

**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
LIFELINE/TRIBAL LINK UP ADVERTISING/OUTREACH
ANNUAL REPORT
JULY 1, 2024**

Company: West River Cooperative Telephone Co

Address: 501 Coleman Ave

Bison, SD 57620

Telephone number: 605-244-5211

Company contact: Tori Kling

Study Area Code: 391689

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. <https://sdplains.com/phone/lifeline-and-link-up>
- Company's information posted on USAC website.
- Other (describe): Newsletters

*Required



West River Cooperative Telephone Company
801 Coleman Avenue
PO Box 39
Bison, SD 57620

605.244.5213
westriver@sdplains.com
www.wrctc.coop
www.facebook.com/WRCTC

December 15, 2023

Mr. Ryman LeBeau, Tribal Chairman
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Government
PO Box 590
Eagle Butte, SD 57625

Dear Mr. LeBeau:

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), as part of its 2012 Order reforming the federal universal service mechanisms related to telecommunications and information services, adopted new "Tribal Engagement" provisions that are intended to improve communications and foster a greater understanding between service providers and Tribal entities of the factors necessary to deploy and sustain telecommunication services on Tribal lands. See FCC Public Notice, Office of Native Affairs and Policy, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, and Wireline Competition Bureau Issue Further Guidance on Tribal Engagement Obligation Provisions of the Connect America Fund, DA 12-1165, released July 19, 2012.

Pursuant to the FCC's rules related to Tribal Engagement, West River Cooperative Telephone Company would, as soon as possible, like to begin discussions with the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in a manner consistent with the FCC rules. Accordingly, we would request a meeting with the Tribe. The purpose of this meeting will, generally, be to exchange information related to the deployment and provisioning of communications services on Tribal lands. While West River Cooperative Telephone Company leaves to your discretion attendees from the tribe at this requested meeting, it is important that at least some of the tribal representative attendees at the meeting are "decision-makers," as this can change the perspectives of the discussions. West River Cooperative Telephone Company asks that the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe provide a name and contact information for a Tribal representative who can assist in scheduling and arranging a meeting with the appropriate Tribal government staff and leaders to discuss deployment and sustainability of telecommunications services on Tribal lands. This information may be provided to the undersigned by calling (605) 244-5213, or through an email directed to ekahler@wrctc.coop. Please respond by December 31, 2023.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. We look forward to discussing these important matters with you.

Sincerely,

Eric Kahler, General Manager
EK:tkk



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PO Box 39
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westriver@sdplains.com
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December 15, 2023

Janet Alkire, Chairwoman
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
PO Box D
Fort Yates, ND 58539

Dear Ms. Alkire:

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), as part of its 2012 Order reforming the federal universal service mechanisms related to telecommunications and information services, adopted new "Tribal Engagement" provisions that are intended to improve communications and foster a greater understanding between service providers and Tribal entities of the factors necessary to deploy and sustain telecommunication services on Tribal lands. See FCC Public Notice, Office of Native Affairs and Policy, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, and Wireline Competition Bureau Issue Further Guidance on Tribal Engagement Obligation Provisions of the Connect America Fund, DA 12-1165, released July 19, 2012.

Pursuant to the FCC's rules related to Tribal Engagement, West River Cooperative Telephone Company would, as soon as possible, like to begin discussions with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in a manner consistent with the FCC rules. Accordingly, we would request a meeting with the Tribe. The purpose of this meeting will, generally, be to exchange information related to the deployment and provisioning of communications services on Tribal lands. While West River Cooperative Telephone Company leaves to your discretion attendees from the tribe at this requested meeting, it is important that at least some of the tribal representative attendees at the meeting are "decision-makers," as this can change the perspectives of the discussions. West River Cooperative Telephone Company asks that the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe provide a name and contact information for a Tribal representative who can assist in scheduling and arranging a meeting with the appropriate Tribal government staff and leaders to discuss deployment and sustainability of telecommunications services on Tribal lands. This information may be provided to the undersigned by calling (605) 244-5213, or through an email directed to ekahler@wrctc.coop. Please respond by December 31, 2023.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. We look forward to discussing these important matters with you.

Sincerely,

Eric Kahler, General Manager
EK/tkk



Lifeline provides discounts to eligible low-income consumers to help them establish and maintain telephone and internet service. **Note:** One discount is available for either telephone or internet services but not both.

What type of discount is available?

Lifeline assistance lowers the cost of basic, monthly local telephone service or internet service. Eligible consumers can receive \$9.25 per month. Eligible residents of Tribal Lands can receive up to an additional \$25 in Lifeline support.

Link Up for Tribal Lands reduces the cost of initiating new telephone service. Eligible consumers can receive a 100% discount off of the one-time costs associated with initiating telephone service, up to a maximum of \$100. Eligible consumers also qualify for a deferred payment schedule for remaining costs of up to \$200.

Toll Limitation Service (TLS) support is also available to all eligible Lifeline consumers. TLS allows eligible consumers who wish to avoid incurring large long distance fees to choose toll blocking or toll control at no cost.

How do I know whether I am eligible?

Eligibility for Lifeline or Link Up for Tribal Lands has a set of federal eligibility criteria to meet for the federal program. An individual is eligible if he or she or a dependent person in their household participates in one of the following programs or if your household income doesn't exceed 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

- Medicaid
- SNAP
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- Veteran's Pension or Survivors Pension

In addition, a consumer may be eligible if his or her household income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines.

Residents of Tribal Lands qualify if they participate in any of the programs listed above, have a household income that is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines, or participate in one of these programs:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) general assistance
- Tribal Head Start (income eligible)
- Tribal TANF
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

How do I apply to receive Lifeline and Link Up?

