



MESSENGER

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120 E. First, P.O. Box 48, Kimball, SD 57355 • (605) 778-6221 • Fax: (605) 778-8080

Trivia~Trivia~Trivia

What is the name of the groundhog that is honored each year during celebrations in Philadelphia to commemorate groundhog day?

****Deadline to enter is the 15th of the Month.** All correct entries will be entered into a drawing for \$10.00. Submit your answers by: 1) Writing your answer on a piece of paper with your name, address and telephone number, and mailing to our Midstate office at PO Box 48, Kimball SD 57355 or 2) Go online to our website at www.midstatesd.net and click on the Trivia link in the bottom left corner and submit your answer online following the online instructions. *Trivia submissions will not be taken by telephone. ONE SUBMISSION PER FAMILY PLEASE.*

And the Winner is...

Dorothy Abernathy knew the astrological sign that represents a birthday between January 20th and February 18th is Aquarius.

Payment Reminder

We would like to ask for your assistance. When submitting payment please make sure to notate your account number and or phone number of the account that you are paying for in the "Memo" line of your check. This helps alleviate confusion when customers submit a check for payment for an account other than their own account.

Also, we ask that when paying by check, please ensure that the amount you write in the payment amount box matches the amount written out on your check. The bank requires us to use the written word amount on the check not the dollar amount written in the box. If the amounts do not match, we will use the amount that is wrote out on the check. We appreciate your assistance on these issues.

Important Dates to Remember...

Please mark the following dates, regarding our billing schedule, on your calendar. Bills are mailed the last business day of each month, and payment is due on the 20th of the month. Paying on time saves frustrating calls and unwanted late fees.

- **Last Business Day of Each Month**
Bills mailed out from Midstate's office
- **5th of Each Month**
Disconnect of all accounts with a 30 day balance.
- **20th of Each Month**
Bills are due in either Midstate office by 12:00 p.m.
- **20th of Each Month**
Overdue notices mailed out and late fees will be applied to all delinquent accounts.

**All Midstate bills are due upon receipt. Any bills that have not been received by the 5th of the following month will be disconnected. To be reconnected the bill must be paid in full and will be subject to a down payment and appropriate reconnect fees.*

Still Having Wi-Fi Problems?

Are you having trouble connecting to Wi-Fi when you're in certain areas of your home? Does your device suddenly disconnect from the network for no apparent reason? Does it take forever to download large files? Do streaming movies pause or stop altogether?

Is all this happening even though you've upgraded your router, placed it in the best location, and are using the settings recommended by Midstate Communications?

If so, it may be time to consider a different type of home Wi-Fi solution; one that's designed to address the most common problems people experience in their home Wi-Fi networks. The best alternative right now to standard home Wi-Fi is an exciting new technology called Mesh Wi-Fi.

What is Mesh Wi-Fi?

Like your current Wi-Fi network, Mesh Wi-Fi uses a router to transmit the Wi-Fi signal your devices connect to. What's different is that it combines the router with a series of small wireless devices—called satellites—which you place in different rooms in your home. These satellites communicate with the router and provide you with a strong Wi-Fi signal everywhere, whether it's your bedroom, your home office, or even your backyard.

What's more, once you're connected to your Mesh Wi-Fi network, there's nothing else you need to do. You can roam freely in your home with any of your devices and not have to worry about losing your connection or dealing with poor performance. The Mesh Wi-Fi system knows where you and your device are at all times and connects you to the nearest satellite.

Advantages of Mesh Wi-Fi...

In addition to solving your biggest home Wi-Fi challenges and giving you outstanding performance, Mesh Wi-Fi offers other compelling advantages.

First of all, it's cost effective. You can upgrade to a Mesh Wi-Fi solution that's managed by Midstate for just a few dollars a month.

Second, it's convenient. As part of your monthly service, Midstate manages your Mesh Wi-Fi network for you. So if you do experience any technical issues, Midstate's experienced support team is just a phone call away. We can access your Wi-Fi network remotely, figure out the source of your problem, and make the appropriate changes without having to send a technician to your home.

Contact Midstate Today...

If you're ready to move on from your current Wi-Fi challenges, contact Midstate Communications today at 778-6221 or 234-8000. We will give you everything you need to upgrade your current Wi-Fi network to a high-performance Mesh Wi-Fi system, and provide you the support you need—so you can enjoy worry-free Wi-Fi that just works.

High School Seniors Don't Miss Out!

Scholarship Deadline is March 16th...Over \$5000 Available!

Midstate Communications Board of Directors is pleased to announce that we will once again be offering the Midstate Communications Scholarship Program to graduating seniors. Young people are considered a very valuable resource at Midstate Communications. This program was established to encourage the youth in our service areas to further their educational aspirations after graduating from high school.

