

GRISWOLD Connections

WINTER 2011



Dividend Checks

Dividend checks were mailed December 1, 2011, so customers should have received them by now. Dividends are paid 10 years in arrears; therefore, the checks were for services from 2001. If you did not get your dividend check or if you have questions, call our business office at 712-778-2121.

Contact

Griswold Cooperative Telephone Co.
607 Main Street / PO Box 640
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



FCC Adopts USF/ICC Reform

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted an order on October 27, 2011, that will dramatically alter rural telecommunications. The order reforms the Universal Service Fund (USF) and Intercarrier Compensation (ICC) rules. At the time of this writing, the FCC adopted the order, but had not released it to the public. The FCC did issue an executive summary.

The FCC's plan shifts funding from spreading basic telephone service to expanding broadband service. The overhaul will still focus on sparsely populated areas, but the USF's new focus will be on areas that don't have adequate access to high speed Internet. Small rural telephone companies and the interest groups that represent them are concerned about changes slashing the subsidies received for providing services in sparsely populated areas. Members of The Great Disconnect, which Griswold Cooperative Telephone is a part of, anticipate that the changes will undercut their ability to afford future investments in their infrastructure and cost their customers more in the long run.

Many small rural telephone companies provide telephone, cable television, Internet, and cellular services. Revenues for these companies come from three places: customer charges, ICC (the fees companies pay one another to transport voice and Internet traffic), and subsidies from the USF. Under the revised fund – renamed the "Connect

Continued on page 2



Holiday Greeting Card Digital Photo Lab Special

Get your Holiday Greeting Cards printed with Griswold Cooperative Telephone's digital photo lab. **Save \$2.00 on our greeting card prices through December 31, 2011.**

Greeting cards are 4x8 and you can print 12 for \$7.95 or 24 for \$15.95.

Print them on the spot!

Don't need greeting cards? Print photos in various sizes—4x6, 5x7, 8x10, and wallets—or even create a photo CD. We even have a portrait package, so bring in your camera memory card, flash drive, pictures you'd like to scan, create a collage, and more.

Print professional quality pictures at an affordable price.



FCC Adopts USF/ICC Reform (continued from page 1)

America Fund” – the proposed annual payouts from taxes that consumers pay on their phone bills will be capped at half the amount of dollars that is currently paid out. Plus, ICC fees will be phased out over five years.

U.S. Rep. Lee Terry, vice chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee's subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet was a key player in crafting early plans for changes to the USF, including a plan that drew modest approval from small rural telephone companies. He too stated that revenue breaks down into the three previously mentioned segments. Terry said, “We knew USF was going to be flattened, capped, and reduced, but what (the providers) weren't counting on was another third of their revenue stream being phased out. That is going to hurt rural providers.”

The executive summary of the FCC's order shows that the ICC fees will be phased out and eventually eliminated, and that companies no longer can count on a steady stream of subsidies. Instead, rural broadband expansions will be opened up to a competitive bidding process, giving more incentive for larger companies to start expanding broadband services in rural areas. Leaving rural telephone companies who are already serving these densely populated areas wondering how the Connect America Fund will affect their future expansions.

Our Time and Temperature Sign Will Be Back and Be Even Better

Griswold Cooperative Telephone is here to serve our customers' communications needs in 2011 and beyond. We are also here to be of service to our community in other ways. As you may have noticed, our time and temperature sign—a highly inquired about service that we provide—has not been operational.

We are pleased to say that the time and temperature sign will not only be back, but it will be better. The new sign will provide time and temperature plus have a messaging center display. Griswold Cooperative Telephone will use the messaging center to communicate our information and will also be offering messaging service capabilities to the



public. More details on this service will be announced after the sign has been installed. Installation is being scheduled with Omaha Neon Sign Co. Inc./Daktronics technicians.



Guard Your Home's Network From Wi-Fi Pirates

You see a suspicious vehicle driving back and forth through your neighborhood, stopping every so often along the curb. No one gets out, and it finally comes to rest for 20 minutes outside one home. There could be a “Wi-Fi pirate” inside—a person who drives slowly through neighborhoods looking for unsecured access to wireless networks.