To apply for Lifeline and Link Up (Tribal Lands only) discounts please contact:

West River Cooperative Telephone Company
PO Box 39
Bison, SD
57620
605-244-5213

Lifeline

Receive up to \$9.25 off your phone or Internet service

Lifeline is a federal program that helps lower the monthly cost of your phone or Internet service.*

INDIVIDUAL ELIGIBILITY

You qualify for a discount if:

- You participate in any **ONE** of these government benefit programs:
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - Medicaid
 - Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)
 - Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

— **OR** —

- Your income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines

HOUSEHOLD ELIGIBILITY

A household is a group of people that share income and expenses.

- You are only allowed to get **one** Lifeline discount per household.
- If you share housing, complete the **Household Worksheet**.
- The worksheet is available on our website, **LifelineSupport.org**. You can also ask your Lifeline service provider.

THREE WAYS TO APPLY



APPLY ONLINE Find the online application at **CheckLifeline.org**.

OR



MAIL YOUR APPLICATION Print an application from **LifelineSupport.org**. Fill out and mail it with proof of eligibility to:
Lifeline Support Center
P.O. Box 7081
London, KY 40742

OR



CONTACT A PHONE OR INTERNET COMPANY
Find a company that provides Lifeline at **LifelineSupport.org**.
Click *Companies Near Me*.

If you live in **CA (CaliforniaLifeline.com)**, **OR (Lifeline.Oregon.gov)**, or **TX (TexasLifeline.org)**, visit the website for your state to find out how to apply.

HOW TO SHOW YOU ARE ELIGIBLE

You may need to show proof that you qualify for Lifeline, such as:

- **A copy of your SNAP or program letter** **OR**
- **A copy of your pay stub or tax return** to prove your income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines.

*If you live on Tribal Lands, you may receive an additional discount toward your service.

If you have a disability and need assistance with your application, contact the Lifeline Support Center.



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

LIFELINE SUPPORT CENTER

(800) 234-9473 | 9 AM-9 PM ET | 7 DAYS PER WEEK
LifelineSupport@usac.org | www.LifelineSupport.org

Lifeline is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) program to help make communications services more affordable for eligible consumers. The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) administers the Lifeline program. USAC is responsible for helping you apply for the program, understand eligibility requirements, and keep your benefit current through an annual recertification process.

Available for Public Use

Lifeline Program Application Form



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

1. About Lifeline

Lifeline is a federal benefit that lowers the monthly cost of phone or internet service.

Rules

If you qualify, your household can get Lifeline for phone or internet service, but not both.

- If you get Lifeline for phone service, you can get the benefit for one mobile phone or one home phone, but not both.
- If you get Lifeline for internet service, you can get the benefit for your mobile phone or your home connection, but not both.
- If you get Lifeline for bundled phone and internet service, you can get the benefit for your mobile phone bundled service or your home bundled service, but not both.

Your household cannot get Lifeline from more than one phone or internet company.

You are only allowed to get one Lifeline benefit per household, **not per person**. If more than one person in your household gets Lifeline, you are breaking the FCC's rules and will lose your benefit.

What is a household?

A household is a group of people who live together and share income and expenses (even if they are not related to each other).

Do not give your benefit to another person

Lifeline is non-transferable. You cannot give your Lifeline benefit to another person, even if they qualify.

Be honest on this form

You must give accurate and true information on this form and on all Lifeline-related forms or questionnaires. If you give false or fraudulent information, you will lose your Lifeline benefit (i.e., de-enrollment or being barred from the program) and the United States government can take legal actions against you. This may include (but is not limited to) fines or imprisonment.

You may need to show other documents

If the Lifeline Program Administrator is not able to validate that you or someone in your household qualify using this form and electronic databases, you may need to provide an official document from one of the government qualifying programs or documentation that proves your annual income. You can submit copies of your official documents with this application or wait until the Lifeline Program Administrator asks you for them. To add them now, include the documents in option 1 or option 2 below:

1. If you qualify through a government program, provide a copy of a document such as an approval letter or benefit letter with the name of the person in your household who qualifies, name of the program, and issue date within the past 12 months or future expiration date.
2. If you qualify through your income, provide a copy of the prior year's state, federal, or Tribal tax return or a current income statement from an employer or paycheck stub for 3 consecutive months (or other accepted documents).

Visit lifelinesupport.org to see all acceptable document guidelines.

Apply

To apply for a Lifeline benefit, fill out the required sections of this form, initial every agreement statement, and sign on page 6.

Mail the form to this address:

USAC
Lifeline Support Center
P.O. Box 9100
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18773

Lifeline Program Application Form



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

2a. Your Information

All fields are required unless indicated. Use only CAPITALIZED LETTERS and black ink to fill out this form.

What is your full legal name?

The name you use on official documents, like your Social Security Card or State ID. Not a nickname.

First

Middle (optional)

Last

Suffix (optional)

What is your phone number (if you have one)?

What is your date of birth?

Month

Day

Year

What is your email address (if you have one)?

What are the last 4 numbers of your Social Security Number (SSN)?

If you do not have a SSN, what is your Tribal Identification Number?

What is the best way to reach you?

- email phone* text message* mail

*If I selected the phone or text option, I consent to let USAC contact me at my Lifeline phone number for important reminders and updates to my Lifeline service.

If I selected the text message option, message and data rates may apply.

Text STOP to end messages.

