

GRISWOLD Connections

SUMMER 2012

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Contact

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Griswold, IA 51535
Phone: 712-778-2121

Office Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 am to 12:00 pm and
1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Email us at gctc@netins.net

Visit us online at www.griswoldtelco.com



BROADBAND NETWORK EVOLUTION PROJECT: Fiber to the Home Update

On January 16, 2012, Griswold Cooperative Telephone Company announced our Broadband Network Evolution Project. This will result in a Fiber to the Home (FTTH) system to provide a platform for enhanced communications and entertainment services far into the future.

The Broadband Network will bring all services individually to customer locations over fiber-optic cables. 769-2370 This fiber "pipe" opens nearly endless opportunities because of the sheer volume of space or bandwidth that's available to every customer. It will allow for higher-quality TV channels and the continued expansion of Internet speeds, data services, and applications. Rural customers will also be able to get TV services, which before have only been available to city residents.

This project is well underway in the Elliott and Grant areas. Customers are being approached by our engineering firm, RVW, Inc., to conduct new fiber-optic system "subscriber location" surveys for homes and businesses. RVW representatives will be talking with each of you in these areas about the design parameters for the location we're serving. This is a very important step in the pre-construction stage of our project implementation and requires your complete cooperation to obtain necessary site details. **If you haven't been contacted as of yet or if we missed you and left a "door hanger" at your location, please call us to make a specific appointment.** You can also call if you have any questions regarding this process.

Soon we'll be starting the design phase of our project for the Lewis exchange area by evaluating fiber cable sizes and lengths. This helps to ensure that our customers will have the services they want and need, when they want and need them. We believe it's our responsibility to have the technology in place to meet the needs of our customers now and in the future.

We'll continue to keep you updated on construction and installation details during all phases of the Broadband Network Evolution Project. Thanks for your cooperation as we implement this major undertaking.



Here's What's New for You

New Website Compass Magazine

To read the Spring 2012 *Website Compass* magazine, go to www.griswoldtelco.com today. This quarter's issue features articles including:

- Creating Your Dream Home and Avoiding Nightmares
- What's the Internet Hiding From You?
- 10 Tips to Beat Technophobia

While you're visiting www.griswoldtelco.com, remember that this *Griswold Connections* newsletter is also available online. In fact, that's how our Internet customers are now receiving this newsletter. Watch for more exciting changes in the coming months to make our website even more useful and convenient for you.

New Destination America Channel

Are you a Griswold Coop Digital Video subscriber? You may have already noticed that Planet Green (channel 83) became Destination America on May 28, 2012. Discovery says, "Destination America will continue the mission of Planet Green which explores the themes that connect Americans such as lifestyle, how-to, food, home renovation, antiques and design."

New 4Mb High Speed Internet

Effective June 1, 2012, Griswold Cooperative Telephone Company has a new High Speed Internet package available with speeds of 4Mb down and 1 Mb up. Call us at 712-778-2121 for more details.

New Way to Win

Beginning with this Summer 2012 *Griswold Connections*, look for randomly selected phone numbers hidden throughout the newsletter. If you find your phone number in *italics*, give us a call at 712-778-2121 to receive a \$5.00 bill credit!



Changes in Washington Could Impact Your Telecom Services

The "Universal Service Fund"—a program overseen by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and funded by telecommunications providers across the country—has been essential in ensuring that rural consumers like you (living in difficult to serve areas) have access to high-quality networks and affordable services. But, new Federal regulations, and others under consideration, put rural networks and services at risk.

Like electricity and telephone service, reliable, high-speed broadband is becoming an essential part of daily life for businesses and consumers. 778-2513 Access is critical commerce, civic participation, health care, and education across the far reaches of rural America.

The new FCC rules, however, do not promote these objectives. Although the FCC has stated its intent to ensure that all of America has comparable access to the Internet, new FCC regulations will reduce support for many smaller, locally based cooperatives and commercial telecom providers such as ours. Among other things, under the new rules, our company will face:

- New limitations on our ability to recover investments made years ago;
- New rules that will be subject to changes every year, making it difficult for companies to plan ahead in accordance with unknown regulatory requirements;
- Federal requirements to increase consumer rates in order to qualify for full Universal Service Fund support; and
- Reduced payments from other (often larger) carriers who use rural networks

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Changes in Washington Could Impact Your Telecom Services

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Even where carriers and rural consumers can adapt to these changes, however, the FCC is considering further rule changes that threaten to reduce the ability of rural carriers to recover costs. The additional changes now being considered include:

- Reducing the opportunity for returns on rural telecom investment and operations;
- Applying additional limitations on the ability to recover costs; and
- Reducing Universal Service Fund support if a competitor serves even just a small part of our serving area.

