

DRN Network Connections

NEW YEAR'S GREETING FROM DRN



Our entire organization joins me in sending holiday greetings with every good wish for the New Year! During this special time of year, we want to express how thankful we are for the opportunity to serve you as your total technology solutions provider. It is also the time of year when the term local takes on extra meaning to DRN as a member-owned cooperative. We are committed to contribute to the organizations that help make the communities we serve a better place. Our board of directors and employees make financial donations and give of their time to assure DRN lives up to its responsibility as a cooperative serving its members' growing needs.

I am happy to announce at our November 2018 Board Meeting, the DRN Board authorized the retirement of capital credits. Capital credits represent the amount of business a customer does with DRN each year and DRN's profit for that year.

Over 9,700 DRN members received a total payout of \$3 million of capital credits in December. It is our wish that the timing of this disbursement helped make your holiday season brighter.

We appreciate being your local technology solutions provider!

*Robert K. Johnson
CEO/General Manager*



GET TO KNOW YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Founded on cooperative principles in November 1950, DRN, continues to bring telecommunications services to rural southeastern North Dakota. As a technology leader, DRN is committed to improving the quality of life to all members in its community.

DRN's Board of Directors consists of nine members and serves 32 exchanges. The director resides in the territory he represents. Directors are elected, for a three-year term, by members at the annual meeting.

Your board member plays a vital role at DRN, as he ensures the cooperative is operating efficiently while meeting your needs as a member/owner.

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DRN INVESTS IN NETWORK UPGRADE TO EXPAND GIGABIT SERVICES

As the need for technology continues to expand, DRN's broadband network is prepared for future growth. DRN is proud to announce it recently deployed the Calix AXOS Platform to dramatically simplify network operations and accelerate the rollout of new services. DRN is also upgrading to whole home Wi-Fi capabilities to ensure subscribers can enjoy seamless video streaming, online gaming, and a full range of bandwidth-intensive services.

When we invest in our network, we are investing in the experience it enables for our customers.

*DRN Operations Manager
Kent Schimke*

"When we invest in our network, we are investing in the experience it enables for our customers," said Kent Schimke, DRN operations manager. "Throughout our long-

standing relationship with Calix, their flexible solutions ensure that no matter our deployment scenario, we'll be able to build a network that provides best-in-class services. As we simplify and increase the efficiency of our network to deliver Gigabit connectivity, we are already looking forward to how we can provide 10G services in the future."

"DRN is a great example of a rural network operator focusing on its mission to provide top quality network services for the vitality of the communities it serves," said Skip Hirvela, vice president of sales for Calix. AXOS is enabling them to simplify their network operations, increase service velocity, and realize significant cost reductions. By coupling this with the only mesh-enhanced carrier class Wi-Fi solution on the market, they are well positioned to deliver exceptional experiences for their subscribers today and well into the future." ■

NEW NAME, FRESH LOOK FOR ND ASSOC.

The North Dakota Association of Telecommunication Cooperatives (NDATC), an organization representing members of North Dakota's independent telco industry including DRN, announced the launch of a new brand and identity. The organization will now be known as BAND: Broadband Association of ND.



DRN, is one of the 18-member organizations part of BAND. The change in name reflects the commitment of the member organizations to evolve with the communication needs of North Dakotans, with an important shift from telephone to broadband.

As communication methods evolved around the world, BAND and its member organizations have evolved with them. In the past decade, DRN has laid over 4,000 miles of fiber across its territory and was one of the first in the state to have its infrastructure 100% fiber as well as one of the first to provide Gig Internet Speeds.

"A lot has changed within our Association and member organizations over the years, from the infrastructure to the various services offered," said DRN CEO/GM Robert K. Johnson. "But what has not changed is our commitment to working together, staying innovative, and providing unparalleled service." Today, BAND and its member organizations continue to build on their 65-year-old promise: to evolve with the needs of its subscribers "at the end of the line." Together, they are ensuring North Dakota is the most connected state in the U.S. ■

Catch local sports action on BEK Sports



BEK Sports—Channel 104, BEK Sports—Channel 107 (Ashley),
BEK Sports+ East—Channel 195 & BEK Sports+ West—Channel 196

Go to beksports.com for an updated schedule.

LIFELINE DISCOUNT

For those who can't afford communication services—Lifeline, a federal program, can help eligible people pay part of their phone or broadband bill.

Lifeline can save you at least \$9.25 on your monthly phone bill for basic local telephone service or broadband. Lifeline assistance applies only to service in the home where you live.

