

TC05-052



**RECEIVED**  
JUN 13 2005  
**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC  
UTILITIES COMMISSION**

June 9, 2005

South Dakota Public Utilities Commission  
500 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-5070

Dear Rolayne Ailts Wiest,

Farmers Mutual Telephone Company advertises the lifeline and link-up program in our newsletter which is mailed to every subscriber. We publish the program once a year. When a customer request the lifeline or link-up program credit we are requiring proof of eligibility based on any one of the federal criteria. For the customers already receiving lifeline credit Farmers Mutual Telephone Company mails out a verification letter requesting the documentation that proves the customers eligibility and a new application for credit. We are keeping the applications with a note as to the type of proof provided in a special file. Enclosed with this letter is our last newsletter with the program published and the application and letter we used.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kris Radermacher".

Kris Radermacher  
Office Manager  
Farmers Mutual Telephone Company

encl



## **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Under a law recently appended by the Minnesota Legislature, the Telephone Assistance Plan (TAP) eligibility requirement, which, also, updates the Federal Lifeline Credit program requirement, changes the offer of telephone assistance to the subscriber at their primary residence. From here forward, annually you must provide proof of eligibility to receive the monthly credit to your phone bill. You are now eligible for TAP if you provide proof of participation in:

- Medicaid/Medical Assistance (MA)
- Food Support (food stamps)
- Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- National School Free Lunch Program

If you do not qualify under the above criteria, but live on a federally recognized reservation, you can also provide proof of participation in one of the following:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
- Tribally Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Head Start (only for those meeting the income qualifying standard)
- Tribal National School Free Lunch Program

If you do not participate in any program listed above, but your income is at or below 135% (\$12,569) of the Federal Poverty Guideline please attach one of the following documents:

- Last year's State, Federal or Tribal Tax Return
- 3 Consecutive Months of Most Recent Paycheck Stub
- Veterans Administration Benefits Statement
- Unemployment/Workmen's Compensation Statement
- Child Support Document
- Current Annual Income Statement from Employer
- Social Security Benefits Statement
- Retirement/Pension Benefit Statement
- Divorce Decree
- Other

**NOTE CHANGE OF REQUIREMENTS:** If you currently receive a TAP/Lifeline Credit on your primary residence telephone billing, please provide Farmers Mutual Telephone Company with current proof of eligibility based on above listed criteria. Farmers Mutual is now required to gather this proof on an annual basis.

If you no longer receive benefits from any of the programs listed above or have not provided Farmers Mutual with proof of eligibility you will no longer receive TAP/Federal Lifeline Credit discount after February 1, 2005. Your February 10, 2005 billing will no longer reflect the discount.

If you have questions about the changes to the TAP/Federal Lifeline Credit Program, please call the Minnesota Department of Human Services at 651-296-2765 or 1-800-657-3838 or Farmers Mutual Telephone Company at 320/568-2105.

**Farmers Mutual Telephone Company Management**

# Telephone Service Discount Application

(Please Print)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Telephone Number (if existing service): ( ) -  
MUST be in applicant's name Area code & 7-digit number

Telephone Number where you can be: ( ) -  
Reached or receive messages Area code & 7-digit number

Name of your local telephone company \_\_\_\_\_

No. of people living in your household \_\_\_\_\_

**1. I am currently participating in the following program(s): Check all that apply and provide proof of participation**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid/Medical Assistance                | <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Public Housing Assistance or Section 8 Assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food Support (food stamps)                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Low-Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) | <input type="checkbox"/> National School Free Lunch Program                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental Security Income (SSI)         |  |

**2. I live on a reservation and participate in the following program(s): Check all that apply and provide proof of participation**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start (only for those meeting its income qualifying standard) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tribally administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal National School Free Lunch Program                          |

**3. I do not participate in any program listed in #1 or #2 and my income is at or below 135% of Federal Poverty Guideline. Please attach one of the documents below.**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Last year's State, Federal or Tribal Tax Return   | <input type="checkbox"/> Child Support Document                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 consecutive months of most recent paycheck stub | <input type="checkbox"/> Current annual income statement from employer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans Administration Benefits Statement        | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security Benefits Statement            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment/Workmen's Compensation Statement     | <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement/Pension Benefit Statement          |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce Decree                                |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other   |

**I agree to notify the telephone company when I no longer participate in any of the above qualifying programs. I certify under penalty of perjury the above information is true. I have read the information on this application and understand I must participate in one of the above programs to receive telephone service discounts on my primary residential line.**

Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I am an "Authorized Representative" for this applicant and am submitting this form on behalf of this customer. I am willing to assist this applicant in seeking telephone service discounts.