The Midstate Communications Scholarship Program has set aside eleven (11) \$500 scholarships to be awarded to high school seniors whose parents/guardians are active customers in good standing at Midstate Communications. To be eligible, the applicant must currently be a high school senior that plans to attend a college, university, vocational or technical post-secondary school.

Scholarship applications are judged by an independent panel of judges on leadership in school, civic and other extracurricular activities, character and essay.

To be considered for this year's scholarship, applications must be postmarked no later than March 16, 2018. Applications can be obtained from high school guidance counselors, at either of the Midstate Communications offices or online at www.midstatesd.net and hovering over the "Company" tab at the top of the homepage and then selecting "Scholarships".

Upcoming SD High School Events Live on Midstate Cable Services...

In an effort to bring you expanded coverage of local high school events, Midstate Communications, in partnership with SDN Communications, will be airing live coverage of the following South Dakota High School Athletic Championships:

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	CHANNEL
February 9-10	AA & A State Gymnastics Tourney	Aberdeen	Channel #245
February 9	Girls DWU Culver's Basketball Classic	Mitchell	Channel #243
February 10	Boys DWU Culver's Basketball Classic	Mitchell	Channel #243
February 22-24	Class A & B State Wrestling Tourney	Sioux Falls	SDPB 1

Lifeline Program Provides Discounts for Voice and Broadband Services...

Since 1985, the Lifeline program has provided a discount on phone service for qualifying low-income consumers to ensure that all Americans have the opportunities and security that phone service brings, including being able to connect to jobs, family and emergency services. The Lifeline program is available to eligible low-income consumers in every state, territory, commonwealth, and on Tribal lands.

In December, 2016, some exciting changes were made to the national Lifeline benefit program. In the past the Lifeline discounts were only available to be applied to your voice services. With the recent order Lifeline discounts are eligible to be applied to bundled or stand-alone Internet service.

This is important to Lifeline customers because starting in December of 2019, Lifeline discount amounts available for voice only services will begin to decrease and will be phased out. If, however, the Lifeline support provided is applied to a bundled service package which includes not only telephone voice service, but also Internet Service or a stand-alone broadband service you can avoid these discount decreases and continue receiving the maximum discount, currently \$9.25 for non-tribal members and \$34.25 for tribal members living on tribal land per month.

Moving your monthly Lifeline discount so that it also applies to your current bundled or stand-alone broadband service, will generally require that you agree to not transfer your Lifeline benefit to another provider for twelve months. There are certain exceptions to this requirement, if you move your residential address as one example.

To be eligible for Lifeline support you must verify under one of the following programs or criteria:

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Medicaid
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- Tribal-specific programs: Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Tribally-Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TTANF), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), Head Start
- Income at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines
- Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit Program

If you would like additional information about the Lifeline program and qualification guidelines, please contact our office at 778-6221.

Photo Contest Winner...

Congratulations to Liz Brooks of Woonsocket for submitting the winning photo for the 2018 Central Connections Directory. For her winning photograph she will receive a \$100 prize. We would like to thank everyone who submitted photos for this year's contest, we truly have some talented people living in our service areas.



Winter Olympic Coverage

The 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, are set to begin Thursday, Feb. 8 with full coverage of the Olympic games continuing through the closing ceremonies on February 25th. The 23rd Winter Games will be an exciting month of competition in sports like figure skating, hockey, curling and events you may never knew existed. Live coverage will be carried by NBC and its family of channels which will include hours of live coverage along with daily updates, replays and analysis of the days Olympic events. You can also follow all the action on the networks live streaming coverage on NBCSports.com and NBCOlympics.com

Olympic events can be viewed on one of the following channels on Midstate cable service:

NBC	104
NBCSN	121
CNBC	138
USA Network	160
Olympic Channel	300



Keeping Kids Safe Online

YouTube is a popular site for young viewers. YouTube recently stepped up enforcement of its guidelines for videos aimed at children. One of those ways that parents can enforce stricter rules is by turning on parental controls. YouTube has a restricted mode you can enable in the settings of the mobile app or on the web browser. Restricted mode attempts to scan and filter out the adult-oriented content posted to the site so young viewers can not see it. YouTube does admit that the setting is not 100 percent accurate. To activate the content filter, make sure you are signed into your YouTube or Google account, and tap your profile picture or the menu icon in the upper right corner of the screen. From the menu choose settings, then general and then restricted mode and turn it on.

Do-Not-Call Registry...

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) have established a national Do-Not-Call Registry that 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.

You may register your phone number for free, and it will remain on the national Do-Not-Call Registry until you remove it or it is disconnected. You may remove your name from the list at any time. The Do-Not-Call Registry will not prevent all unwanted calls. It does not cover the following:

- Calls from organizations with which you have established a business relationship.
- Calls for which you have given prior written consent.
- Calls which are not commercial or do not include unsolicited advertisements.
- Calls by or on behalf of tax-exempt non-profit organizations.