Who is eligible?*

An individual is eligible if he or she participates in one of the following programs:

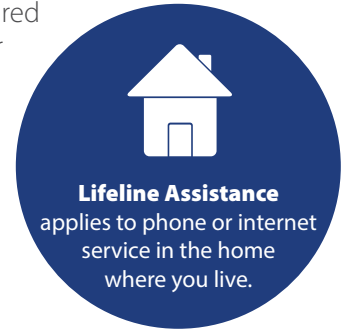
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Medicaid
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- Veterans Pension or Survivors Pension

In addition, a consumer may be eligible if his or her household income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines. **Only eligible persons may apply. Only one discount is available per household. Lifeline is non-transferable.*

For more information: Call DRN at 344-5000. Consumers must apply for Lifeline through their telco company. ■

How to obtain assistance

Offices that administer a program under which you are eligible for Lifeline may automatically send you an Assistance Certificate in the mail. Anyone wishing to participate in Lifeline is required to sign a form indicating, under oath, that they qualify to participate because they meet at least one of the program eligibility requirements. This must be signed and returned with a copy of your income or program eligibility.



What if my benefits stop? If you no longer qualify for any economic program, you no longer qualify for Lifeline. Participants must submit a Lifeline application every year.

PREPARE FOR WINTER POWER OUTAGES

DRN reminds customers your telecommunications services are powered by electricity. If your main power source goes out, all fiber customers have a backup power supply box provided by DRN in your home, apartment complex, or office building.

The battery backup powers telephone service for approximately eight hours. This means the backup will provide eight hours of in use time or talk time. If the power is out for an extended period of time, telephone service will continue to work as long as the battery backup has not been depleted of its eight hours of in use time. During a power outage, Internet and television service disconnects immediately.

In order to keep you and your family connected during an extended power outage, DRN recommends connecting your home or business to a backup generator or emergency backup battery. DRN offers a 24-hour extended battery for purchase. For details on buying an extended battery from DRN, or any other questions regarding the battery backup, contact a customer care specialist at 344-5000. ■



NEW CONSTRUCTION

PLANNING TO BUILD? DRN asks all those planning new construction, to please notify our office between two to three months before you would like new services installed. To improve customer service and eliminate delays, DRN needs this time to ensure easements have been attained and all proper plans are in place to reach new areas with telecommunications services. Call DRN at 344-5000 or go to “Contact Us” at www.drntel.com.

WELCOME NEW EMPLOYEES TO DRN

DRN is pleased to announce the addition of April Weight and Haylee O'Brien to its team. "We are excited to welcome these new employees to DRN to meet the growing demands of our business," said Robert Johnson, DRN CEO and general manager.

April Weight, customer care specialist, has joined the customer service team and works in the Lisbon office. She and her husband, Brady, reside in Fort Ransom. In her spare time, April enjoys reading, baking, kayaking, spending time with family, and hanging out at the river behind her home.

Haylee O'Brien has joined DRN as a customer care specialist in the Oakes office. She previously worked for Social Services in LaMoure. Haylee lives in Oakes with her husband, Matt and daughter, Hayzel. In her spare time, Haylee enjoys spending time with her family and friends, taking her daughter to the park or pool and relaxing and fishing at the lake. ■



April Weight

Haylee O'Brien

AUTOMATICALLY SAFEGUARD YOUR PRECIOUS MEMORIES



In the event of a disaster such as fire, flooding, or hardware failure, the family photos you've digitally stored over many years could be gone in minutes. Don't risk losing those precious memories along with other important files such as your personal financial records. Sign up now for online backup protection from DRN ReditTech to keep your computer files safe.

Online Backup offers remote online backup that continuously monitors your files and automatically backs

them up whenever they change. There's nothing to remember to do — simply set it and forget it. Your data is encrypted before it leaves your PC, then is stored offsite in a state-of-the-art data center. You gain peace of mind knowing your data is safe and readily accessible to you via the Internet.

Call us today at 344-5000 for an online backup consultation and quote. You may have a lot to lose if you don't. ■

DO NOT CALL RESIDENTIAL NOTIFICATION

To address consumer concerns about unwelcome telemarketing calls, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) established a national Do-Not-Call Registry. The registry applies to all telemarketers (with the exception of certain non-profit and political organizations) and covers both interstate and intrastate telemarketing calls. Commercial telemarketers are not allowed to call you if your number is listed on the registry.