Lifeline Program Application Form



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

2b. Your Information (continued)

*Tribal lands include any federally recognized Indian tribe's reservation, pueblo, or colony, including former reservations in Oklahoma; Alaska Native regions established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (AS Stat. 888); Indian allotments; Hawaiian Home Lands—areas held in trust for Native Hawaiians by the state of Hawaii, pursuant to the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920 (July 9, 1921, 42 Stat. 388, et. seq., as amended); and any land designated as such by the FCC for purposes of this subpart pursuant to the designation process in the FCC's Lifeline rules.

What is your home address? (The address where you will get service. Do not use a P.O. Box)

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Street Number and Name

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Apt., Unit, etc.

City

--	--	--	--	--

State

Zip Code

Is this a temporary address? Yes No **Check if you live on Tribal lands***

What is your mailing address? (Only fill this out if it is not the same as your home address.)

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Street Number and Name

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Apt., Unit, etc.

City

--	--	--	--	--

State

Zip Code

**Lifeline Program
Application Form**



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

2c. Your Information (continued)

Only fill this section
out if you are applying
through a child or
dependent.

Check if you are qualifying through a child or dependent in your household.
If so, answer the following questions:

What is their full legal name?

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

First

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Middle (optional)

--	--	--

Suffix (optional)

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Last

What is their date of birth?

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Month

Day

Year

What are the last 4 numbers of their Social Security Number (SSN)?

--	--	--	--

If they do not have a SSN, what is their Tribal Identification Number?

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Lifeline Program Application Form



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

3. Qualify for Lifeline

Fill out this section to show that you, your dependent, or someone in your household qualifies for Lifeline.

You can qualify through some government assistance programs or through your income (you do not need to qualify through both).

Qualify through a government program:

Check all programs that you or someone in your household have:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (Food Stamps)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Medicaid
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)
- Veterans Pension or Survivors Benefit Programs

Tribal Specific Programs

- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) General Assistance
- Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Tribal TANF)
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)
- Tribal Head Start (only households that meet the income qualifying standard)

Or

Qualify through your income:

(Only fill this out if you do not qualify through a government program.)

Including you, how many people live in your household? (check one)

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

If more than 8, add this amount for each extra person:

Is your income the same or less than the amount listed for your state and household size?

(only check yes or no next to your household size)

All 48 States, DC,
and Territories
(not Alaska and Hawaii)

Alaska

Hawaii

\$19,683

\$24,584

\$22,640

Yes

No

\$26,622

\$33,264

\$30,618

Yes

No

\$33,561

\$41,945

\$38,597

Yes

No

\$40,500

\$50,625

\$46,575

Yes

No

\$47,439

\$59,306

\$54,554

Yes

No

\$54,378

\$67,986

\$62,532

Yes

No

\$61,317

\$76,667

\$70,511

Yes

No

\$68,256

\$85,347

\$78,489

Yes

No

Add \$6,939

Add \$8,681

Add \$7,979

Yes

No

135% of the 2023 Federal Poverty Guidelines

*The Federal Poverty Guidelines are typically updated at the end of January.

Lifeline Program Application Form



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

4. Agreement

I agree, under penalty of perjury, to the following statements:

You must initial next to each statement.

- Initial I (or my dependent or other person in my household) currently get benefits from the government program(s) listed on this form or my annual household income is 135% or less than the Federal Poverty Guidelines (the amount listed in the Federal Poverty Guidelines table on this form).
- Initial I agree that if I move I will give my service provider my new address within 30 days.
- Initial I understand that I have to tell my service provider within 30 days if I do not qualify for Lifeline anymore, including:
- 1) I, or the person in my household that qualifies, do not qualify through a government program or income anymore.
 - 2) Either I or someone in my household gets more than one Lifeline benefit (including more than one Lifeline broadband internet service, more than one Lifeline telephone service, or both Lifeline telephone and Lifeline broadband internet services).
- Initial I know that my household can only get one Lifeline benefit and, to the best of my knowledge, my household is not getting more than one Lifeline benefit.
- Initial I agree that all of the information I provide on this form may be collected, used, shared, and retained for the purposes of applying for and/or receiving the Lifeline Program benefit. I understand that if this information is not provided to the Lifeline Program Administrator, I will not be able to get Lifeline benefits. If the laws of my state or Tribal government require it, I agree that the state or Tribal government may share information about my benefits for a qualifying program with the Lifeline Program Administrator. The information shared by the state or Tribal government will be used only to help find out if I can get a Lifeline Program benefit.
- Initial All the answers and agreements that I provided on this form are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.
- Initial I know that willingly giving false or fraudulent information to get Lifeline Program benefits is punishable by law and can result in fines, jail time, de-enrollment, or being barred from the program.
- Initial My service provider may have to check whether I still qualify at any time. If I need to recertify (renew) my Lifeline benefit, I understand that I have to respond by the deadline or I will be removed from the Lifeline Program and my Lifeline benefit will stop.
- Initial I was truthful about whether or not I am a resident of Tribal lands, as defined in section 2 of this form.

Signature

Today's Date

Lifeline Program Application Form



Universal Service Administrative Co.

5. Agent Information

Answer only if a sales person submits this form.

What is the agent's full legal name?

The name you use on official documents, like your Social Security Card or State ID. Not a nickname.

First Name input field (16 boxes)

First

Middle (optional) Name input field (16 boxes)

Middle (optional)

Suffix (optional) Name input field (4 boxes)

Suffix (optional)

Last Name input field (24 boxes)

Last

What is the agent's ID number?

ID Number input field (10 boxes)

What is the agent's date of birth?

Date of Birth input fields (Month: 2 boxes, Day: 2 boxes, Year: 4 boxes)

Month

Day

Year

Lifeline Program
Application FormUniversal Service
Administrative Co.

