



Bell Ringer

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July 2021

ITC Scholarship Winners 2021

ITC would like to congratulate all area seniors from the class of 2021! We would also like to recognize graduates who received ITC and Dean E. Anderson Scholarships. We wish you the best of luck next fall as you take the next step in your education and your future!

This year, ITC proudly awarded 22 - \$600 scholarships to graduating seniors. Scholarship recipients must live in the ITC territory and plan to attend a post-secondary institution located in South Dakota or Minnesota. One of those 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!

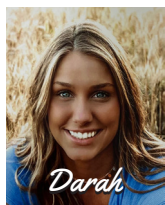


Mason

- Winner - School
- Mason Bebensee - Brookings
 - Cassidy Skogen - Canby
 - Darah DeKam - Castlewood
 - Avery Schut - Chester
 - Jordon Dessie - Clark
 - Nash Colberg - Deubrook
 - Tanner Preheim - Deuel
 - Karissa Olsen - Elkton/Lake Benton
 - Kylie Beare - Estelline
 - Cody Randall Hospes - Florence
 - Lason Smith - Hamlin
 - Jesus Alfonso Marcos - Hendricks
 - Payton Gassman - Henry
 - Amaya Street - Milbank
 - Kaitlyn Hanson - Minneota
 - Luke Ellefson - RTR
 - Colton Wicks - Rutland
 - Ariana Marquardt - Waubay
 - Hope Buchholz - Waverly/South Shore
 - Ellie Mount - Webster
 - Chayla Vig - Willow Lake
 - Open Enrollment
 - Cherish Sten - Brookings



Cassidy



Darah



Avery



Jordon



Nash



Tanner



Karissa



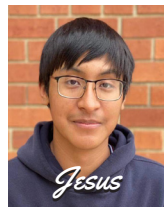
Kylie



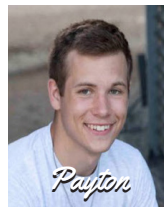
Cody



Lason



Jesus



Payton



Amaya



Kaitlyn



Luke



Colton



Ariana



Hope



Ellie



Chayla



Cherish

It's Time to Celebrate!

ITC has so many things to celebrate this summer. First and most exciting, ITC is now 100% fiber! We have worked for several years upgrading our network to fiber-optic cable. Now we can offer fiber-fast speeds to all our members.

Another reason to celebrate is ITC was awarded two additional ConnectSD grants for areas in Codington County and areas around Lake Poinsett and Lake Albert. We are excited to get started on these projects and will provide more information soon.

ITC will be attending several local parades and community events this summer to celebrate our 100% fiber-optic network. Also, mark your calendars as the ITC Annual Meeting will be held in person this year on September 11 at the Clear Lake Community Center.

We are proud to be 100% fiber; come celebrate with us!





Internet 911: **Ransomware**

By Michael Martinell, Network Broadband Technician

Today ransomware is a significant criminal business that can cripple and potentially destroy a business, utility, or government. So far this year, there have been over 100 high-profile attacks. High-profile targets have included the Colonial Pipeline, London, Australia, Apple, Acer, Solarwinds, the DC Police, and the NBA. Billions of dollars have also been collectively paid out by smaller organizations. In 2019 ransomware cost victims an estimated \$11.5 billion. In 2020 the cost was \$20 billion. This year is already close to matching all of 2020.

Simply put, a ransomware attack happens when a criminal tries to hold data hostage. Malicious software encrypts all the victim's data. To access your data, the user can try paying money to the criminal who stole their data. If the victim pays, the criminal might unlock their data. Then again, they might not.

While there is no way to guarantee you won't be affected, much of the same advice that will help protect against ransomware is the same as any computer virus. For example, don't open unexpected email attachments or plug unknown USB devices into your computer.

By keeping your computer's operating system, such as Windows, fresh and current, you will make it harder for the criminal to get into your system. Unless the criminal targets you specifically, they are likely using automated scripts to break in. Most of these scripts are monitored by equipment and software manufacturers. Companies release security patches to protect you, in part, from the weaknesses that these scripts are attempting to exploit.

Routers and firewalls are targets for the criminal. If you own your router, update the firmware, and replace old equipment that can't be upgraded. If you use ITC Blast Wi-Fi, this is already done for you. Also, work with your point of sale and other business equipment vendors and apply all recommended patches.

You should also follow the 3-2-1 model for data backup and recovery, which means that you have your original data and two copies of that data. The original data is what you use in your daily business. The first backup is commonly either kept at the same location as the original data or stored offsite. You should also have a copy of the backup stored somewhere like the ITC's local cloud backup solution. The benefit of having backups in multiple locations is if the criminal manages to find and encrypt the backups at your business, you still have another backup source for recovering your data. How often you back up and how long you keep those backups depends on how much of your data you can afford to lose.

Often the most secure way to recover from a ransomware attack is to completely rebuild your computer systems that were affected or even connected with the compromised system. This is true whether you pay the ransom or not. If you need help recovering from an attack, give ITC a call at 1.800.417.8667.



ITC University: **Director Elections**

By Holly Stormo, Marketing Communications Specialist

ITC's District Director Elections will be wrapped up soon for four districts this year. Only District One needed to have an election this year.

On June 29, ITC mailed ballots and bios to District One (Castlewood, Clear Lake, Estelline, Goodwin) to cast their vote. If you are a member of District One, please check your mail for your ballot. The ballots need to be filled out and returned to the ITC office in Clear Lake by July 9, 2021.

Also, an election meeting will be held in Clear Lake on July 9, 2021, from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM for members of District One who want to cast their ballots in person. A credentials committee will count the mail-in ballots on July 12, 2021.

Districts Two (Astoria, Brandt, Gary, Toronto, White), Four (Brookings, Elkton), and Eight (Bradley, Florence, Waubay, Webster) ran unopposed, so the elections in those districts were canceled.

If you have any questions on the elections or casting your vote, please call ITC at 1.800.417.8667.

The 2022 ITC Phone Book

ITC is currently working on the 2022 Phone Book. If you are a customer of ITC with phone service, you will receive a physical copy of the ITC Phone Book each year. For those who don't have phone service or want to look online, check out www.localsolutions.com. You can find businesses and people by typing in the top search bar. It's easy, and you can access it from anywhere!

It is important to keep ITC updated with any changes you have for the phone book. If you have made any changes to your address in the past year, please notify ITC. It is your responsibility to let us know if you have a new post office box or if you closed one. We also need to know if you made a change that would affect how your name appears in the 2022 Phone Book. Please call our office at 1.800.417.8667 and ask for Riahnnon with any changes.

