



Bell Ringer

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Clear Lake, South Dakota 57226

ITC SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS 2025

ITC would like to congratulate all area seniors from the class of 2025 and recognize graduates who received ITC and Dean E. Anderson Scholarships. We wish you the best of luck as you take the next step in your education and future!

ITC proudly awarded 24 - \$700 scholarships to graduating seniors this year. Scholarship recipients must live in the ITC territory, have an ITC service, and plan to attend a post-secondary institution in South Dakota or Minnesota. One of these scholarships is awarded to a student who is open enrolled. The respective high school officials in each district determine who receives the scholarship based on activities, honors and awards, citizenship, community involvement, academic achievement, and effort in application completion. Congratulations to these exceptional students!



BROOKINGS
Gabriel Stern



CANBY
Rachel Fairchild



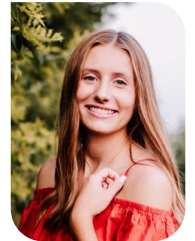
CASTLEWOOD
Hailee Raasch



CHESTER
Layke Wold



CLARK
Waylan Olson



DEUBROOK
Zoey Molengraaf



DEUEL
Jaycee Hourigan



ELKTON-LB
Keira Larson



ESTELLINE
Braxton Jongeling



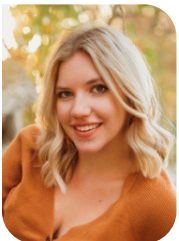
FLORENCE
Brooke Hlavacek



HAMLIN
Talayna Opdahl



HENDRICKS
Ayla Texley



HENRY
Madeline Kittelson



MILBANK
Claire Snaza



MINNEOTA
Brayden Downing



RTR
Brooke Sanderson



RUTLAND
Garett Wicks



SIOUX VALLEY
Kylie Christensen



WATERTOWN
Brielle Jenc



WAUBAY
Nolan Thuringer



WAVERLY-SS
Zachary Ries



WEBSTER
Addison Matthews



WILLOW LAKE
Samantha Brenden



OPEN ENROLL
Greyson Leins

ONT: THAT BOX OUTSIDE

By Michael Martinell, Network Broadband Technician

A few years ago, getting online meant connecting a modem to your phone line—and who could forget that infamous screeching sound? Thankfully, those days are behind us. Nowadays, fiber-optic Internet is more like upgrading from a horse-drawn carriage to a high-speed sports car. And that means new and interesting devices. Today, you have a small box, typically located outside, called an ONT—that stands for Optical Network Terminal. It might seem like a fancy modem, but there's an important difference worth understanding.



ONT attached to the side of a house.

Fiber-optic Internet works differently from the old connections many of us remember. Instead of using electrical signals like dial-up or cable, fiber uses light pulses to deliver data at incredibly fast speeds. To make sense of those light signals, your home needs a special device called an ONT.

An ONT is like the modern replacement for the old modem, but with a key difference. While a traditional modem converts analog signals (like those sent over phone or cable lines) into digital signals your devices can understand, an ONT converts light pulses into digital signals. It's the translator between your fiber line and your Internet connection.

Here's a fun analogy: sometimes people mistakenly call a router a modem, but that's like calling a plane a car. They're both vehicles, sure—but they serve very different roles. Your router doesn't convert signals; it takes the digital Internet signal from the ONT and shares it throughout your home, usually through Wi-Fi. So while the ONT brings the Internet to your home, the router makes it accessible to all your devices.

Now, what about streaming issues like buffering? Fiber-optics themselves are rarely the culprit. If your Internet speed is slow, the problem is usually somewhere else in your setup, like with the router, your device, or the connection between them. Many factors are at play, such as bandwidth, interference on the Wi-Fi channel, or even settings (called "protocols") that affect how devices communicate with the router. In rare cases, a fiber line could get damaged by construction or critters like gophers, or it might get a little dirty and need a quick cleaning. But these are the exceptions, not the rule.

If you're having issues or if you're curious about your setup, don't hesitate to give us a call. If you're using an ITC leased router, we're happy to help troubleshoot. If it's your personal router, we can at least check if the fiber connection needs a quick cleanup.

This summer, ITC will be replacing some of the ONTs on houses and businesses. If you receive a phone call or doorhanger, please give ITC at call at 1.800.417.8667.

LIFELINE CREDIT

By Holly Stormo, Marketing Communications Specialist

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

Information Needed

Contact ITC for a Lifeline application or visit ITC's website at www.itc-web.com/services/residential/phone or Internet. You can also go directly to the Lifeline National Verifier at www.LifelineSupport.org. The following information is needed to apply:

- First and last name
- Your home address
- Date of birth
- Last four digits of your social security number (or Tribal ID number).
- Your email address

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 Qualify

To be eligible for the Lifeline benefit, 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 must contact ITC to receive the discount on your existing service.

One Per Household

Only one Lifeline credit is available per household. A household is a group of people who live together and share money. If you are sharing a house, but don't share money, you and your housemate are considered separate households.

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

CALL 811 BEFORE YOU DIG

When you call 811, the South Dakota One Call System notifies utility companies with buried lines in the area. The utility companies will only mark lines that they own. Private lines must be located by the private locating firm and are your responsibility. (For MN, call 811 or 1.800.252.1166.)