Notice

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT NOTICE: Section 54.410 of the Federal Communications Commission's rules requires all Lifeline subscribers to demonstrate their eligibility to receive Lifeline services. This collection of information stems from the FCC's authority under Section 254 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. §254. Using this authority, the FCC has designated USAC as the permanent Lifeline Administrator. The FCC has published rules detailing how consumers can qualify for Lifeline services and what Lifeline services they may receive (47 CFR §54.400 et seq.). The data provided in response to this information collection will be used by USAC to verify the applicant's eligibility for Lifeline services.

We have estimated that each response to this collection of information will take, on average, between 0.25 and 0.75 hours. Our estimate includes the time to read the questions, look through existing records, gather the required data, and actually complete and review the form or response. If you have any comments on this estimate, or how we can improve the collection and reduce the burden it causes you, please write to the Federal Communications Commission, OMD-PERM, Paperwork Reduction Project (3060-0819), Washington, D.C. 20554. We also will accept your comments via the internet if you send them to PRA@fcc.gov. Please **DO NOT SEND COMPLETED DATA COLLECTION FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS.**

Remember – You are not required to respond to a collection of information sponsored by the Federal government, and the government may not conduct or sponsor this collection, unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. This collection has been assigned an OMB control number of 3060-0819.

The Commission is authorized under the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, to collect the information we request on this form. If we believe there may be a violation or potential violation of a statute or a Commission regulation, rule, or order, your response may be referred to the Federal, state, or local agency responsible for investigating, prosecuting, enforcing, or implementing the statute, rule, regulation, or order.

If you do not provide the information we request on this form, you will not be eligible to receive Lifeline services under the Lifeline Program rules, 47 C.F.R. §§ 54.400-54.423.

The foregoing Notice is required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1996, P.L. No. 104-13, 44 U.S.C. § 3501, et seq.

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT: The Privacy Act is a law that requires the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) to explain why we are asking individuals for personal information and what we are going to do with this information after we collect it.

Authority: Section 254 of the Communications Act (47 U.S.C. § 254), as amended, 47 U.S.C. §254, authorizes the FCC to operate the Lifeline program. Using this authority, the FCC has designated USAC as the permanent Lifeline Administrator. The FCC has published rules detailing how consumers can qualify for Lifeline services and what Lifeline services they may receive (47 CFR §54.400 et seq.).

Purpose: We are collecting this personal information so we can verify that you qualify for the Lifeline Program and so we can efficiently provide Lifeline services to you. We access, maintain and use your personal information in the manner described in the Lifeline System of Records Notice (SORN), FCC/WCB-1, is available at <https://www.fcc.gov/managing-director/privacytransparency/privacy-act-information#systems/>.

Routine Uses: We may share the personal information you enter into this form with other parties for specific purposes, such as: with contractors that help us operate the Lifeline program; with other federal and state government agencies that help us determine your Lifeline eligibility; with the telecommunications companies that provide you Lifeline service; and with law enforcement and other officials investigating potential violations of Lifeline rules.

A complete listing of the ways we may use your information is published in the Lifeline SORN described in the "Purpose" paragraph of this statement.

Disclosure: You are not required to provide the information we are requesting, but if you do not, you will not be eligible to receive Lifeline services under the Lifeline Program rules, 47 C.F.R. §§ 54.400-54.423.

Calling on You

2024 Scholarship Winners

**OFFICE
CLOSED**

West River Cooperative Telephone Company will be closed Thursday, July 4, 2024 in observance of Independence Day.



facebook.com/WRCTC
Leave us a Review!

WRCTC and Grand Electric Cooperative teamed together for the 23rd year to award \$750 scholarships to graduating seniors from area school districts. WRCTC and Grand Electric sponsor this scholarship program to help serve as an investment in the economic future of our rural area. It is used to recognize and encourage the academic achievements of students in the areas we serve. Winners have been awarded their certificates at the Academic Awards programs at their respective schools. Congratulations, Class of 2024!

ALLIE KOHN, daughter of Ryan and Jeanna Kohn, graduated May 12, 2024, from Lemmon High School. Ranked 4 of 25 in her class, Allie graduated with a 3.898 GPA. She plans to attend Dickinson State University, where she will major in Elementary Education. Allie participated in many extracurricular activities throughout her high school career such as Student Council, FFA, Basketball, Volleyball, Track, and Cross Country. Upon college graduation, Allie plans to return to Lemmon with hopes of getting an elementary teaching position at the school. She would also like to help coach sports, starting with younger ages and working her way up to high school sports.



MADDIE HULM, daughter of Brent and Cindy Hulm, graduated May 11, 2024, from Bison High School. Ranked 1 of 5 in her class, Maddie graduated with a 4.159 GPA. She plans to attend Black Hills State University and will major in Elementary Education. Maddie was involved in many activities during high school such as FCCLA, Student Council, Regional Student Council, National Honor Society, Cross-Age, Yearbook, Academic Olympics, Quiz Bowl, Volleyball, Basketball, Church Youth Group, Confirmation, and Feeding South Dakota. Once she graduates from BHSU, she plans to move back to Bison, or another small community, and teach. Her long-term goal is to be the best teacher possible whom kids love and look up to.

BRENNAN GLINES, son of Ryan and Natalie Glines, graduated from Harding County High School on May 18, 2024. Brennan ranked 11 of 15 in his class and graduated with a 3.325 GPA. He plans to attend Dickinson State University to major in Finance and minor in Entrepreneurship. Brennan participated in many activities during high school such as Football, Basketball, and Student Council. Once Brennan graduates, he plans to open an Investment and Real Estate LLC. When he has PO Box 279, Bison; earned enough capital from his LLC, he would like to reinvest his earnings back into his hometown of Buffalo by opening more businesses.