Consumers may register their residential phone number, and wireless numbers, on the national Do-Not-Call Registry for free. To register by phone, call 1-888-382-1222. For TTY call 1-866-290-4236. You must call from the phone number you wish to register. Or, register online at www.donotcall.gov. Telemarketers have up to 31 days to get your phone number and remove it from their call lists. ■

Beware of Caller ID Spoofing & Scamming

Illegitimate businesses and scammers do not use the Do Not Call Registry. Scammers use programs to disguise their numbers creating fake phone numbers. This trick is known as caller ID spoofing.

Do not answer any questions. If you accidentally answer a call and are not 100% certain it's legitimate, hang up and call the company or organization back directly with a verified & listed phone number.

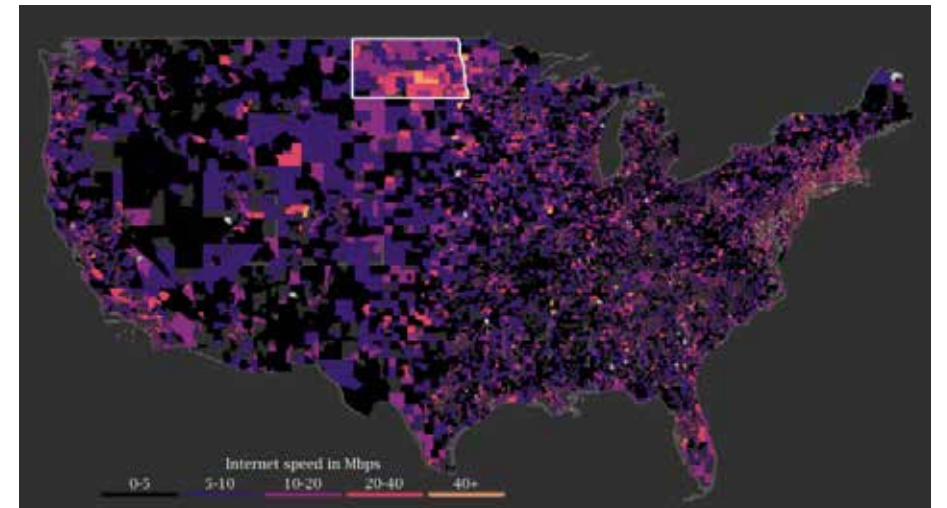
How did North Dakota become the crown jewel of the Internet in the Midwest?

There's a strand of coastal conventional wisdom that views anything west of the Appalachian Mountains and east of the Sierra Nevada as impossibly outdated. Technology is born in Silicon Valley and Washington state, flies to New York City and Washington, D.C., and 20 years down the road, shows up for use on Main Street—if the residents in these "flyover" states are lucky. If you believe that, I encourage you to play the video game Fortnite in Grand Forks, ND, where internet speeds are nearly three times the national average.

North Dakota is easy to spot on the map (above right), because it visibly outperforms its neighbors. For rural communities, many experiencing related population loss and slow job growth, establishing high-speed internet is now a necessity, much the same way the rural electrification of America. Like electricity, faster broadband has well-documented economic effects, with, among others, a 2013 study estimating that a 4 Mbps increase in internet speed increased annual household income by \$2,100.

What changed in ND? First, the federal government helped by creating the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) to promote the development and adoption of broadband in unserved or underserved areas. Also, ND's internet surge is due to the support of several rural cooperatives.

Co-ops including the Dickey Rural Telephone (DRN), Dakota Central Telecommunications, and a co-op of co-ops, Dakota Carrier Network (DCN), worked to provide broadband to many of ND residents. Like electric co-ops that brought light to rural America when bigger companies deemed it unprofitable, internet coops provide modern technology. Being able to download millions of documents in a few seconds or video chat with five people in five countries in real-time shows co-ops are doing the good work of making this type connectivity commonplace.



North Dakota's unique telecoms history has led to internet connectivity and speeds that other largely rural states have yet to achieve. The cooperative nature of North Dakota's telecoms industry is a central part of that success story.

Part of co-ops' effort involves close connection with the state government's closed broadband network STAGEnet. DCN has built out and upgraded STAGEnet, helping to bring high-speed internet to government buildings and schools, with a project in place to make ND the first state with gigabit connections in all schools.

North Dakota's unique telecoms history has led to internet connectivity and speeds that other largely rural states have yet to achieve. The cooperative nature of North Dakota's telecoms industry is a central part of that success story. It's not worth suffering another Great Recession to secure better internet. But neither is it necessary. A more cooperative internet marketplace seems to do the same just fine.

