Bell Ringer

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Clear Lake, South Dakota 57226

POWERED BY FIBER, BACKED BY PEOPLE

At ITC, our fiber network delivers the services our members rely on, and our staff makes that experience exceptional. While advanced technology gives us fast, reliable Internet, it's our people who truly make the difference. Every day, our employees provide the dependable service, local support, and positive experience our members have come to expect.

The strength of our team is reflected in the quality of our service. Our employees bring generations of knowledge, a strong sense of commitment, and a deep understanding of the communities we serve. ITC is a workplace where employees build long-term careers and take pride in helping their friends and neighbors stay connected. This is evident in the fact that the average employee has worked at ITC for 16 years.

This year, ITC welcomed new team members, Rusty Carlson, Hunter Waege, and Charlie Harming (more information on the back), along with seasonal construction technician Shane Harming. These additions help support ongoing projects and meet customer needs throughout the year, strengthening a workforce focused on continuing ITC's tradition of reliable service.

We also understand that support needs don't always happen during regular business hours. That's why ITC offers a local 24/7 Help Desk, giving members another convenient option for assistance whenever they need it. Whether it's troubleshooting a connection or answering service questions, help is always within reach. In a time when many companies rely on automated systems, ITC continues to offer local, knowledgeable support from people who understand our members and the communities we serve.

As ITC continues to invest in our fiber network and future technologies, one thing remains constant: our commitment to our Cooperative members. Reliable connections start with dedicated employees, and their hard work is what keeps our communities connected today and prepared for tomorrow.

What our members are saying:

"I have always received immediate repair service and have found the technicians to be knowledgeable and efficient...as well as being just plain good people!"

"The entire staff, from the front desk to the service technicians are all very helpful, knowledgeable and courteous!!"

"Anytime that I need help with anything, the staff is always very helpful and friendly."

ITC employees have a combined 1,029 years of dedicated service. Each year, ITC recognizes team members who reach significant career milestones. In April, 16 employees were honored with Years of Service awards.

(Pictured: From the left, Heather Landmark, Tristan Rabine, Mary Streier, Jerome Salanoa, Kent Simon, Mark Van Eck, Ray Hjermstad, Holly Stormo, Justin Von Eye, Hilary Dexter, Derek Benck, Tim Nowick, Travis Engelkes, Stacey Amdahl, Brad Mathis, and Julie Donahue.)

Internet Help Desk
1.888.217.5718

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24/7 SUPPORT

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TV Help Desk
1.800.455.5958

Internet 911:

SEEING ISN'T BELIEVING: AI SCAMS

By Michael Martinell, Network Broadband Technician

Your phone rings late; the caller sounds just like your child or grandchild. Upset, they claim they've been in an accident and need money urgently. The voice sounds real because it is a convincing copy of someone you trust.

Just a few years ago, fraud like this might have sounded like a bad science fiction movie. Today, though, scams powered by artificial intelligence (AI) are among the fastest-growing scams out there.

AI has become a useful tool for many everyday tasks. It can help write documents, answer questions, and solve problems. At ITC, we've even offered ITC University training sessions to help members learn how to use it effectively. Unfortunately, scammers have discovered that AI can create remarkably convincing conversations that sound just like the real person.

According to the South Dakota Bureau of Information and Technology, AI-generated "deepfakes" are becoming a significant threat. A deepfake is a fake image, video, or audio recording created using artificial intelligence. With enough publicly available information from social media, videos, or recordings, scammers can imitate someone's appearance or even clone their voice.

The information used to create these scams often comes from places many of us use every day, such as social media videos, public presentations, and voicemail greetings. Like most scams, the goal is simple. The scammer tries to create a sense of urgency and hopes you'll act before stopping to verify the story.

That's why one of the best defenses is surprisingly simple: create a safe word with your family and close friends. A safe word is a private word or phrase, like a password, known only to the people you trust. It can be something silly and memorable, but not something others could easily guess. For example, a phrase like "The dog says meow" would work perfectly.

If you receive an urgent call, text, or video message asking for money, personal information, or immediate action, ask for the safe word. A real family member will know it. A scammer using a cloned voice or AI-generated video will not. If they can't provide the safe word, stop the conversation and verify the situation through another trusted contact method before taking any action.

Technology continues to change, but scammers still rely on panic, urgency, and trust just like they always have. That's why taking a moment to slow down and verify can make all the difference. The next scam may look real, sound real, and even use the voice of someone you know.

Staying informed about new technology and scam tactics is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your loved ones. By remaining cautious, using tools like safe words, and regularly discussing online safety with your family, you can help ensure you won't fall for the latest tricks, even as scammers continue to evolve their tactics.

ITC University:

NEW EMPLOYEES

By Holly Stormo, Marketing Communications Specialist

ITC has welcomed three new Fiber Locator Technicians to our team. Look for them out and about, locating ITC's fiber-optic cable.

Rusty Carlson started in April. He graduated from Lake Area Technical College with a degree in Industrial Automation.

Rusty lives in Clear Lake with his wife, Crystal, and has three kids. He enjoys golfing, playing guitar, watching the NHL, and spending time with his family.

Rusty Carlson

Hunter Waege

Charlie Harming

Next up is Hunter Waege, who started at ITC in May. Hunter also graduated from Lake Area Technical College with a degree in Ag Business.

Hunter enjoys farming and working the scoreboard at basketball games. He also is a JV and Varsity football coach for Deuel. Hunter currently lives in Clear Lake with his wife, Morgan.

Finally, ITC is happy to welcome Charlie Harming back as a full-time employee. He had been a seasonal employee for the last couple of years before starting full-time in May.

Charlie graduated from SDSU with a degree in Ag Science and also from Mitchell Technical School with a degree in Wi-Fi and Broadband, for which he was the Class Ambassador!

Charlie enjoys playing catcher in amateur baseball, coaching, and playing the guitar.

We are excited to have Rusty, Hunter, and Charlie join the ITC team and look forward to the great work they will do!

FRS GRANT PROGRAM

Do you have an organization in your community that needs funding for a special project? The 2026 Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) Community Grant Program is here to help! They are accepting applications for a variety of local efforts that build and sustain a high quality of life in rural America. To learn if your organization meets the criteria for a grant, visit www.frs.org/programs/grant-program/community-grant. If you are ready to apply for a FRS Community Grant, call ITC at 1.800.417.8667. Together, we can boost our community.

Happy 250 Years, America!

ITC will be closed on July 3.

Have a great 4th of July!