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SARAH HOLZKAMM, daughter of Rick and Bekki Holzkamm, graduated May 19, 2024, from Hettinger High School. She ranked 3 of 18 and graduated with a 3.91 GPA. Sarah will be attending Washington State University in the Fall where she will major in Anthropology and Linguistics and minor in Chinese and French. Sarah spent a lot of time in extracurricular activities including Band, Choir, National Honor Society, FFA and Acalympics. Once Sarah finishes her undergraduate, she plans to continue to earn her Ph.D. She would like a job where she can travel abroad while studying different cultures and languages, and how they affect society and the world.

KIMBERLY JOHNSON, daughter of Dean and Rebecca Johnson, graduated May 18, 2024, from Newell High School. Ranked 1 of 22 in her class, Kimberly graduated with a 4.163 GPA. She plans to attend Dickinson State University to work towards her Doctorate of Chiropractic Medicine and Minor in Spanish and Business. Kimberly has been involved in many extracurricular activities such as FFA, Student Council, National Honors Society, SDQHYA, AQHYS, and sports. Once Kimberly graduates from college, she would like to open her own Chiropractic Clinic in a community PO Box 126, Vale; that is in need of healthcare options.



COMMANDIQ

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO ME?

In the next few months, we will cover COMMANDIQ, PROTECTIQ AND EXPERIENCEIQ and discuss WHY these Apps are beneficial to YOU!

COMMANDIQ is a **FREE** application on your smart device that allows YOU to control your internet! It's like a remote control for your Wi-Fi - HOW COOL IS THAT?! While running the app from the palm of your hand, you can change Wi-Fi passwords and Wi-Fi Network names, run speed tests, turn Wi-Fi on and off for specific devices, and receive notifications when a new or unknown device connects to your network! Did we mention it's **FREE**?! Having access to your internet wherever you are gives YOU the power!

There are so many benefits to the COMMANDIQ App! The list goes on and on! Call the office today PO Box 392, Buffalo; for more information!

- ❑ **COMMANDIQ** is 18459 Stonelake Rd Newell; available to all Managed Wi-Fi subscribers.
- ❑ **PROTECTIQ** and **EXPERIENCEIQ** require our GigaSpire and a subscription.
- ❑ Have Managed Wi-Fi and not sure what device you have? Give us a call today at 605-244-5213!

**YOUR WI-FI
REMOTE!
DOWNLOAD THE
APP TODAY!
IT'S FREE!!!**



BABY ANIMALS 2025 DIRECTORY PHOTO CONTEST



We are looking for photos for the 2025 WRCTC Directory. The photos can be of any type of baby animal! We want to see the view through your lens!

Please submit your pictures to bschecher@wrctc.coop

WRCTC requires that all photos be submitted digitally. Digital photos are more vibrant and clear, they keep their quality and are easy to access while designing the directory.

- **We will not crop your photos for the contest, they will be used as submitted.**
- **Photos must be taken in WRCTC's territory.**

Deadline to enter the 2025 Directory Photo Contest is July 31, 2024.

PHOTO CONTEST RULES: *The photo must be an original taken by a WRCTC member. If the photo contains a person who is highly recognizable and it is chosen as a winner, a picture permission form must be signed by the individual. If the subject is under 18 years of age, a parent/guardian must sign prior to receiving the money. Each member may submit FOUR photos. Photos may be submitted on a computer disc or e-mailed as a jpeg or pdf file. Submission of the photo releases all right of ownership of the photo and authorizes WRCTC to publish the photo on the directory cover, or use as WRCTC desires, allowing proper acknowledgment to the photographer. Photos must be taken in WRCTC's service territory. The winners will see their photo on the front cover of the 2025 directory and will be awarded a \$100 cash prize for first place; \$50 for second place and \$25 for third place. Employees and Directors are not eligible.*

Lifeline: Affordable Telephone Service for Income-Eligible Consumers

Lifeline is the FCC's program to help make communications service more affordable for low-income consumers. Lifeline provides subscribers a discount on monthly telephone and/or broadband services purchased from participating providers in the marketplace. The discounts, which can be applied to stand-alone broadband, bundled voice-broadband packages - either fixed or mobile - and stand-alone voice service - will help ensure that low-income consumers can afford 21st-century broadband and the access it provides to jobs, education, and opportunities.

The History of Lifeline

The FCC established the Lifeline program in 1985 to ensure that qualifying low-income consumers could afford phone service and the opportunities and security it provides. Congress supported and strengthened Lifeline in the Telecommunications Act of 1996, requiring that affordable service and advanced communications be available to low-income consumers across the country. In March of 2016, the FCC modernized Lifeline for advanced services by beginning a transition toward support of broadband service.

How Lifeline Works

Lifeline provides an eligible customer with broadband internet at a discount of up to \$9.25 per month. Eligible voice only subscribers will receive a discount of \$5.25 per month. Subscribers may receive a Lifeline discount on either a wireline or a wireless service but may not receive a discount on both services at the same time. Lifeline also supports broadband-voice bundles. FCC rules prohibit more than one Lifeline service per household.

Lifeline is available to eligible low-income subscribers in every state, territory, commonwealth, and on Tribal lands.