Consumers may register their residential telephone number, including wireless cellular numbers, on the national Do-Not-Call Registry at no cost by telephone or on the Internet. To register by telephone, consumers may call 1-888-382-1222. For the hearing impaired, TTY call 1-866-290-4236.

You must call from the phone number you wish to register. You may also register online at www.donotcall.gov. Inclusion of your telephone number on the national Do-Not-Call Registry will be effective three months following your registration.

General Rules & Regulations

Taxes

Federal law requires a 3 percent excise tax on telephone rental and long distance charges. These taxes are billed to all telephone users not specifically exempt by law. All taxes collected are remitted to the proper federal and state agencies.

Allowance For Failure Of Service

The Telephone Companies do not guarantee uninterrupted working of its lines or equipment. In case service is interrupted otherwise than by the negligence or willful act of the subscriber, an adjustment will, upon application by a subscriber, be made in the amount of charges for such service, equipment, and facilities furnished as are rendered useless or inoperative. Any adjustment shall apply only to the period the interruption continues beyond 24 hours after notice of the interruption is received by the Telephone Companies. No other liability shall in any case attach to the Telephone Companies.

Billing & Payment For Service

If you desire assistance or explanation regarding your bill, please call the Business Office.

National Do No 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 email 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.

Annoying, Obscene, & Threatening Calls

If you get an annoying, obscene, or threatening call, hang up immediately. See page 21 for instructions on using Customer Originated Trace. Threatening calls should be reported immediately to the police. Obscene or harassing calls are prohibited by federal and state laws. A person who makes or permits such calls to be made over a telephone under his/her control may be fined or imprisoned, or both.

Telephone Assistance Programs

Low Income Assistance Available to Telephone & Broadband Subscribers

Midstate Communications is authorized to offer Lifeline assistance to our customers. The Lifeline Universal Service Program is a government supported program available to qualified, low-income consumers and offers a discount for eligible telephone and bundled Internet service meeting the minimum standards. If you are an existing telephone service subscriber receiving the monthly Lifeline discount, you can continue to apply that discount to your home phone voice service. Effective December of 2019, Lifeline discount amount available for voice only services will begin to decrease. If, however, the Lifeline support provided is applied to a bundled service package which includes not only telephone voice service, but also Internet Service you can avoid these discount decreases and continue receiving the maximum discount, currently \$9.25.

Moving your monthly Lifeline discount so that it also applies to your current bundled service which includes both voice telephone service and Internet service, will generally require that you agree to not transfer your Lifeline benefit to another provider for twelve months. There are certain exceptions to this requirement.

Tribal Lifeline/Link-Up

The Tribal Lifeline program provides a reduction in monthly charges to telephone or bundled Internet service to customers who live on tribal lands and are currently receiving benefits from a qualifying public assistance program. Eligible subscribers may be eligible for additional discounts up to \$25.

The Tribal Link-Up program provides a reduction in connection charges to telephone customers who live on tribal lands and are currently receiving benefits from a qualifying assistance program.

How to Qualify for a Lifeline Discount:

You must participate in at least one of the following programs to be eligible for a Lifeline Program discount:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Supplemental Security Income
- Medicaid
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- Veteran's Pension and Survivors Benefit Program
- Income Below the Federal Poverty Guidelines

If residing on tribal lands the following eligibility criteria is also available to be utilized:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
- Tribally-administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Food Distribution on Indian Reservations
- Head Start

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JOHN L & D JILL EKSTRUM
25697 362ND AVE
KIMBALL, SD 57355-7005

Dear Customer:

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) requires that we notify our customers on an annual basis of the Lifeline Link-up Assistance program. We have enclosed the paperwork explaining eligibility for this program as well as the application. Please review this information and if you qualify for the assistance please complete the application and the consent form and return it to us with the documentation of the program you are participating in. Examples of documentation would be a copy of the food stamp EBT card if you qualify for food stamps or a copy of the Medicaid card if you qualify for the Medicaid program. Each program has a document of proof that we would need to see as verification that you are eligible.

If you have questions about Lifeline or Link-up, the application form or your current services, please contact us at 778-6221 or 234-8000 for more information.

Sincerely,
MIDSTATE COMMUNICATIONS, INC.



Mark D. Benton
General Manager

MDB/jt

Enclosures

Lifeline Assistance Application and Certification Form

(Please print or type)

Company Name: *Midstate Communications & Midstate Telecom*

SPIN: *14007716 & 143030709*

Account Name: _____

Residential Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

(Do not use a P.O. Box address.)