Print "Authorized Representative" name \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**FARMERS MUTUAL TELEPHONE COMPANY**

**PO BOX 368**

**BELLINGHAM, MN 56212**

**320-568-2105 PHONE**

**320-568-2200 FAX**

**Email: [farmers@farmerstel.net](mailto:farmers@farmerstel.net)**

**Website: [www.farmerstel.net](http://www.farmerstel.net)**



# TELE-NOTES

Volume 1, Issue 2

[www.farmerstel.net](http://www.farmerstel.net)

November 2004

## ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS AND SENIORS:

### YOUTH TOUR AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



Foundation  
for Rural Service

The Foundation for Rural Service (FRS), through its partnership with the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA) promotes, educates, and advocates to the public, rural telecommunication issues in order to sustain and enhance the rural way of life throughout America. Through its various programs the foundation strongly supports the continuing education of rural youth.

#### *Youth Tour 2005*

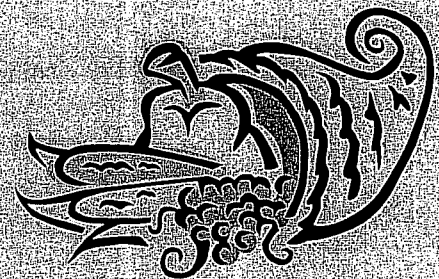
*June 4—8, 2005, Washington, DC*

The Foundation for Rural Service's annual Youth Tour is one of the most visible examples of FRS's involvement and commitment to rural youth. 2004 marked the 10th annual Youth Tour. Each year, in collaboration with NTCA member companies, FRS brings rural students from across the United States to Washington, D.C. for a four-day tour of some of the most historical sites in the nation. While here, students learn about the telecommunications industry, as well as the regulatory and legislative processes. Educational sessions on these topics are greatly enhanced by both site visits, such as those to the U.S. Capitol and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in addition to meetings with industry leaders and members of congress.

The students are also given time to tour the nation's capital and its many attractions. While there, the group visits such sites as the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, The Korean, Vietnam and new World War II, Memorials; Mount Vernon, the Smithsonian Museums; and, much more. Students are accompanied by adult chaperones at all times.

Every student who participates in the Youth Tour is sponsored by either their local Telco or by an affiliated member of NTCA.

These sponsors are responsible for their student's registration fees, airline transportation, and additional spending money.



#### Eligibility:

- Students must be a high school junior (graduating class of 2006)
- Parents must be members of the Farmers Mutual Telephone Company.

#### Selection Process:

- Each student is required to submit an essay of 500 words or less explaining why the student would like to attend the Youth Tour and why they are interested in learning more about the telephone industry.
- Essay must include the student's name, their parent's name and telephone number.
- Essay must be received at FMTC by February 1, 2005.
- Selected students will be required to submit an article for publication in the Farmers Mutual **TELENOTES** explaining their experiences at the 2005 Youth Tour.



# November



# FRS College Scholarship

Scholarship Program for rural youth in our local schools. Should a student from our service area be selected to receive one of 25 scholarships (\$2,000 each), we will contribute an additional \$500 to the scholarship, bringing the total one-time scholarship award to \$2,500.

Applicants for the scholarship must be a graduating high school senior, receive their local telecom services from Farmers Mutual Telephone Company in addition to other eligibility requirements as specified in the application. *It should be noted that preference will be given to individuals expressing an interest to return to work in a rural area following graduation.*

Applications have been sent directly to Lac qui Parle Valley, Dawson and Ortonville High Schools, or you may download an application from the FRS website at [www.frs.org](http://www.frs.org). All applications **MUST** be signed by either the manager or the board president. Completed applications should be sent directly to FRS, postmarked no later than March 1, 2005.

As your local telecommunications service provider, it is our pleasure to participate in both the FRS Scholarship Program and the FRS Youth Tour.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING YOUR TELEPHONE SERVICE

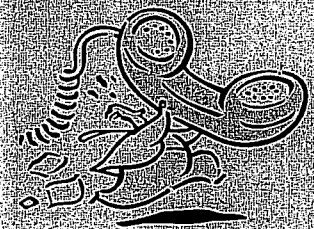
### Qualifying for Lifeline and Link-up Support

The Lifeline and Link-Up programs are available to qualifying consumers in every state, territory and commonwealth. Eligibility for participation in these programs varies by state. States that have their own state Lifeline program may have their own criteria. In states that rely solely on the Federal Low Income Program, a consumer must either have an income that is at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, or participate in one of the following assistance programs:

- Medicaid
- Food Stamps
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8)
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), or
- The National School Lunch Program's Free Lunch Program.

Estimated income requirements for households at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines are as follows:

Family Size	Estimated Income Requirements
1	\$12,569
2	\$16,862
3	\$21,155
4	\$25,448
5	\$29,741
6	\$34,034
7	\$38,327
8	\$42,620



For each additional person, add \$4,293 to the income eligibility requirements.





## Qualifying for Lifeline and Link-up Support...continued

Lifeline assistance lowers the cost of monthly local telephone service. The assistance ranges from \$5.25 to \$10.00 per month. The amount varies depending on a number of factors, including whether a state has a matching Lifeline program. If a state has a matching program, low-income consumers may qualify for additional federal support as well as state support.

If you are participating in one or more of these programs, you may certify eligibility by contacting our business office for a certificate.