The Universal Service Fund cuts arising out of the new rules will put existing investment in rural broadband at risk, and they will discourage future investment in new broadband-capable networks by small companies such as ours. The FCC's cuts could also lead to increased rates for many customers for telephone, broadband and other services.

New FCC regulations will reduce support for many smaller, locally based cooperatives and commercial telecom providers such as ours.

From the earliest days of telephone service, Congress has enforced policies that require affordable access to reasonably comparable communications services throughout the Nation. 763-4525 The Universal Service Fund is essential to fulfilling this policy. But rather than supporting true universal service, the new FCC rules now being considered promise better service to some Americans at the expense of lesser service, and at higher cost, for others.

Help our company continue to provide you with the services you need at an affordable rate. Don't let the FCC keep our rural community on the slow side of a broadband digital divide. Don't let the FCC adopt policies that will require rural consumers to pay higher rates for telephone service and slower broadband. Contact your congressional representatives and urge them to support regulatory action that ensures equal and affordable access to broadband for **all** Americans. Ask your representatives to help make sure that the new rules are implemented in a manner that is fair for all rural consumers and consistent with **true** universal service. Ask your representatives to tell the FCC to stop pressing for new rules that will only make matters worse.



Report Call Completion Concerns

Griswold Cooperative Telephone has been tracking how the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is handling rural call termination issues. These issues have included long distance calls not reaching customers, poor call quality, as well as incorrect Caller ID information. The problem has been occurring typically in rural areas where long-distance carriers pay higher-than-average charges to the local telephone company to complete calls. To minimize these charges, some long-distance carriers use third-party "least-cost routers," which attempt to connect calls to their destination at the lowest cost possible. Sometimes, however, the calls appear not to be connecting at all.

Recently the FCC has established a communication mechanism to report rural call completion problems. If you find that you're experiencing call completion problems, have the originating caller contact their long distance carrier first. If there is no positive, long-term outcome, then Griswold Cooperative Telephone can submit information to the FCC. We'll need as much detail as possible, including when and where the problem occurred, whether it's ongoing, whether the originating carrier has been contacted or not, and how the originating carrier responded. Thank you for your understanding concerning this issue.

Frequently Asked Questions: Fiber to the Home



What is FTTH?

FTTH is Fiber to the Home. FTTH is a new technology that uses fiber-optic cable instead of copper cable to deliver telephone, Internet, and digital television services to your home or business. Fiber-optic cables have the capacity for an unlimited amount of data, which is becoming a necessity today.

What are fiber optics?

Fiber optics (optical fibers) are long, thin strands of very pure glass about the diameter of a human hair. They're arranged in bundles called optical cables and are used to transmit light signals. Fiber networks are extremely reliable and can carry multiple voice, data, and video streams to a location at the same time.

What is the difference between FTTH and copper/coaxial cable?

It comes down to capacity and speed. Fiber-optic cables transmit signals at speeds over 20x faster than today's copper and coaxial cable. Fiber technology provides unlimited bandwidth, which means it has thousands of times the transmission capacity of copper or coaxial cable. Fiber does not conduct electricity, is not affected by heat and cold, and has a longer lifespan than copper or coaxial cable. 767-2454

What happens if the electricity goes out?

A backup battery is installed as part of your fiber infrastructure in a box inside your location. If you lose power, the battery will run for approximately eight hours and uses very low power when charging.

What kind of Internet speed will I have after fiber installation?

Customer demand and the regulatory environment will influence the Internet speeds available when the network construction is complete. Fiber has the capacity to deliver virtually unlimited speeds.

Are you going to offer improved and new digital television (video) services?

Yes, and not only will improved services be available to existing customers but the fiber network will enable the Cooperative to offer these services to our rural customers as well.

When can I get a fiber connection?

As previously communicated, we're building the fiber network in phases. The initial phase, underway at present, will cover all of the Elliott and Grant service areas. The second phase of development will be for the Lewis service area. And finally, the service areas of Griswold and Lyman will be completed by year-end 2015.

Why fiber?

Products/Bandwidth – The products and bandwidth that can be offered are only limited to the technology that's available today. The Cooperative believes in positioning the network to accommodate new and enhanced services being developed for future use by our customers.

Greater Reliability – Fiber optic cables are less susceptible to interference and can better withstand shock and vibration, such as potential disruption from natural events.

More Secure – Voice, data, and video transmissions over fiber optics are more secure than when sent over conventional copper or coaxial connections.

Flexibility – Fiber provides the flexibility to more easily adapt to customer preferences or demand. Services and products delivered over fiber can be initiated or adopted more readily.

Contact Griswold Cooperative Telephone at 712-778-2121 if you have any more FTTH questions.