To participate in the program, subscribers must either have an income that is at or below 135% of the federal Poverty Guidelines or participate in certain assistance programs. You can see if you are eligible with the Lifeline Eligibility Pre-Screening Tool on the Universal Service Administrative website at <https://www.checklifeline.org/lifeline>.

How Do I Qualify?

The following is a list of assistance programs that qualify a participant for Lifeline:

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamps or SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)
- Veterans Pension or Survivors Benefit Program

How Tribal Link Up Works?

Tribal Link Up provides eligible low-income consumers living on Tribal lands with a one-time discount of up to \$100 on the initial installation or activation of a wireline or wireless telephone for the primary residence. Tribal Lands Link Up also allows consumers to pay the remaining amount that they owe on a deferred schedule, interest-free. Federal rules prohibit eligible low-income consumers from receiving more than ONE Link Up discount at a primary residence. Eligible consumers may be eligible for Link Up again only after moving to a new primary residence. Link Up support is only offered to carriers who are building out infrastructure on Tribal lands so not all carriers may discount their activation fee. Enhanced benefits are provided to low-income consumers who live on a federally recognized Indian Tribe's reservation.

Tribal Lifeline takes up to an extra \$25 off your monthly bill, for a total Lifeline discount of up to \$34.25 per month. You can get Tribal Lifeline if you live on Tribal lands. Tribal lands include any federally recognized Indian tribe's reservation, Pueblo, or colony, including former reservations in Oklahoma, Alaska Native regions, Hawaiian Home Lands, or Indian Allotments. The following is a list of Tribal assistance programs that also qualify a participant for Lifeline:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) General Assistance
- Tribally-Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- Head Start (if income eligibility criteria are met)

How Do I Sign Up for Lifeline?

If you qualify for any of the above programs, you must complete a Lifeline Assistance Application. You can find the application online at www.wrctc.coop.

Submit applications to:

USAC
Lifeline Support Center

911 Increase

The State of South Dakota increased the 911 emergency services surcharge to \$2.00 during 420 Main Ave, Lemmon; the 2024 legislative session, making this mandatory increase effective 7/1/24 through 7/1/26.

Pursuant to South Dakota Codified Laws § 34-45-4 voice service providers are required to collect and remit the 911 emergency surcharges to the SD Department of Revenue and to state such charges in any billing statement, invoice, or receipt.

This increase will only affect members with telephone services, located in South Dakota.



New WRCTC Members

Buffalo
Sever, Jon

605-375-3084

New Employee



JULIANNA (KARI) ZITTELMAN began working for WRCTC and Grand Electric on May 1, 2024, as the Cashier/ Receptionist. She is responsible for greeting members at the front desk, posting payments, answering phones, and completing payment reports. Julianna most recently worked at the North Dakota Department

of Environmental Quality. She graduated from Bison High School and obtained a Bachelor's in Biology from the University of Mary in Bismarck. While attending college, she met her now husband, Jarad Zittleman.

Julianna, Jarad, and their house cat, Mikko, recently moved back to Bison to be closer to her parents, John and Veronica Kari, and to help out on the family ranch. When Julianna is not working, she enjoys gardening, baking, cooking, and spending time with her family and friends. Welcome to the Cooperative Family, Julianna! We are excited to have you as part of the team!

Advocating for Rural Broadband

In May, General Manager Eric Kahler and Board of Directors Vice President Garrett Schweitzer attended a conference in Washington, D.C., where they met with South Dakota's three congressional delegates, United States Senators John Thune and Mike Rounds, and United States Representative Dusty Johnson. During their meetings, they discussed the critical role that the Universal Service Fund plays in West River's ability to continue to provide its members with access to high-quality and affordable broadband and all rural providers across the nation.



Youth Tour Winner

LAINEE GEBHART, daughter of Dalton and Sara Gebhart, Meadow, has been selected to join the Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C.

Lainee just finished her sophomore year at Lemmon High School.

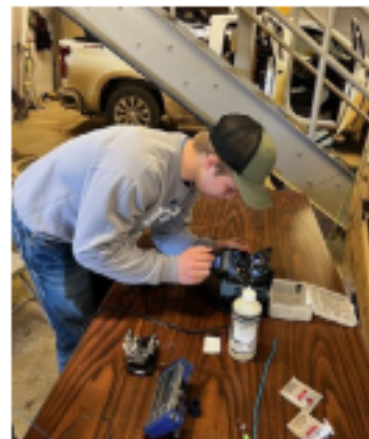
Congratulations, Lainee!



Internships

This year, West River Cooperative Telephone Company participated in the Lemmon High School Internship Program.

Trevor Ellingson, Lemmon High School, job shadowed Andy Arthur, Bison Area Technician, as he did his everyday work. Trevor was 811 3rd Ave E, Lemmon; able to gain on the job experiences, earn credits towards a high school class, and figure out if a telephone technician would be good career choice after graduation. If you would be interested in interning at WRCTC, call the office at 605-244-5213.



Trevor Ellingson learns to splice fiber



Trevor Ellingson (left) and Andy Arthur (right) install a barn camera system

Find Your Address

Five addresses were hidden in the last newsletter. Hidden in this issue are five new addresses. If you find YOUR address, all you have to do is notify our office. The \$20 will then be deducted off your next telephone bill. Changes of address in the New WRCTC Members section do not count. **Deadline is June 25, 2024.**

\$20
bill credit

Calling on You

2023 Scholarship Winners

**OFFICE
CLOSED**

**West River Cooperative
Telephone Company
will be closed Tuesday,
July 4, 2023 in
observance of
Independence Day.**



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JALE YALOWIZER, daughter of Shane Yalowizer and Dacia Hilkemeier, graduated May 14, 2023 from Lemmon High School. Ranked 2 of 15 in her class, Jale graduated with a 3.981 GPA. She plans to attend Black Hills State University, where she will major in Social Science Secondary Education. Jale participated in many extracurricular activities throughout her high school career such as National Honor Society, Student Council, Regional Reporter, FFA, Youth Group, Saturday Morning Physics, FCCLA, Bible Study, Oral Interpretation, Theater, Track, Basketball, Volleyball, Volleyball Manager, Football Manager and many hours of volunteer work. Upon college graduation, Jale plans to return to a rural South Dakota town and become a High School Social Studies Teacher. Jale hopes to become an adviser for NHS or FCCLA and would like to help out as an assistant coach to one of the sports teams.



