

GRISWOLD Connections

WINTER 2021

Dividend Checks Mailed December 1

Dividends to Griswold Communications shareholders are paid 10 years in arrears; therefore, the checks were for services from 2011. If you do not get your dividend check or you have questions, call our business office at 712-778-2121.

Happy Holidays

Griswold Communications employees and board wish you and your family a happy holiday season. Our business office will be closed Thursday, December 23 and Friday, December 24 for the Christmas holiday, and Friday, December 31 for the New Year's holiday.

Contact

Griswold Communications
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Phone: 712-778-2121

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

**griswold**
communications



A WINTER WONDERLAND CREATES *Wonderful Speed*

Enjoy Wonderful Speed from Your Internet, Too

It's more fun to move more quickly, whether you're sledding down a snowy hill or flying through downloads at home. So why not give your family the gift of faster internet this holiday season? It's sure to make the new year more wonderful for the binge watchers, gamers, teleworkers, and students in your household.

We offer internet speeds up to 1 Gig!

**INCREASE YOUR BLUESURGE INTERNET SPEED IN
DECEMBER AND WE'LL WAIVE THE \$27 CHANGE FEE.***

CALL 712-778-2121

*Certain restrictions apply. Online experience is impacted by devices used and their performance capability as well as by wireless router capability and environmental conditions.



DIY to Become Magnolia Network

DIY (channel 94 on blueSURGE television) will become Magnolia Network on January 5, 2022 at 8:00 pm.

Guided by the vision of Chip and Joanna Gaines, the highly anticipated Magnolia Network will showcase extraordinary stories and authentic talent that will deliver a unique and motivational entertainment destination. 763-4500 Magnolia Network will offer new, original programs featuring chefs, entrepreneurs, and expert artisans as well as DIY Network fan-favorite series like *Maine Cabin Masters*, *Restoring Galveston*, and *Barnwood Builders*.

Magnolia Network's premiere slate includes original series such as *Fixer Upper: Welcome Home*, *Magnolia Table with Joanna Gaines*, *Restoration Road with Clint Harp*, *Home Work*, *The Lost Kitchen*, *Family Dinner*, *The Johnnyswim Show*, *Super Dad* and more, in addition to the full, five-season *Fixer Upper* library.

Fake Shopping Websites are a Real Problem

Online purchasing is the most common scam type reported to the Better Business Bureau (BBB). These scams typically start with a fake shopping website that offers incredible deals on well-known brands. If you order products from one of these websites, you may never receive the merchandise or you may get a shoddy, counterfeit item delivered instead. And your losses might continue. Scammers sometimes seed their phony websites with malware that infects your device and harvests personal information for use in identity theft.

Many fake shopping websites mimic trusted retailers, using familiar logos and slogans and a URL that's close to the real thing. According to the BBB, you should look for these warning signs:

- **Bargain-basement prices.** Internet security firm Norton says to be on guard if discounts exceed 55 percent.
- **Shoddy website design or sloppy English.** Real retailers take great care with their online presentation.
- **Limited or suspicious contact options.** For example, the customer-service email is a Yahoo or Gmail account, not a corporate one.
- **Slightly changed URLs.** Be suspicious if there's an odd character or extraneous punctuation mark compared to the real website's URL, such as "Amaz0n.net," which uses a zero instead of the letter "O." The same goes if there's a foreign domain or an unfamiliar domain such as ".bargain" instead of ".com" or ".net" at the end of the URL.

In addition to watching out for the signs of fake shopping websites, follow these strategies to minimize your chances of getting scammed:

- **Use trusted websites** rather than shopping with a search engine, since scammers can manipulate search results to lead you to their content.
- **Comparison shop and check prices** from multiple retailers to help determine if a deal you've seen really is too good to be true.
- **Research an unfamiliar product or brand** by search for its name with terms like "scam" or "complaint."
- **Carefully read delivery, exchange, refund, and privacy policies**, and if they're vague or nonexistent, take your business elsewhere.

While shopping online is a convenient option, don't rush through the process and focus only on getting the lowest price. If you do, you might end up with nothing but headaches.

Tech the Halls to Simplify Your Holiday

Smart home devices can reduce the stress of the holiday season by taking some of the tasks off your to-do list. Are you taking full advantage of this handy technology?

Holiday Light Control

If you love to brighten your home inside and out with what seems like miles of light strands, you know what a hassle it can be to plug and unplug them each day. Save yourself the trouble by using smart plugs in your electric outlets. You can control smart plugs via your mobile device or smart speaker, or program them to turn on and off automatically according to your schedule. While you're at it, consider swapping out your regular light bulbs in lamps and ceiling fixtures with smart bulbs. 767-2627 They offer color-changing capabilities to light up walls and décor for a more festive mood.



Doorbell Cameras

You'll probably have more visitors and more packages at your front door this time of year. By installing a doorbell camera, you can stay updated on what's happening with both. These cameras allow you to view and chat with porch visitors through a smartphone app—whether you're on the other side of the door or the other side of the country. They can also alert you when a package is dropped off, so you can grab it yourself or call a neighbor to do it for you. Plus, just the sight of a doorbell camera on a front porch may deter package thefts.

