

**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
LIFELINE/TRIBAL LINK UP ADVERTISING/OUTREACH
ANNUAL REPORT
JULY 1, 2023**

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 1st 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 - Milbank

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 \$25.00 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

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

July 2022

Public Notice published in the Grant County Review - 7/20/2022



Interstate Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc.
312 4th Street West, PO Box 920, Clear Lake, SD 57226

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- ... 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.

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emporary Suspension, net service are treated . Only one charge will ideo and Internet are .sended. Continuation e or Internet service ie \$35.00 charge from

porary Suspension will \$35.00 charge as the Suspension.

i. A customer renewing both convention- al 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 preceded 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 continuance 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 business 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.

**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 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 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.

**USE OF TELEPHONE
FOR DEBT COLLECTION
PURPOSES**

The Federal Communications Commission has received information that interstate telephone service is being used for collection 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 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 calls, 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.

**AFFORDABLE
CONNECTIVITY
PROGRAM**

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is a U.S. government program that helps many low income households pay for broadband service and internet connected devices. ITC has been approved by the FCC as a provider for the ACP program. To learn about eligibility and application options, visit AffordableConnectivity.gov.

LIFELINE & LINK-UP

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- 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 or visit our website at www.itc-web.com.

**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.**



Bell Ringer

Volume 57, No 2 June 2023
Clear Lake, South Dakota 57226

ITC HOSTED VOICE = ULTIMATE BUSINESS SOLUTION

ITC Hosted Voice is a phone solution for businesses packed with great benefits and flexible options. Our phones are a cutting-edge solution for any size business, making them the ultimate communications tool for any workplace. Read what some of our customers say about the service to the right.

Here are some of the benefits of ITC Hosted Voice:

- **Low Startup Costs** – ITC Hosted Voice is managed via the cloud through our secure local data network with no costly hardware to purchase, thus eliminating the burden of making large upfront investments. The phones will be leased and managed by ITC.
- **Feature Packed Service** – The seat price includes all major business phone features to help you manage your business efficiently, including mobility with soft-phone, web portal access, mobile app, voice mail, and more.
- **Flexible and Scalable** – ITC Hosted Voice is priced per station and can be expanded as you grow your business by any number of users or locations.
- **Mobile Connectivity** – ITC Hosted Voice allows you remote access to your business phone via the SNAPMobile app and web interface.
- **Reliable and Secure** – ITC Hosted Voice is fully redundant and secure.
- **Support** – ITC will take care of your Hosted Voice service. In most cases, issues can be resolved remotely.

“Grant County upgraded the phone system in December of 2022 to ITC Hosted Voice and integrated all five county locations. When the techs were on site, they were informative and efficient. The main reason we chose ITC as our provider is because of their excellent customer service and tech support. Support calls are answered very quickly and resolved.”

- Karen, Grant County

“We have been using ITC Hosted Voice since 2020. We love it! One of the main reasons we switched was to add a remote location. It’s great as we can call the other site using only the extension number. We have two top features of the system; the support is the main one. If we need a quick change done with our auto-attendant, we e-mail the technician, and it is updated within the hour. Our second favorite feature is Voice Mail to E-mail. If a Voice Mail is left, whether the office is closed for bad weather or after-hours, we receive them in our e-mail. The voice quality is excellent; we are so glad we made the switch.”

- Amanda, Rick’s Welding, Inc. & Powerlift Doors

LOCATING YOUR INTERNET LINES



ITC recently added four new employees whose jobs primarily include locating fiber-optic lines during construction season. These new employees include Derick “Bob” Nielsen, Tyler Engen, Jack Bandemer, and James Swisher. Whenever you call “811”, the South Dakota One Call System, ITC will have 48 business hours to locate the ITC fiber on your property before you start digging. The call is free and could save you money in fines.