**For more information or an application, please contact our business office at 568-2105.**

## TROUBLE REPORTING PROCESS – WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU CALL

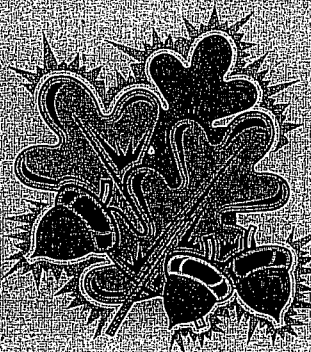
Why doesn't my phone work? The answer depends on many different factors. It may be a problem with the telephone itself, the wiring inside your home or office, the outside lines or the switching equipment.

There are some simple tests you can do before you contact our office. These simple tests can save you time and the cost of a repair visit.

1. Check to make sure all telephones are hung up properly.
2. If you have more than one phone, unplug all of them. This includes phone accessories such as answering machines, speakerphones, cordless phones, computer modems, fax machines and security or satellite systems, etc. All of these items can cause static problems or no dial tone on the line.
3. Start with the phone you think is giving you the problem. Plug another phone into that jack to see if the problem still exists. If the problem is gone, chances are good that the other phone or accessory was causing the problem. Repeat this procedure for all the phones/accessories in your home or business.
4. If you lease a phone from Farmers Mutual please contact the office for repair.
5. If you own the phone or accessory, please follow the instructions in your owner's manual.
6. If the problem is with the wiring, without maintenance contract, the customers are responsible for their own wiring repair costs. With the Maintenance Contract, Farmers Mutual Telephone Company will make all repairs necessary up to and including the jack. The maintenance contract is available for 50 cents per month per jack. You know you have a maintenance contract if the summary of local service charges on the final page of your bill shows a CPW Jack Charge.

7. Please do not report trouble with someone else's phone line unless they ask you to. Sometimes, customers will take their phone off the hook and might not be accepting calls.
8. A rapid busy signal means that all circuits are busy. Please try your call again later.
9. If you have trouble placing a call and receive a recorded announcement, please write down the announcement in its entirety before you report the problem. Each recorded announcement should have an identification code at the end of the message. This code will help to locate the problem.

Repair Number is 568-2105 or 1-800-692-0021. To report trouble after hours, leave a message on the voice mail.



Farmers Mutual Telephone Company will charge a repair visit to cover the expenses incurred to dispatch an employee to your home/business for an unnecessary repair call. This charge covers the cost of the visit only and not the repair itself, which will be billed at time and materials. An unnecessary repair call includes but is not limited to the following situations:

1. A telephone or telephone accessory is not hung up properly. This service is not included with the monthly rental fee of the telephone equipment, but rather is the customer's responsibility to check all telecommunications equipment prior to reporting any service outage(s).
2. Customer owned equipment is causing the service outage and/or interruption. Please remember to disconnect your own equipment prior to reporting any service outage(s).
3. Service outage and/or interruption caused by wiring inside the customer's home/business that is not covered under the Maintenance contract.

***Please follow the Trouble Reporting Process stated above to avoid those unnecessary repair calls. A few minutes can save you some avoidable charges.***



# Local PRIDE Alliance

Directors of Farmers Mutual Telephone Company

Orman Street, President

David Falness

Gerald Stensrud, Vice President

Richard Maatz

Lloyd Hanson, Secretary

Robert Morken

Lyle Dahle

## DIRECTORY CHANGES

### BELLINGHAM:

Gruber, Matthew	568-2680
Lee Country Enterprise	568-2262
Westermeyer, Allan	568-2640
Wytenback, Jim	568-2665

### MARIETTA:

Johnson, John D.	668-2615
Longhenry, Wayne R.	668-2418
Stoick, Gust	668-2124

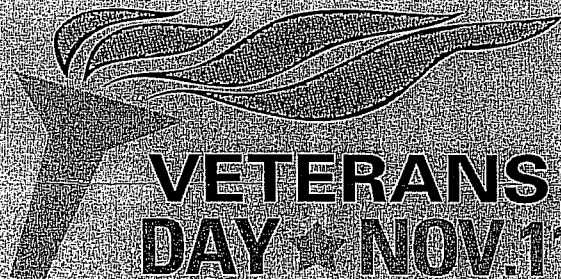
### CERRO GORDO:

Osteraas, Jeremy	752-4328
Saeger, Dave	752-4352
Siegert, Tim	752-4383
Sparkman, Vern	752-4222

### WEST MARIETTA:

# HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Our offices will be closed on Thursday, November 25 and Friday, November 26, 2004 in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday. We are thankful for you, our loyal customers!



**FARMERS MUTUAL**

*Telephone Company*

301 2nd Street South  
PO Box 368  
Bellingham, MN 56212

Phone: 1-320-568-2105 or 1-800-692-0021

Fax: 1-320-568-2200

Email: [farmers@farmersnet.net](mailto:farmers@farmersnet.net)

Repairs: 568-2105 or 811

Hours: M-F 8:00—4:30 p.m.

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