Voice-Enabled Smart Speakers

A smart speaker is like a “digital elf” that can handle all kinds of tasks. For example, the Amazon Echo can create multiple shopping lists (for gifts, party supplies, and more), schedule reminders, track an airline flight, play a Christmas carol for you, or even order a last-minute gift.

Housework Helpers

Get help managing your home. Robot vacuum cleaners and mops can automatically clean up messes, and smart refrigerators can alert you when the door is left open and tell you what's inside so you know what food to pick up at the store.

Griswold Communications offers the high-speed internet plans you need to support smart home devices. To learn more, visit griswoldcommunications.com.

Check Out These Live Webcams

Have a few minutes to kill? **Visit hdontap.com**. It lets you watch live webcams from around the world for free.

HDOntap's founder, Tim Sears, presented one of the very first webcams on the web in late 1995, and started HDOntap with his wife Tiffany Sears in 2011. Today, you can virtually visit many different places and see what's happening live, with no filter and no editing. 769-2499

Here's a sampling of what's on the website:

- **Animals:** You can go wild and check out the activity of all kinds of animals—including elk, deer, bears, wolves, elephants, owls, eagles, and bats.
- **Picturesque Places:** From Roche Harbor, Washington to historic downtown Julian, California, the webcams take you on mini vacations without leaving home.
- **Beaches:** No sunscreen is needed to visit many California beaches as well as ones in Hawaii, Florida, Washington, Texas, and Mexico.

While the Griswold Communications website doesn't have a webcam, it does have lots of helpful information about our communications services. Visit griswoldcommunications.com today.



Scholarship Notice for 2022 Graduates and Their Parents

It's never too soon to be thinking about upcoming scholarship opportunities. Griswold Communications offers a local scholarship to students in our school district. There will be additional scholarship opportunities available through other associations of which Griswold Communications is a member.

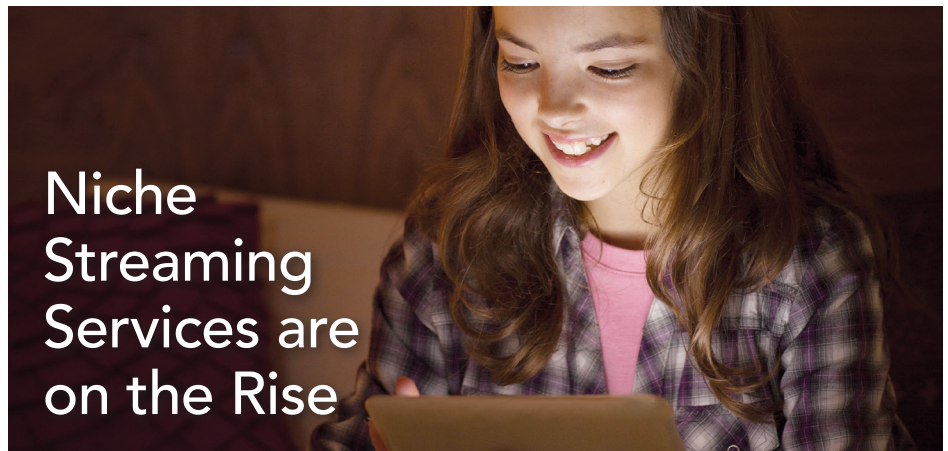
All details have not been finalized yet, but deadlines for submission of scholarship applications last year were between March 1 and March 15. We anticipate those deadlines to be similar in 2022. More details will be made available as we get them.



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 December 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!



While the big names in streaming—including Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney Plus+, and Hulu—probably come to mind first, niche streaming services are growing more quickly and getting an increasing share of the traffic.

What's a niche streaming service? It's one that focuses on a specific type of content for a specific audience. Niche streaming services pride themselves on being able to curate viewers' experiences with shows and movies they might not otherwise find. As such, they stress the competitive advantages of authenticity, efficiency, and focus to their subscribers. This is in stark contrast to services such as Netflix, which caters to a broad audience with a huge and diverse collection of video content.

Examples in the niche streaming services category include the following:

Acorn – The focus is on streaming the best of British television, with shows such as *Doc Martin*.

BET+ – Its TV shows, movies, and specials feature black culture including the complete Tyler Perry collection.

BroadwayHD – It lets theater fans stream a wide variety of stage performances.

Crunchroll, Funimation, and RetroCrush – These three streaming services are all completely devoted to anime, which is Japanese animation.

Curiosity Stream – Subscribers have access to thousands of documentaries for less than \$20/year.

Documentary Plus+ – This free streaming service has a small but high-quality catalog of documentaries. It launched in January 2021.

Kanopy – A streaming platform with a focus on education, Kanopy is free to use for students or patrons of cooperating public libraries.

Screambox and Shudder – It's scary how popular these streaming services are with fans of horror films.

Toon Googles – Expect lots of fun cartoons and kids' shows with Toon Googles.

No matter which streaming services you enjoy at home, you'll want to make sure your internet connection is fast enough to provide a trouble-free streaming experience. Call Griswold Communications at 712-778-2121 to ask about a speed upgrade.