

**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
LIFELINE/TRIBAL LINK UP ADVERTISING/OUTREACH
ANNUAL REPORT
JULY 1, 2021**

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/Coop

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 \$22.50 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 \$7.25 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.
- Other Programs for Tribal Lands.

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

July 2020

Public Notices also published -
Brookings Register 7/14/20
Watertown Public Opinion 7/11/20
Grant County Review 7/8/20



E-Statement is Everything...

Easy - Efficient - Effortless - Eco-Friendly

Easy, efficient, as well as eco-friendly... Why wouldn't you sign up for E-Statement from ITC? If you currently mail your bill or drop it off at one of our offices, we would like to encourage you to sign up for Auto-Pay and go paperless with E-Statement. Sign up for both services now, and we will give you a **bill credit for \$25**. The best part about signing up for both services is you never have to leave home to pay your bill or worry about it being late. If you only sign up for one of these services, we'll still give you a \$10 bill credit.

When you sign up for Auto-Pay, your bill amount is deducted from your account every month. If you pay using your checking account, your bill will be deducted on the 10th of the month. If you pay with a credit or debit card, you can choose the date (from the 1st to the 17th of the month). Call ITC's offices at 1.800.417.8667 to sign up.

When you sign up for E-Statement and go paperless, ITC will notify you via email that your bill is ready each month. You can log in to see the information, save it, or print it if you want a paper record. Your monthly newsletter, the Bell Ringer, will also be delivered via email. To go paperless, sign in to www.itcebill.com/estatement/login and follow the instructions to the right.

It's easy to save time, paper, and money. Go paperless with E-Statement and sign up for Auto-Pay to get a \$25 credit off your next bill! Do it today!



To Go Paperless:

1. Log into E-Statement.
2. Go to "Setting" and click the "General" tab.
3. Under "Invoice Preference, choose "Web Bill Only."
4. Then click "Change Preference."

Call Before You Dig

Summer is here, which means it's time for construction projects around the house. Whether you are digging a new garden spot or holes for a new fence, be sure to call "811," the South Dakota One Call System. The call is free and could save you money in fines.

The South Dakota One Call System is for excavators 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 have 48 hours to mark their lines. Do not start digging until 48 hours have passed. If the utility company doesn't respond, please call the South Dakota One Call System again. The utility companies will only mark lines that they own. Private lines need to be located by the private locating firm and are your responsibility.

If you live in Minnesota, the number to call is 811 or 1.800.252.1166.

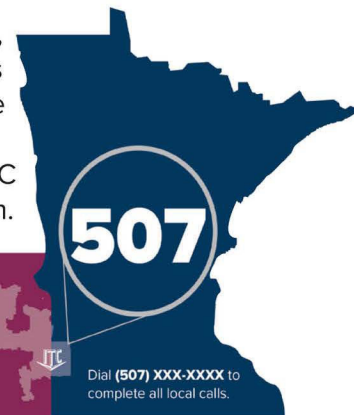


Start 10-Digit Dialing Today!

988, the new National Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Crisis Lifeline number, goes into effect on July 16, 2022. For 988 to work, ITC has implemented ten-digit local dialing, which means you need to dial the area code plus the telephone number when making a local call. This applies to all calls within your area code that are currently dialed with seven digits. If you forget and dial just seven digits, your call will still be completed at this time.

Also, please update all services, automatic dialing equipment, or other types of equipment programmed to complete calls with seven-digit local numbers.

If you have any questions, please call ITC at 1.800.417.8667 or visit www.itc-web.com. You can also visit the FCC website at <https://www.fcc.gov/suicide-prevention-hotline>.





Internet 911: Printers in 2021

By Michael Martinell, Network Broadband Technician

I have no idea how many printers I have owned since I got my first dot matrix for Christmas in the early 1990s. It was a slow, noisy machine that could be made to print at near laser printer quality with the right software. When I sent a print job, I had plenty of time to make a pot of coffee.

Back in those days, if you wanted to print something, you were forced to use the computer connected to the printer. Some simple printers today may still force you to print with a cable, but most printers now have a convenient wireless option. Once your computer is connected to the wireless router, such as ITC Blast Wi-Fi, you can print from anywhere you have wireless Internet coverage. In many cases, new printers allow you to print pictures and documents from your computer, tablet, and even your smartphone.

Another important consideration is whether you need an inkjet or laser printer. Inkjet printers are typically slower than laser printers and are more expensive to operate. The benefit is they are much cheaper to buy initially, and they usually excel at printing photos. The most significant expense with inkjet printers is having to purchase expensive ink cartridges. When I first used an inkjet printer, I would typically refill the cartridge from bottles of ink. Unfortunately, that doesn't work these days because, in many cases, printer manufacturers have mechanisms that prevent the refilled cartridge from working in the printer it came out of.

Some brands of inkjet printers make models with ink tanks where you can put a bottle of printer ink. This is cheaper when compared to a cartridge. They generally cost more to initially purchase than their cartridge equivalents but are cheaper to operate. I can say as an owner of one of these types of printers, I would personally never purchase a cartridge printer again.

The laser printer is typically good for documents, as they produce nice crisp text. For this reason, they are more appropriate in an office setting. The advantage is that they print very fast and are cheaper to operate than a traditional inkjet with an ink cartridge.

Laser printers also struggle with different paper types, such as labels, envelopes, and greeting cards. There are more expensive laser printers that handle these paper types and print nice photos, but they are on the expensive end of the printer lineup.

Whichever you decide you want, inkjet or laser, you can find models that perform just the basic printer function that my old dot matrix did. Many people want more out of their printer and tend to gravitate toward an all-in-one model that features a built-in photocopier, flatbed scanner, and sometimes a fax machine. Some models will even sort the output for stapling. I have not seen one that makes coffee yet, though.



ITC University: The EBB

By Holly Stormo, Marketing Communications Specialist

The FCC has approved ITC to be a provider for the Emergency Broadband Benefit program (EBB) to help households struggling to pay for Internet service during the pandemic. This new benefit provides a temporary discount on monthly Internet bills for qualifying low-income households. It will help families with challenges such as working from home, distance learning, telehealth services, or simply connecting digitally with loved ones.

If your household is eligible, you could receive up to a \$50/month discount on your Internet service and equipment rentals. The program is open now for applications and will continue until the fund runs out of money or six months after the Department of Health declares an end to the COVID-19 health emergency, whichever is sooner.

To find out if you qualify or to apply, go to the EBB website at [GetEmergencyBroadband.org](https://www.getemergencybroadband.org). If you need assistance with your application, contact the EBB support center at 1.833.511.0311.

Lifeline Funding Available

Lifeline is a federal program that lowers the monthly cost of phone and Internet. Eligible customers will get up to \$9.25 toward 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 go to ITC's website at <https://www.itc-web.com/services-and-products/phone/lifeline-and-link/>. You can also go directly to the Lifeline National Verifier at <https://nationalverifier.servicenowservices.com/lifeline>. 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.



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

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- ... Access to emergency services provided at no additional charge;
- ... Access to emergency services provided by local government to other public safety organizations, such as 911 and enhanced 911, to the extent the local government in XYZ’s service area has implemented 911 to enhanced 911 systems; and
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Questions regarding any of the above service should be directed to ITC at 1.800.417.8667.

GENERAL INFORMATION/LIFELINE & LINK-UP

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 col-

lection 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; 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.

LIFELINE & LINK-UP

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- Medicaid
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- 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.

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.

Your service representative will be glad to help you.