While some of these Wi-Fi pirates could be harmless—such as out-of-towners who just need to check their email—others might be looking for ways to steal identities or conduct illegal activities without being identified by law enforcement. There have been cases of homeowners being questioned by police about downloading child pornography, when in reality, it was done by someone pirating the home's wireless network.

To protect yourself and help prevent unauthorized Wi-Fi access, make sure your home's wireless network is as secure as it can be. Start by taking these five precautions:

1. **Position the router correctly.** Typical wireless routers transmit radio signals for about 300 feet. If you position the router far enough back in the house, it will be more difficult for Wi-Fi pirates to steal your bandwidth.
2. **Configure your router properly.** Change the default network name and password immediately after setup to secure your network and keep others from using it.
3. **Update software regularly.** This includes keeping your operating software up to date, as well as antivirus and spyware protection.
4. **Install and use firewalls.** The majority of computers already have firewalls installed and enabled when you buy them. Your wireless router comes with a firewall, too. It's best to have firewalls in both places.
5. **Turn on data encryption and filtering.** Encryption technology rearranges the information that goes through your wireless router in such a way that it's difficult for humans to read without permission. Filters in your router can identify friendly users and decline access for unknown users.

If you have questions or need additional assistance with the protection of your home's wireless network, contact Griswold Cooperative Telephone.



Wishing You a Happy Holiday Season

Griswold Cooperative Telephone's Holiday Open House was held November 17, 2011. We enjoyed visiting with customers and appreciate them stopping by to kick off the holiday season!

“Experience Griswold!” Remaining Thursday nights in December—December 15 and December 22

Businesses will stay open late and offer specials for your holiday shopping needs. Experience special holiday festivities to help you celebrate as well.

Griswold Cooperative Telephone employees and Board members wish you and your family a very happy holiday season. We'd like to thank you for your business during the past year. It is a pleasure to serve you and help you stay connected. We look forward to serving you in 2012.





Pieces & Dreams Car Club Local Toy Drive

Pieces & Dreams Car Club is once again sponsoring a local toy drive for children in need this Christmas season. If you would like to donate, please drop off new, unwrapped toys in the collection boxes located at Casey's General Store, Griswold Library, Griswold Post Office, Griswold American, Griswold Rolling Hills Bank, and Griswold Cooperative Telephone Company. In Lewis, there is a collection box at Weirich Welding.

Car club members will be picking up donated items on Tuesday, December 13 to prepare the toys for distribution. Cash donations are also welcome—car club members will do the shopping for you.

Mail donations to Roger Rhoads at PO Box 387, Griswold, IA 51535.

If you know of a child in need, call 712-778-4154. Thank you in advance for your generous donation and for making some child's Christmas brighter!



New Look for Newsletter, Website, and Website Compass Magazine

We hope you are enjoying the new *Connections* newsletter. We are very excited to be able to give you more information each quarter, in a new, fun, and inviting manner. The new newsletters can also be found on our website www.griswoldtelco.com. As new newsletters are published, the old newsletters will be archived on the website.

Griswold Cooperative Telephone is also working on redesigning our website. Stay tuned to check it out at www.griswoldtelco.com.

Website Compass magazine has been mailed out to all Griswold Cooperative Telephone Internet service subscribers on a quarterly basis for several years. We are excited to offer a greener version of this valuable tool to our Internet subscribers. You can now read it online at www.griswoldtelco.com instead of receiving it in the mail. The online flipbook version is the same as the paper copy—just online.

Get Internet Directions from Website Compass

It can be tough to keep up with changing Internet technologies and learn to use the vast number of online resources most effectively. That's why Griswold Cooperative Telephone offers you convenient access to the online version of *Website Compass* magazine.

Whether you're an Internet "newbie" or an experienced veteran, you're sure to find information you can use about Internet tips, trends, troubleshooting, and terms. *Website Compass* is an invaluable resource for virtually anything you do online, both at home and in the workplace. Learn about some of today's most popular websites and online activities, see answers to "Frequently Asked Questions" about Internet-related topics, and get step-by-step tutorials on dozens of common tasks involving browsers and email programs.



To access the magazine, just visit our website at www.griswoldtelco.com and click the "Website Compass" link.