



Bell Ringer

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MORE PROTECTION FOR THE INTERNET YOU USE EVERY DAY

Today's homes are more connected than ever. From smart TVs and gaming systems to security cameras and thermostats, many devices rely on your home Wi-Fi every day. While these technologies bring convenience, they also increase the need for strong, reliable network security.

Many smart devices have limited built-in protections, which can leave them vulnerable to malicious websites, viruses, and other cyber threats. That is why protecting your entire home network, not just individual devices, is more important than ever.

ProtectIQ® is a powerful network-level security solution that works quietly in the background to help keep your connected devices safe. By monitoring Internet traffic in real time and comparing it to a continuously updated cloud database of known threats, ProtectIQ® can block malicious websites, viruses, ransomware, and intrusion attempts before they reach devices on your network. Because threat data is updated regularly, you are protected against newly emerging risks without needing to install software or manage complicated settings.

Great News for Our Members

We are excited to share that ProtectIQ® is now included at no additional cost for members who subscribe to our Explorer package (100Mbps/100Mbps) or higher, and have a GigaSpire router with Blast Wi-Fi.

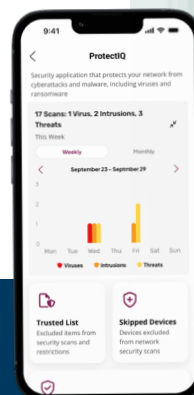
If you meet these requirements, ProtectIQ® will be available automatically, providing 24/7 protection for all the devices connected to your home network.

Not currently on an Explorer package or higher with Blast Wi-Fi? **Upgrading your Internet plan or adding Blast Wi-Fi is a simple way to take advantage of this added security.** We can help you explore upgrade options and ensure you have the equipment needed to get the most from your home Wi-Fi.

For more information on Blast Wi-Fi and ProtectIQ®, visit our website at www.itc-web.com/blast-wi-fi.



*Stronger Wi-Fi
Starts with Smarter
Protection*



ROUTER BAN

By Michael Martinell, Network Broadband Technician

You may have seen recent news about the federal government placing new restrictions on the sale of certain home Internet routers coming from foreign countries. While this is an important security change, for most people, nothing about your day-to-day Internet use will change. This update does not affect routers already in your home or business, and there is no recall or requirement to replace the equipment you are currently using.

Your router, of course, plays an important role in connecting your phones, computers, TVs, and other devices to the Internet. While it may not be something most people think about every day, it remains an important part of keeping your home network running smoothly and securely.

In general, new electronic devices must be approved by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) before they can be sold in the United States. The FCC also maintains a "Covered List" that identifies communications equipment that federal authorities have determined may pose national security concerns. Under the latest change, consumer-grade routers produced in a foreign country have been added to that list. Because of this, new router models in this category may be subject to additional review before they can be approved for sale in the United States. These types of updates are not unusual and are part of ongoing efforts to keep communication systems reliable and secure as technology evolves.

For most people, this change will happen behind the scenes. It applies to new products entering the market, not the equipment already in your home. The FCC has also stated that previously authorized routers can continue to receive software and security updates to maintain usability. A current waiver allows this to continue through at least March 1, 2027, at which point the policy will be reviewed. That means no immediate action is needed on your part, and your current devices will continue to work as expected.

If you use ITC's Blast Wi-Fi service, we handle much of that technical work for you. Blast Wi-Fi includes router support, tools to help manage your home network, and assistance from our technicians with setup and Wi-Fi coverage. If you own your own router, you can continue using your current setup as normal and simply keep these updated requirements in mind whenever you decide to replace equipment.

The main takeaway is simple: this federal change is focused on new router approvals, not the equipment already in your home. Whether you lease your router through ITC or manage your own equipment, your current devices will continue to work as expected, and no immediate action is needed.

If you have any questions about your ITC router, please call ITC at 1.800.417.8667.

TELECOM ACCESS FOR ALL

By Holly Stormo, Marketing Communications Specialist

What is South Dakota TED? TED is the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program for South Dakota. It allows those who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and/or speech disabled to communicate effectively on the telephone by obtaining special equipment. There is little or no cost for the customer.

To be eligible for the equipment, you must be a resident of South Dakota. You must also have difficulty communicating on the telephone because of a hearing or speech disability. You also need to have an existing telephone service in your home.

The Telecommunications Equipment Distribution program stocks phones that offer a speakerphone with volume adjustments, volume amplifier, and large visual display. They also provide oversized and lighted dial buttons, hearing aid compatible phones, visual ringer alerts or adjustable loud ringers, sound frequency clarifying adjustments, and tone adjustments.

To apply, visit www.relaysd.com. At the top, under the TED program, is a TED Program Overview section. The site has a place to apply for a free or reduced phone. If you have any questions about service or need help, call 711 or customer service assistance at 1.877.866.8950 (TTY/Voice).

South Dakota Relay Service: If you require assistance using the telephone system due to a hearing or speech impairment or need to communicate with someone who has such an impairment, contact the Communication Service for the Deaf. They are equipped with Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDDs) and provide the service. For information on Voice Carry-over and Hearing Carry-over services, call 1.800.676.3777 (TTY/Voice). To contact and use the USA Relay for call processing, call 711 or 1.800.877.1113.

2026 DIRECTOR ELECTIONS

ITC has 10 Directors who represent Coop members in nine districts. This year, three of the districts are up for election.

ITC will be holding director elections in District Three (Hendricks and Lake Benton), District Five (Chester, Nunda, Sinai, and Wentworth), and District Six (Bryant, Hayti, Lake Norden, Willow Lake, and areas of Watertown). On May 26, 2026, a "Notice of Election" will be sent to the members in these districts. Anyone seeking a nomination petition can pick one up after May 26, 2026, at the ITC office in Clear Lake. Petitions must be completed and filed at the headquarters office in Clear Lake on or before June 10, 2026. If the director of that district runs unopposed, the election will be canceled, and members will be notified. Members in districts where elections will be held will receive ballots and bios by mail on June 23, 2026. Ballots must be returned to the ITC office by July 7, 2026.

An election meeting will be held in Clear Lake on July 10, 2026, from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM for members who want to cast their ballots in person. A Credentials Committee will count the mail-in ballots on July 10, 2026. If you have any questions, call ITC at 1.800.417.8667.