The South Dakota One Call System is for excavators or anyone digging to notify utility companies of their intent to dig. When you call 811, the South Dakota One Call System notifies utility companies with buried lines in the area. The

utility companies will only mark lines that they own. Private lines must be located by the private locating firm and are your responsibility. (For MN, call 811 or 1.800.252.1166.)

Don’t dig before calling 811, even if it’s just for a garden. And if you happen to see any of these new employees out and about, say “Hi” and welcome them into the ITC family.

Bob



Tyler



Jack



James



BLAST WI-FI TIPS AND TRICKS

By Michael Martinell, Network Broadband Technician

In today's world, the Internet is an essential part of our lives. We use it to stream movies, connect with friends and family, work remotely, and more. However, there's nothing more frustrating than a slow and unreliable Internet connection. That's why we've put together some tips and tricks to help you improve your Blast Wi-Fi experience.

At ITC, we're committed to providing you with a secure and up-to-date Wi-Fi connection. As a Blast Wi-Fi customer, you can rest assured that we take your online security seriously. Our team regularly checks your equipment for potential issues and upgrades your firmware to keep your connection secure and up-to-date.

The location of your router can affect your Wi-Fi coverage. We recommend you place your router in a central location away from walls and other obstructions to minimize signal interference, helping your devices connect to the Wi-Fi network. For example, if you're streaming a movie on Netflix and it keeps buffering, this could be due to poor signal strength, which can be remedied by moving your router to a central location. ITC can help you relocate your router if necessary.

For devices that require a stable and consistent Internet connection, such as gaming consoles or desktop computers, we recommend using a wired connection instead of Wi-Fi. This minimizes latency and ensures an always-on connection. For instance, if you're playing an online game and the connection keeps dropping, switching to a wired connection can fix the issue.

Older devices that are no longer in use or are rarely used can slow down your Wi-Fi network. You can remove these devices from your network using our Blast Wi-Fi app, which frees up bandwidth and improves Wi-Fi performance for your other devices. This also helps ensure your network is more secure and less susceptible to attacks.

With Blast Wi-Fi, you can prioritize certain types of Internet traffic, such as streaming video, online gaming, or work apps, to ensure that they receive sufficient bandwidth and do not suffer from lag or buffering. This is made possible through the Priorities feature on the ITC Blast Wi-Fi app. Prioritizing specific types of traffic can significantly improve your Wi-Fi performance. For example, if you're working from home and need to participate in a video conference, enabling Priorities for your computer can ensure a seamless video conferencing experience.

If you have a large home or areas with weak Wi-Fi coverage, we recommend using a Wi-Fi GigaSpire Mesh device. This can boost the signal of your existing router, providing seamless Wi-Fi coverage throughout your home by using multiple access points. We can help determine where you need extended Wi-Fi coverage and install a mesh unit.

We hope these tips help you improve your Wi-Fi experience with Blast Wi-Fi. If you ever experience any issues or have questions, our customer support team is always ready to help. If you want to try out ITC's Blast Wi-Fi, call us at 1.800.417.8667 to discuss the best Wi-Fi experience.

TAKE OUR SURVEY

By Holly Stormo, Marketing Communications Specialist

ITC recently emailed out a two-question survey to our customers. If you didn't receive it or don't have email, please scan the QR code to the right with your smartphone camera. You can also stop into the office to pick up a copy. We want to know what you think.



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 provide a discount of up to \$30 per month for broadband service (up to \$75 for those living on Tribal Lands). If your application is approved, you will need to contact ITC to receive the discount on your existing service. For more info or to see if you qualify, visit www.GetInternet.gov.

LIFELINE FUNDING AVAILABLE

Lifeline is a federal program that lowers the monthly cost of phone or Internet. Eligible customers will get up to \$9.25 toward broadband service (up to \$34.25 for those living on Tribal Lands), or up to \$5.25 toward phone service on their bill. 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 www.itc-web.com/services/residential/phone. You can also go directly to the Lifeline National Verifier at www.LifelineSupport.org. 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.