MARY CARMICHAEL, daughter of Kyle and Shawnda Carmichael, graduated May 13, 2023, from Bison High School. Ranked one of the top two in her class of 5, Mary graduated with a 4.129 GPA. She plans to attend University of Mary and will major in Nursing, as she has been accepted into UM's new accelerated nursing program. Mary was involved in many activities during high school such as FCCLA, Student Council, National Honor Society, Academic Olympics, Theater, Band, Volleyball, Basketball, Golf and has volunteered countless hours to local organizations. Once Mary graduates from nursing school, she plans to pursue her Doctor of Nurse Practitioner Degree and go on to practice Pediatric Oncology.



GREY GILBERT, son of Lloyd and Patricia Gilbert, graduated from Harding County High School on May 20, 2023. Grey ranked 2 of 14 in his class and graduated with a 4.0 GPA. He plans to attend the Laramie County Community College to major in Ag. Business Management and minor in Pipeline Welding. Grey participated in many activities during high school such as, National Honor Society, FFA, football, wrestling and rodeo. Once Grey graduates, he plans to move back to the family ranch and use his welding degree to pursue a business of his own. He would eventually like to work with programs that educate the nation about the importance of Agriculture and he would also like to work to find more beneficial ways to grow our food.



TAYLOR GAER, daughter of David and LeeAnn Gaer, graduated May 20, 2023, from Newell High School. Ranked 4 of 25 in her class, Taylor graduated with a 3.8 GPA. She plans to attend Dickinson State University to study Elementary Education with a minor in Math or Science. Taylor has been involved in many extracurricular activities such as Student Council, Leo Club, National Honor Society, High School Rodeo and Rodeo Club, Basketball, Volleyball, Track and 4-H. Once Taylor graduates from college, she plans to move to a rural area where she hopes to become a teacher and volleyball coach in her community.



JESS HARPER, son of Brian and Darci Harper, graduated May 13, 2023, from Faith High School. He ranked 15 of 21 and graduated with a 3.289 GPA. Jess will be attending Black Hills State University in the Fall where he will major in Education with a minor in Coaching. Jess spent a lot of time in extracurricular activities including, National Honor Society, Student Council, Football, Basketball, High 19280 Vale Cemetery Rd, Vale; School Rodeo and 4-H. Once Jess finishes college, he plans to move back home to the family ranch, teach elementary education in Faith and also coach football and basketball.



WRCTC and Grand Electric Cooperative teamed together for the 22nd year to award \$750 scholarships to graduating seniors from area school districts. WRCTC and Grand Electric sponsor this scholarship program to help serve as an investment in the economic future of our rural area. It is used to recognize and encourage the academic achievements of students in the areas we serve. Winners have been awarded their certificates at the Academic Awards programs at their respective schools. Congratulations Class of 2023!

COMMANDIQ

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO ME?

In the next few months, we will cover COMMANDIQ, PROTECTIQ AND EXPERIENCEIQ and discuss WHY these options are beneficial to YOU!

COMMANDIQ is a FREE application on your smart device that allows YOU to control your internet! It's like a remote for your Wi-Fi - HOW COOL IS THAT?! While running the app from the palm of your hand, you can change Wi-Fi passwords and Wi-Fi Network names, run speed tests, turn Wi-Fi on and off for specific devices and get notifications when a new or unknown device connects to your network! Did we mention it's FREE?! Having access to your internet wherever you are gives YOU the power!

There are so many benefits to the COMMANDIQ App! The list goes on and on! Call the office today PO Box 10, Redig; for more information!

- COMMANDIQ is available to all Managed Wi-Fi subscribers. PROTECTIQ and EXPERIENCEIQ require our GigaSpire and a subscription.
- Have a GigaCenter? Call us today to upgrade to a GigaSpire for FREE!!

**YOUR WI-FI
REMOTE!
DOWNLOAD THE
APP TODAY!
IT'S FREE!!!**



CELEBRATE SOUTH DAKOTA

GREAT FACES - GREAT PLACES 2024 DIRECTORY PHOTO CONTEST

We are looking for photos for the 2024 WRCTC Directory. The photos can be of anything that represents South Dakota! We want to see the view through your lens!

Please submit your pictures to bschecher@wrctc.coop

WRCTC requires that all photos be submitted digitally. Digital photos are more vibrant and clear, they keep their quality and are easy to access while designing the directory.

- We will not crop your photos for the contest, they will be used as submitted.
- Photos must be taken in WRCTC's territory.

Deadline to enter the 2024 Directory Photo Contest is July 31, 2023.

