

GRISWOLD Connections

SPRING 2021



Annual Meeting Coming in April

Griswold Communications' Annual Meeting will be held in April. Plans are being made for a virtual meeting due to the pandemic. When finalized, details will be mailed to each stockholder.

blueSURGE television KMTV 3.4

KMTV 3.4 Court TV Mystery can now be found on channel 304 on the blueSURGE television line-up. Court TV Mystery features investigative crime series such as The First 48, real-life docuseries and exclusive originals.

Contact

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Office Hours
Monday – Friday
7:30 am to 12:30 pm and
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Email us at gctc@netins.net

Visit us online at
griswoldcommunications.com

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communications



HBOmax on blueSURGE television

Subscribers of blueSURGE television and HBO movie package now have access to HBO Max, FREE with your subscription. HBO Max is a streaming experience like no other that bundles all of HBO together with a collection of movies, shows, and new Max originals at no additional charge with your current subscription.

Visit griswoldcommunications.com and login to your Watch TV Everywhere account or register as a new user. Once registered, access is available on the HBO Max app or website.

Call us at 778-2121 with questions. If you are not an HBO movie package subscriber, add HBO movie package today.

Don't Pass by This Password Reminder

You've heard it before, but we'll say it again. It's important to have strong passwords and change them regularly to help keep your accounts safe. Here are the basics:

Don't use personal information.

This includes names of people in your family, your address, or birthdays, since this information can be publicly available to hackers.

Don't use real words. Password cracking tools can process every word in the dictionary until a match is found. Instead, use uppercase and lowercase letters combined with special characters such as "&" or "#."

Create longer passwords. The longer it is, the better. Try for at least 10 characters.

Don't use the same password for multiple websites. If one website has a data breach and you've used that password elsewhere, it's easier for hackers to steal more information.

Change your passwords. Get in the habit of changing them twice a year when you reset your clocks for Daylight Saving Time.

Griswold Communications offers Tech Home, which includes password keeper. Call 712-778-2121 for details.



How to Write a Helpful Product or Service Review

Online reviews are most valuable when they contain clear and complete information. Follow these guidelines:

Experience the product or service first-hand. This might go without saying, but don't review anything you haven't tried. Review readers are looking for personal experience, and you can't provide it unless you've actually been there and done that.

Take photos. If you're reviewing a restaurant, take your photos before you start eating to show the dishes at their best. When reviewing a store, capture sections that show the product selection or the friendly faces of helpful staff. 763-4431

Wait for a day or two. If you want to post a negative review, wait awhile so your emotions don't get in the way of objectively describing a bad experience. If you're displeased, first mention the things you did like about the product or service (there must be at least one or two). Then explain why, overall, the negative outweighed the positive.

Use details. Your review can be as brief or as long as you like, but the more details you include, the more useful it will be. For example, you could write, "The service was great," or you could write, "Our waiter was always around when we needed him, without being intrusive. He was super friendly and gave us excellent recommendations for the best wine to drink with our meal."

Ask a friend to review your review. It might be "just" a review, but the easier it is to read, the more helpful it will be to others. Ask a friend with a good command of writing to look it over for spelling, grammar, and flow.

Make suggestions. Remember that business owners and managers are also reading your reviews, not only potential customers. If you have a problem with a business, suggest a solution. For example, "The line was a complete bottleneck. It would be much more efficient if customers could wait at their tables for their food."

Griswold Communications encourages you to post reviews of our services on our Facebook page to help others in the community feel confident about choosing us as their provider. Thanks in advance for your help.

IRS Reveals Latest List of “Dirty Dozen” Tax Scams

Each year, the IRS urges taxpayers to be on guard for tax scams that attempt to steal money and information. Here’s the Dirty Dozen list released by the IRS in July 2020:

- 1. Phishing schemes via emails, texts, and more** – They may use keywords such as “coronavirus,” “COVID-19,” and “Stimulus,” trying to get you to provide financial account information.
- 2. Fake charities exploiting the pandemic** – Bogus websites use names similar to legitimate charities to trick people to send money or provide personal financial information.
- 3. IRS impersonator calls** – The scammer attempts to instill fear and urgency in the potential victim, threatening arrest if a tax payment isn’t made.
- 4. Social media scams** – Information pulled from social media posts is used by scammers to trick potential victims into thinking they’re communicating with someone they know.
- 5. Refund theft** – Criminals file false tax returns or supply other bogus information to the IRS to divert refunds to wrong addresses or bank accounts.
- 6. Senior fraud** – Seniors are more likely to be targeted and victimized by tax scammers than other segments of society.
- 7. Scams targeting non-English speakers** – A common scam is where a taxpayer receives a call (supposedly from the IRS) threatening jail time, deportation, or revocation of a driver’s license.
- 8. Unscrupulous tax preparers** – Dishonest preparers may commit fraud, harm innocent taxpayers, or talk taxpayers into doing illegal things. Be wary of a preparer who doesn’t sign the return.
- 9. Offer in Compromise (OIC) mills** – These scammers exaggerate chances to settle tax debts and charge big fees to churn out applications unlikely to yield results.
- 10. Fake payments with repayment demands** – The scammer files a bogus tax return and has the refund deposited into the taxpayer’s account. Then the taxpayer is told there’s been an error and the IRS needs the money returned immediately in the form of gift cards. 767-2262
- 11. Payroll and HR scams** – These try to steal Form W-2s and other tax information or change the employee’s direct deposit information.
- 12. Ransomware** – A phishing email may trick a potential victim into opening a link or attachment containing the ransomware. Once downloaded, it tracks keystrokes and other computer activity.

For complete information about these scams, visit www.irs.gov/newsroom/dirty-dozen.



FCC Approves 988 for National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

The 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides free and confidential counseling to those in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. People currently reach the hotline by calling the 10-digit number: 1-800-273-8255 (TALK).

In July 2020, the FCC voted to finalize 988 as the three-digit number Americans will be able to call to be directed to this hotline. All telecommunication and VoIP providers are required to implement the 988 dialing code by July 16, 2022. The transition period will allow time for providers to make necessary network changes and enable the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline to prepare for an expected increase in calls. 769-2373

Chosen because it echoes the 911 dialing code everyone knows as an emergency number, 988 is easy to remember and quick to dial. An FCC report published in 2019 found that having a three-digit number would ease access to resources for people struggling with suicidal thoughts.

Griswold Communications is making plans for the implementation of the 988 number in our service area and will let you know when it’s available for use.



Access Our Online Telephone Directory

The Griswold Communications' 2021 Telephone Directory was mailed to all telephone subscribers. Did you know we also provide an online version at griswoldcommunications.com?

With our online telephone directory, the information you need is always at your fingertips:

- Access it via your computer, mobile phone or tablet.
- Search by category, yellow pages or white pages.
- If there is a website listed, click on it to go directly there.

Take advantage of the convenience of this online resource.

Hidden Number Contest

We have hidden randomly selected phone numbers throughout this newsletter. If you find your phone number in *italics* anywhere in this newsletter, please call our office at 712-778-2121 by March 31, 2021 to receive a \$5.00 bill credit.

Look now to see if your phone number is hiding in any articles. Good luck and happy reading!

5 Signs Your Home May Need Faster Internet

Are you wondering whether or not your home needs an internet speed upgrade? If you see these signs, the answer is probably “yes.”

1. You experience frequent buffering while streaming.

It's not fun when your screen freezes and you're stuck waiting while the endless circle goes around and around. Buffering is the result of an internet connection that isn't fast enough and a sign you need more speed.

2. You're planning to add more streaming subscriptions.

Does your family love streaming services like Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime Video? Be aware that adding more streaming subscriptions (or additional streaming devices) can quickly bog down your internet connection, especially if you have multiple people streaming simultaneously.

3. You're big on smart home devices.

If you're a smart home fan, you need to make sure your internet connection can support your smart speakers, smart light bulbs, smart thermostats, smart cameras, smart appliances, and so on. Trying to get by with an inadequate internet connection is simply not smart.

4. Your home often has guests (who bring devices).

Whether it's your children's friends for sleepovers or your relatives for a week-long visit, it seems like everybody will want to use your Wi-Fi as soon as they walk in the door. If you don't have enough bandwidth, the “more” isn't the “merrier”—it can cause internet slowdowns. 778-4574

5. You work from home.

Bandwidth-intensive applications such as video conferences and screen-sharing collaborations demand a strong internet connection. Don't risk looking unprofessional or wasting your colleagues' time with frozen screens and choppy audio. Make sure your internet connection works well for work.

For help choosing the right internet speed for your home, call Griswold Communications at 712-778-2121. We'll talk with you about your online requirements and provide details about our selection of internet plans.

