



Bell Ringer

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E-STATEMENT IS EASY!

Easy, efficient, as well as eco-friendly... Why wouldn't you sign up for E-Statement from ITC? If you currently mail your bill or drop it off at one of our offices, we would like to encourage you to sign up for Auto-Pay and go paperless with E-Statement. Sign up for both services now, and we will give you a one-time **bill credit of \$20**. The best part about signing up for both services is you never have to leave home to pay your bill or worry about it being late. If you only sign up for one of these services, we'll still give you a one-time \$10 bill credit.

When you sign up for Auto-Pay, your bill amount is deducted from your account every month. If you pay using your checking account, your bill will be deducted on the 10th of the month. If you pay with a credit or debit card, you can choose the date (from the 1st to the 17th of the month). Call ITC's offices at 1.800.417.8667 to sign up.

When you sign up for E-Statement and go paperless, ITC will notify you via email that your bill is ready each month. You can log in to see the information, save it, or print it if you want a paper record. Your monthly newsletter, the Bell Ringer, will also be delivered via email. To go paperless, sign in to www.itcebills.com/estatement/login and follow the instructions below.

ITC will also be doing five drawings for a one-time \$20 bill credit from current paperless customers to thank them for using E-Statement.

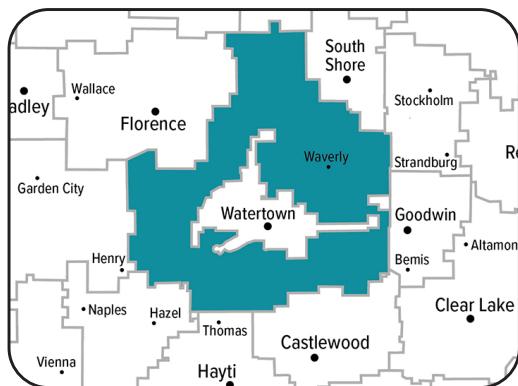
It's easy to save time, paper, and money. Go paperless with E-Statement and sign up for Auto-Pay to get a \$20 credit off your next bill! Do it today!

To Go Paperless:

1. Log into E-Statement.
2. Go to "Settings" & click the "General" tab.
3. Under "Invoice Preference, choose "Web Bill Only."
4. Then click "Change Preference."



ITC IS EXPANDING IN CODINGTON COUNTY



ITC continues to expand its network to ensure area residents have access to world-class telecommunications services. Currently, we are expanding in areas of rural Codington County. This new fiber-optic connection will offer residents and businesses a reliable, unlimited, Fiber-Fast Internet connection along with an option for local phone service. Broadband is vital for economic development in rural areas, providing an always-on connection to the rest of the world.

Along with ITC's investment in the fiber-optic expansion, this project was also awarded a ConnectSD grant from the State of South Dakota to make this project a reality. The ConnectSD program aims to bring sustainable, high-speed service to every home and business in South Dakota.

Tracy Bandemer, ITC's CEO, adds, "With ITC's current customers upgraded to fiber-optics, it was the right time to look at expansion opportunities. The Board of Directors, management, and staff are excited to proceed with this expansion in rural Codington County. It is an excellent opportunity to expand ITC's territory and bring this cutting-edge technology to locations that are considered underserved." Construction for this expansion will start soon.

IS YOUR ROUTER UPDATED?

By Michael Martinell, Network Broadband Technician

Not a month goes by without some new router exploit. The website routersecurity.org, which helps track exploits, shows recent exploits in many popular brands of routers. The issues include outdated operating systems, old versions of software, and hardcoded credentials that can be used from anywhere in the world. Unfortunately, many users who own their routers don't keep them updated.

While it is true that some newer router models automatically update themselves, many times, that feature must be enabled. Older routers may not have that feature at all, and sadly many popular routers have been completely abandoned by their creators without any security patches.

What is the danger?

A few years ago, when criminals broke into routers, they used it to host websites of stolen programs or pornography. While this might still be the case, these days, hacked routers are used by criminals to spy on network traffic, hack your DNS settings, steal your passwords, and mine cryptocurrency. Another popular tactic is to present you with a phony technical support page, complete with a fake phone number.

What can you do?

The first thing to do is make sure your router's firmware and other software are up to date. How to do this will vary depending on your router brand. You can refer to the documents that came with your router or do an Internet search if you aren't sure how. Check to see if your router supports automatic updates. If it does, turn it on to automatically get the security fixes that keep the bad guys out.

One thing to keep in mind is that the update process needs to run without losing power. Once you tell your router to update, don't unplug it or expect to use it until it is finished. You may see random flashing lights, and the router might even reboot multiple times.

Another thing to consider doing is to purchase a new router. If your router is more than 3 or 4 years old, the router may be no longer supported. You should check your router's website to be sure. Your device won't get any critical security updates if it is no longer supported by the company that made it. That will leave you vulnerable to security flaws and other issues.

What can ITC do?

If you want to avoid the hassle of updating your router and managing your connections, you could also consider leasing a router from ITC. One significant advantage of our Blast Wi-Fi routers is that we work to keep them as up-to-date and secure as possible. We take care of things like firmware updates and other security measures so you can rest assured knowing that your router is secure.

FACEBOOK TUTORIAL

By Holly Stormo, Marketing Communications Specialist

Since 2020, ITC University has been on hiatus except for a few Zoom classes. To make up for the absence, we will be posting a "Facebook Tips" ITC University class on our website to watch at your leisure. To find this class, go to www.itc-web.com/news and click on ITC University-Facebook Tips 2022.

AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM

The FCC has approved ITC as a provider for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which is an FCC program to help low-income households pay for Internet service and connected devices like a laptop or tablet. If your household is eligible, you could receive a monthly discount on Internet service. For more info or to see if you qualify, visit www.affordableconnectivity.gov.

LIFELINE FUNDING AVAILABLE

Lifeline is a federal program that lowers the monthly cost of phone and Internet. Eligible customers will get up to \$9.25 toward their bill (up to \$34.25 for those living on Tribal lands). You can use Lifeline either for phone or Internet, but not both. Only one Lifeline credit is available per household. Lifeline is the FCC's program to help make communications services more affordable for eligible customers.

Contact ITC for a Lifeline application or visit ITC's website at <https://www.itc-web.com/services/residential/phone>. You can also go directly to the Lifeline National Verifier at <https://nationalverifier.servicenowservices.com/lifeline>. The following information will be needed to apply: First and last name, address, date of birth, and last four digits of your social security number (or tribal ID number). You may also need to provide one of these items: photo ID, prior year's tax return, social security card, or another document to prove your identity.

To be eligible for the Lifeline benefit, either you or someone in your household must participate in one of the programs below. The other option is to prove your income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines.

- Medicaid.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA).
- Veterans Pension or Survivors Pension.
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- Other Programs for Tribal Lands.

If your application is approved, you will need to contact ITC to receive the discount on your existing service.

If you believe you are eligible for Lifeline, call our office at 1.800.417.8667 for assistance.