PHOTO CONTEST RULES: The photo must be an original taken by a WRCTC member. If the photo contains a person who is highly recognizable and it is chosen as a winner, a picture permission form must be signed by the individual. If the subject is under 18 years of age, a parent/guardian must sign prior to receiving the money. Each customer may submit FOUR photos. Photos may be submitted on a computer disc or e-mailed as a jpeg or pdf file. Submission of the photo releases all right of ownership of the photo and authorizes WRCTC to publish the photo on the directory cover, or use as WRCTC desires, allowing proper acknowledgment to the photographer. Photos must be taken in WRCTC's service territory. The winners will see their photo on the front cover of the 2024 directory and will be awarded a \$100 cash prize for first place; \$50 for second place and \$25 for third place. Employees and Directors are not eligible.

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- Veterans Pension or Survivors Benefit Program

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How Do I Sign Up for Lifeline?

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Submit applications to:

USAC
Lifeline Support Center
P.O. Box 7081
London, KY 40742



Securing your Account

To protect the privacy of information contained in your telephone account, WRCTC is only allowed to discuss account information with the person(s) listed on the account. This includes businesses. We must authenticate you (confirm your identity) before sharing account information. This is done by asking you two questions pertaining to your account that only you, as the account holder, would know. We can add more security to your account by adding personal questions that only the authorized users would know. Call the office to update your security questions or update via SmartHub.

If the account is listed ONLY in your name or the business' name, you might want to consider adding an authorized user. For instance, if you are a parent or individual who relies on someone else to discuss account changes, payments or any other account data with our company, you will need to have the person's name added to your records as an authorized contact before our Member Relations Representatives are able to assist them.

If you need to add an authorized user to your account, the form can be found on our website, www.wrctc.coop, or you may call our office at 605-244-5213.

New WRCTC Members

Vale

Hilltop Diesel

605-456-6972

Vale Bar

605-456-3939

Farewell



KAYE SENN's final day at Grand Electric was May 1, 2023. Kaye and her husband, Steve, will be moving to Rapid City to be closer to their children and grandchildren.

Kaye worked at Grand Electric and West River Cooperative Telephone Company for a little 602 6th Ave W, Lemmon; over a year. She worked as the Head Custodian and took care of

all of the indoor and outdoor maintenance.

Once moved, Kaye plans to go to work for her daughter at Black Hills Receptions and Rentals, where she will put her fabulous decorating skills to use. Kaye is very excited for her new adventure, but her fun personality will be missed at the office. Good luck with your future endeavors, Kaye!

New Employee



TOMMI JO RICE began working for Grand Electric and WRCTC on April 17, 2023, as the new Head Custodian. She is responsible for the everyday cleaning and maintenance of the building and grounds. Tommi Jo has most recently worked at the Lazy Spurr Restaurant as a cook. She graduated from Sturgis High School and obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Wellness at BHSU in

Spearfish. A massage therapy certification from the Cottonwood School of Massage in Aurora, CO, led to a 20 plus year career serving the 403 5th Ave E, Lemmon; surrounding area with deep tissue massage.

Tommi Jo lives in Bison with her husband, Lucas, and has five children, Levi, Mesa, Lane, Mattie and Mecarty. She is a member of the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church. When she is not working, Tommi Jo enjoys hobbies that include team roping, crafting, DIY projects, movement therapy and learning new things. Welcome, Tommi Jo!

2023 Technical School Scholarship Winner



West River Cooperative Telephone Company and Grand Electric Cooperative teamed together again to award a \$750 scholarship to a graduating senior pursuing a degree in the electric or telecommunications field. WRCTC and Grand Electric sponsor this scholarship program to serve as an investment in the economic future of our rural area. This scholarship is used to help a student pursue their goals in the line of work the cooperatives employees work in each and every day. This year, the winner of the Technical Scholarship was Andrew Dirk, Lemmon. Congratulations, Andrew!

ANDREW DIRK, son of Brent and Jenny Dirk, graduated May 14, 2023, from Lemmon High School. Ranked 1 of 15 in his class, he graduated with a 4.0 GPA. He plans to attend North Dakota State College of Science to study Plumbing and HVAC/R. Andrew has been involved in many extracurricular activities such as National Honor Society, Student Council, Quiz Bowl, Academic Olympics, Football, Track, and Wrestling. Andrew states "My career goals consist of me obtaining my journeymen license and then, down PO Box 595, Buffalo; the road, possibly starting my own plumbing or HVAC/R business. The reason I want to work in one, or both, of these fields, is that I like using my hands and I like physically seeing what I have accomplished. Another reason I want to work in one of these fields is because of the highly needed service that it offers for people."

IPTV DVR UPDATE



On August 1, 2023, a system update will take place for all DVR's on West River Cooperative Telephone Company's IPTV system.

IMPORTANT

This update will, unfortunately, reset all DVR's and any recordings you have saved, will be permanently deleted. This should not affect any scheduled recordings, but recordings should be checked by the members after the update. Once the update is complete, you will be able to record again as normal.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. Please call the office if you have questions at 605-244-5213.

Find Your Address

Five addresses were hidden in the last newsletter. Hidden in this issue are five new addresses. If you find YOUR address, all you have to do is notify our office. The \$20 will then be deducted off your next telephone bill. Changes of address in the New WRCTC Members section do not count. **Deadline is June 28, 2023.**

\$20
bill credit



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Lifeline and Link Up



- Custom Calling Features
- Long Distance Services
- Lifeline and Link Up**
- Hearing Aid Compatibility

- Non-Tribal Lifeline Information and application
- Tribal Link Up & Lifeline Programs and application
- Additional Lifeline Information

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West River Cooperative Telephone Co.
 801 Coleman Avenue
 P.O. Box 39
 Bison, South Dakota 57620
 Business Office: 605-244-5211
 Billing Inquiry: 777
 Trouble Reporting: 611
 E-mail: westriver@sdpalms.com