417-8667 (no charge) by telephone or TDD between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays. After business hours, an answering device will record TDD messages.

\* formerly called teletypewriters on TTYs.

**Operator Services Center for TDD Customers**

Centurylink provides operator assistance to its customers who use Telecommunications Devices for Deaf Customers (TDDs). Any TDD user making calling card, collect, directory assistance, or other Operator assisted-calls should call 1-800-855-1155. This number may also be used for after hour repair service. For all other services call 1-800-223-3131.

**TRANSMISSION OF MESSAGES**

The function of your Telephone Company is to furnish means of communication between telephone stations. Acceptance, by employees, of written or verbal communications from the public, for transmission or delivery is forbidden.

**UNLAWFUL WIRETAPPING MAY BE SUBJECT TO PROSECUTION**

Under federal and state laws it is a crime for any person to wiretap or otherwise intercept a telephone call, without the consent of one or both parties actually participating in the call.

Properly authorized law enforcement officers can take part in interception without the consent of either party, when proceeding under court orders issued following the appropriate federal or state law. The penalty for illegal wiretapping can be imprisonment and/or a fine.

**CARE OF EQUIPMENT**

The telephone equipment, apparatus, and lines furnished shall be carefully used and cared for by the subscriber and shall be surrendered to your Telephone Company upon termination of the subscriber's right of use in as good condition as when received, ordinary wear and tear alone excepted.

All ordinary expense of maintenance and repair, unless otherwise specified in your Telephone tariff or in the contract for the use of the equipment, will be borne by the Telephone Company. In case of damage to, or destruction of, any of the said equipment, due to negligence of the subscriber, the subscriber shall pay either the cost of replacing the equipment or the cost of restoring the equipment to its original condition.

**NATIONAL DO NOT CALL REGISTRY**

The federal government created the National Do Not Call Registry to make it easier and more efficient for you to stop getting most telemarketing sales calls you don't want. You can register online at [www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov) if you have an active e-mail address, or you can call toll-free, 1-888-382-1222 (TTY 1-866-290-4236), from the number you wish to register. Registration is free and your number will stay in the registry, until it is disconnected, or until you delete it from the registry.

If you receive telemarketing calls after you have registered your telephone number and it has been in the registry for three months, you can file a complaint at [www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov) or by calling 1-888-382-1222 (TTY 1-866-290-4236). You will have to know the company's name or phone number to file a "do not call" complaint.

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**USE OF TELEPHONE FOR DEBT COLLECTION PURPOSES**

The Federal Communications Commission has received information that interstate telephone service is being used for col-

lection of claimed debts in ways that are or may be in violation of applicable tariffs of the telephone companies and criminal statutes. Practices alleged include calling at odd hours of the day or night; repeated calls; calls to friends, neighbors, relatives, employers, and children; calls making a variety of threats; calls asserting falsely that credit ratings will be hurt; calls falsely stating that legal process is about to be served; calls demanding payments for amounts not owed; calls to places of employment; and calls misrepresenting the terms and conditions of existing or proposed contracts. Although many of these calls are placed on a local basis, there is increasing indication that such improper practices also involve use of interstate toll and Wide Area Telephone Service (WATS).

Tariffs of the telephone companies forbid use of the telephone for a call or call, anonymous or otherwise, in a manner reasonably to be expected to frighten, abuse, torment, or harass another, or for calls that interfere unreasonably with the use of the service by one or more other customers, or calls for unlawful purpose. Upon violation of any of these conditions the telephone company can, by written notice, discontinue service forthwith. These tariff regulations are filed with this Commission pursuant to Section 203 of the Communications Act, 47 U.S.C. 203, and are binding on the telephone company and customer alike. Users of the telephone service are also subject to the enforcement proceedings provided for in Sections 401 and 411 of the Communications Act. In addition to the loss of telephone service for violation of the tariffs, Section 223 of the Communications Act makes it a crime to use the telephone in the District of Columbia or in interstate or foreign communications to make "repeated telephone calls, during which conversation ensues, solely to harass any person at the called number" or to knowingly permit "others to use his/her telephone" for such purpose. Penalties for violation of Section 223 are a fine up to \$500.00 or six months' imprisonment, or both, 47 U.S.C. 223.

The Commission is concerned that some users of telephone service may be unaware of their obligations to refrain from using the service for abusive or harassing calls. It is also concerned that other users may be willfully and repeatedly violating the provision of the tariffs and the applicable statutes, and that the telephone companies are not adequately enforcing their tariffs. Accordingly, the Commission is issuing this Public Notice in order that the public may be informed of the requirements of law in this area and so that users may be alerted to their legal obligations in the use of the telephone and the penalties for failure to abide thereby.

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**LIFELINE & LINK-UP**

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**HOW TO HANDLE ANNOYANCE CALLS**

It is against the law to make an obscene, harassing, or threatening telephone call. When you receive such a call, follow these suggestions:

- 1) When answering your telephone, say hello twice. If no answer, HANG UP.
- 2) Do not give information until you are absolutely certain you know who is speaking.
- 3) Instruct children not to give any information to strangers over the phone.
- 4) Hang up when you hear something off-color or obscene.
- 5) Never reveal the fact that you are alone.
- 6) When annoyance calls persist, contact your local law enforcement agency.
- 7) Calls of a threatening nature should be reported to the local law enforcement agency immediately.

**For information about any telephone service, call your Business Office at 1-800-417-8667. A Customer Service Representative will be glad to help you.**