

**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
LIFELINE/LINK UP ADVERTISING/OUTREACH
ANNUAL REPORT
JULY 1, 2016**

Company: Red River Rural Telephone Association
dba Red River Communications

Address: 510 Broadway – PO Box 136
Abercrombie, ND 58001

Telephone number: 701-553-8309

Company contact: Jeff Olson or Donna Thiel

Study Area Code: 381631

Lifeline Advertising/Outreach Activities

 X Advertise in media of general distribution.* (See attached ad from Richland County News-Monitor published Sept. 29, 2015.)

 X Letter to existing and new customers regarding the availability of Lifeline.* (See attached bill insert distributed Feb. 2016)

 X Company's Lifeline information in directory (See attached article from the directory distributed Jan. 2016)

 X Company's Lifeline information available on Company website (See www.redrivercomm.com)

 Company's information posted on USAC website

 Other (describe): _____

* Required

Telephone Lifeline Assistance Available

Lifeline is a low-income telephone service discount available to qualifying persons participating in certain assistance programs or based on income compared to the poverty level. State rules vary. For more information on Lifeline, call Red River Communications at 701-553-8309, 1-866-553-8309, or visit www.lifelinesupport.org.

Under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, "universal service" means basic telephone service is available to all consumers. Universal service is voice grade access to the telecommunications network, including local usage, touchtone calling, single-party service, access to emergency 911 services, access to operator service, access to qualifying low-income consumers. All of these services are available from Red River Communications in these areas: In ND - Abercrombie, Barney, Colfax, Fairmount, Great Bend, Hankinson, Lidgerwood, Mantador, Mooreton and Wyndmere; In MN - Barnesville rural, Kent and Rollag; In SD - South Lidgerwood.

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2015 charges for these universal services are:

- Local residential service \$16-\$18/month
(Rates vary by exchange and EAS charges may apply)
- Touchtone calling No charge
- Single-party service No charge
- Access to 911 service No charge
(Local government assesses a tax to pay for special equipment.)
- Access to operator services No charge
- Access to directory assistance \$.60/call
(If you call a long distance company for DA, that company may charge for its services.) for local info
- Access to long distance telephone companies \$6.50/month
(Flat rate prescribed by federal agency)
- Low-income discounts \$9.25/month
- Toll-blocking No charge

Statement of Non-Discrimination

Bill insert

Red River Rural Telephone Association dba Red River Communications is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form.

You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Recycle Your Old Telephone Books

Help conserve natural resources by recycling your old phone books. These can be dropped off at the business office in Abercrombie, ND or at the following recycling centers:

Barnesville, MN — Tuesday & Thursday noon - 8 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. to noon.

Hawley, MN — Hours Monday & Thursday 4 p.m. - 8 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Winter Hours starting November 1 Monday & Thursday 4 p.m. - 7 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.



Account Privacy Rules In Effect

Red River Communications has always considered customer account information private. FCC rules now dictate how that information is protected. You need:

- ◆ **Authorized contacts** – Be sure anyone you authorize to access your account, including your spouse, is listed as an authorized contact.
- ◆ **Password** – If you aren't calling from the account telephone number, a password will be requested before information is shared.
- ◆ **Security questions** – These questions will be asked if the correct password isn't supplied.
- ◆ **Identification** – A photo ID may be required when accessing the account in person.

Please do not be offended if these steps are taken to verify your identity.

Contact the business office if you have any questions about the privacy of your account.



LIFELINE Telephone Assistance Programs for Low-Income Consumers

Red River Communications offers residential telephone assistance programs, referred to as Lifeline, to help eligible persons and maintain telephone service. Only ONE Lifeline discount per customer or household allowed.

Lifeline applies only to primary local telephone service in your home. It lowers the monthly cost of telephone service by at least \$8.25. Eligible persons receive a form of assistance listed below or self-certify based on income.

Certification for LIFELINE

- MN & SD Residents -

I certify under penalty of perjury that I currently receive benefits from the following program and agree to notify Red River Communications immediately if I cease to participate in the program:

- Medicaid Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- National School Lunch MN Family Investment Program
- Federal Public Housing Assistance Low-Income Home Energy Assistance
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Low Income - at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (Proof of income is required - contact Red River Communications for list of accepted documents or visit www.lifelinesupport.org)

Customer Name _____
(Must be same name as on telephone bill)

Date _____

Signature _____
(Must be same name as on telephone bill)

Phone _____

Social Security # _____

Return completed forms to: **Red River Communications**
P.O. Box 136
Abercrombie, ND 58001

- ND Residents -

If you participate in an assistance program you should contact social services for the necessary Lifeline form.

The form to the left can be used to self-certify your participation in Lifeline based on income only. Additional information may be required.

Return completed forms to
Red River Communications
P.O. Box 136
Abercrombie, ND 58001

Statement Of Nondiscrimination

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If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Telephone Assistance Program (Lifeline)

Lifeline is a federal and state assistance program which reduces telephone bills for qualified low-income customers. Lifeline offers a monthly credit up to \$9.25/month per eligible household. You may qualify for telephone assistance if you participate in one of the following assistance programs:

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Supplemental Security Income | Medicaid |
| Low-Income Home Energy Assistance | Federal Public Housing Assistant |
| Temporary Assistance for Needy Families | National Free School Lunch |
| Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) | Minnesota Family Investment Program |

or you may qualify if your household income is below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

Methods of qualifying and applying vary by state. North Dakota residents should contact their county social service office for proof of eligibility. South Dakota and Minnesota residents may self-certify for the federal program by requesting a Lifeline application from our business office. Minnesota has a state Lifeline program which provides additional assistance to qualifying residents. Applications are available from our business office.

Lifeline participants are required to re-certify their eligibility annually in order to continue participation in this program and agree to notify the business office if they no longer qualify for Lifeline.

Account Privacy Information (CPNI)

Red River Communications has always considered customer account information private. FCC rules now dictate how that information is protected. You need:

- * **Authorized contacts** - Be sure anyone you authorize to access your account, including your spouse, is listed as an additional contact.
- * **Password** - If you aren't calling from the account telephone number, a password will be requested before information is shared.
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Contact the business office if you have any questions about the privacy of your account.