Excerpt reprinted with permission, view the complete article at newamerica.org. Originally published 11/15/18, by Nick Thieme. ■

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES

RDFC awards grant to Lisbon Pool Preservers

Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC) encourages economic and community vitality through the generation of funding to support building and growth in rural communities. DRN is a member of the (RDFC), communities in its service area were eligible to apply for a grant of up to \$2,000 for community based projects. RDFC recently granted \$2,000 to the Lisbon Pool Preservers.

The Lisbon Pool Preservers is a group of Lisbon area residents raising funds to upgrade the Lisbon Community Pool. The grant funds will go towards phase 3 of the project, which includes rebuilding the wading pool entrance to meet ADA requirements. RDFC is playing a valuable role with its larger loan program funding community-based projects and non-profit entities with low interest loans. ■



Left to right: Alison Kempel and Betsey Enger, represent Lisbon Pool Preservers with Kari Nishek, DRN.

DRN donates \$1,000 to Gwinner First Responders

Dedicated to improving the quality of life for those living throughout the service territory, DRN is happy to announce it recently donated \$1,000 to the Gwinner First Responders. The donation will go towards the purchase of new pagers. ■

Photo: Ryan Johnson, Gwinner First Responders and Michelle Schroeder, DRN.



Cogswell Gun Club receives \$500 donation

DRN donated \$500 to the Cogswell Gun Club. The donation will be used to purchase materials to finish the inside of their new facility, as well as improvements to increase safety and function of the range. ■

Photo: William Hehn, Cogswell Gun Club, left, with DRN's Pamela Henningsen.



Micah Brandenburg

DRN 2019 CALENDAR

DRN subscribers submitted their photos of living, working, and playing throughout the area for the 2019 calendar photo contest. These photos captured the essence of rural life in North Dakota.

Customers received their calendars in December. Thanks to all who submitted photos for this year's calendar. Stop by a DRN customer care office, to pick up an extra calendar for your cabin, shop, garage, or to give to a friend. ■

2019 Calendar Correction! Please note the correct date for Ash Wednesday is Wednesday, March 6.

NEW DIRECTORY LISTINGS

Ashley 288

Irene Frankfurt..... 288-3437

Ellendale 349

Beano Thorpe..... 349-2793

Ryan Tilleras 349-3635

Kulm 647

Janice King..... 647-2543

LaMoure 883

Donna Joyce..... 883-5124

Doug Townsend..... 883-4452

Lisbon 683

Country Payee Services.... 683-3199

Country Payee, Fax..... 683-5693

Evelyn Hitchcock 683-5659

Delores Johnson 683-3125

Roland Magill..... 683-5182

Litchville 762

Bradley Giesler..... 762-4416

Ludden 783

Ludden Tavern 783-9370

Oakes 742

Joyce Brewer 742-3981

Anthony Bruhn..... 742-2653

Seth Meier 742-3789

DRN TV UPDATES

Pursuit Channel is now on channel 316 of the Ultimate Family lineup! Pursuit features hunting, fishing, shooting and outdoor recreation programming.

DRN's Weather Channel 101 is updating to a new system! You may notice it is down for a short time mid-January during the upgrade, but it will be back up with a fresh new look! For a complete TV lineup visit drtel.com.

MANAGE YOUR PASSWORDS

Stop keeping your passwords on a sticky note or unsecure computer file! Store your passwords with world-class security to safeguard from hackers and cyber criminals with Keeper from DRN ReditTech! Starting at only \$2.50/mo. store unlimited passwords per residential user and \$3.50/mo. for business. **Visit readitech.com to learn more or call 344-5000 to get started.**



DRN 2019 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



Attention students—earn money for college! DRN is passionate about supporting area youth and is proud to announce it will continue its Scholarship Program in 2019.

High school seniors are eligible if they attend a high school in one of the DRN exchanges and/or their parents or guardians are DRN subscribers. Applicants also must plan to attend an accredited college, university or vocational school and indicate an interest in returning to a rural community following graduation to further their career. Students meeting these criteria are encouraged to apply. **The deadline is February 15, 2019.**

Download and complete application at www.drteel.com. For more information, contact Janell Hauck at 344-5000. ■

Board of Directors (continued from page 1)

RALPH NEU, PRESIDENT



Nelvik & Ventura

RALPH GREER, VP



Dickey, Litchville & Marion

ARDEN FALK, SEC./TREASURER



Kathryn, Verona & Fort Ransom

ROD BUCK



Oakes, Forman, Gwinner & Lisbon

DAN GIRARD



Ellendale, Ashley, Kulm, Edgeley & LaMoure

BRUNO KINZLER



Fullerton & Guelph

SID MEIDINGER



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