Is your residential address a permanent address? Yes _____ No _____

Billing Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

(If different from physical address)

Social Security Number (last four digits): _____ If you are a member of a Tribal nation and do not have a social security number, you may provide your Tribal identification number _____

Date of Birth: _____ Telephone Number: _____ (if existing service)

Telephone number where you can be reached or receive messages: _____

Are you currently receiving Lifeline assistance through any other telephone provider? Yes _____ No _____

I am applying for: _____ Lifeline (monthly telephone service discount) **Minimum of \$9.25**
_____ Tribal Link Up (Tribal Only - telephone connection charge discount)

Select Type of applicable Lifeline Service (office staff may update as necessary)

_____ Voice Only _____ Bundle (both Voice & Broadband meet minimum standard)

Note: Customers receiving Lifeline assistance are required to remain with their service provider for a minimum period before they may transfer the benefit to another provider – a 60 day “port freeze” for voice services and a 12 month “port freeze” for broadband services.

I am applying as an individual living on “tribal lands”: _____ Yes _____ No

(“Tribal lands” are defined as any federally-recognized Indian tribe’s reservation, pueblo or colony; Indian Allotments; and areas that fall outside the boundaries of existing Tribal lands but have been designated by the Federal Communications Commission as Tribal lands for the purpose of receiving Tribal Lifeline & Tribal Link Up support.)

I, one or more of my dependents, or my household currently participates in one or more of the following programs: (Check all that apply.) **You will be required to provide documentation of eligibility.**

_____ Medicaid (e.g. Title XIX/Medical State Supplemental Assistance)

_____ Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

_____ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps)

_____ Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8)

_____ Veterans Pension or Survivors Pension

_____ Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance (Tribal Only)

_____ Tribally-Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TTANF – Tribal Only)

_____ Head Start (if income eligibility criteria are met – Tribal Only)

_____ Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (Tribal Only)

_____ **OR** My household income is at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The number of individuals in my household is: _____.

If you do not participate in one or more of the programs listed above, you may qualify for Lifeline, Tribal Lifeline and Tribal Link Up if your household income does not exceed 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (see table below).

2018 Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines

Number in Residence	135% Guideline (Annual)	Number in Residence	135% Guideline (Annual)
1	\$16,389	5	\$39,717
2	\$22,221	6	\$45,549
3	\$28,053	7	\$51,381
4	\$33,885	8	\$57,213

For each additional person after 8, add \$5,832 to the annual guideline. Source:

Federal Register, Vol. 83, No. 12, January 18, 2018, pp. 2642-2644

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Consent to Provide Lifeline/Tribal Link Up Subscriber Information to the National Lifeline Accountability Database

The Federal Communications Commission has established the National Lifeline Accountability Database ("Database") to detect and prevent consumers from receiving more than one discounted telephone service under the federal Lifeline program.

Under federal law, Midstate Communications/Midstate Telecom is required to check/query this Database prior to signing up Lifeline/Tribal Link Up subscribers and is also required to provide to the federal administrator of this Database the following information regarding each new and existing Lifeline/Tribal Link Up subscriber:

- The Lifeline/Tribal Link Up subscriber's full name;
- The Lifeline/Tribal Link Up subscriber's full residential Address;
- The Lifeline/Tribal Link Up subscriber's date of birth;
- The last four digits of the Lifeline/Tribal Link Up subscriber's Social Security number or Tribal Identification Number (if the subscriber is a Tribal member and does not have a Social Security number);
- The telephone number associated with the Lifeline/Tribal Link Up service;
- The date on which the Lifeline/Tribal Link Up service was initiated;
- The date on which the Lifeline service was terminated (if applicable);
- The amount of Lifeline service support being sought for the subscriber;
- The means through which the subscriber qualified for Lifeline service (income or program-based, Medicaid, etc.).

The above information related to your Lifeline/Tribal Link Up service is being provided by Midstate Communications/Midstate Telecom to the federal administrator (the "Universal Service Administrative Company" and/or its agents) of the National Lifeline Accountability Database to verify that you, as a Lifeline/Tribal Link Up applicant and/or subscriber, are not receiving more than one Lifeline/Tribal Link Up benefit, and to otherwise ensure proper administration of the Lifeline/Tribal Link Up program.

I, the Lifeline/Tribal Linkup applicant/subscriber, acknowledge that Midstate Communications/Midstate Telecom will transmit to the federal administrator of the National Lifeline Accountability Database the above-referenced information about my Lifeline/Tribal Link Up account and/or service for inclusion into the Database, and hereby consent to transmission of the information for purposes allowed by law relating to administration of the Lifeline/Tribal Link Up program.

I further understand that a failure to provide this consent to release my Lifeline/Tribal Link Up account and/or service information to the federal administrator for inclusion in the National Lifeline Accountability Database will result in a denial of or de-enrollment from Lifeline/Tribal Link Up service.

Signature

Date