



Bell Ringer

Volume 60, No 2 June 2026
Clear Lake, South Dakota 57226

2026 ITC SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



BROOKINGS
Kennedy Behrend



CANBY
Abigale Westphal



CASTLEWOOD
Yader Munoz



CHESTER
Zach Moyer

ITC would like to congratulate all area seniors from the class of 2026 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!

This year, ITC proudly awarded twenty-two \$700 scholarships to graduating seniors. 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 an open-enrolled student. 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 completing the application. Congratulations to these exceptional students!



CLARK
Michael Severson



DEUBROOK
Raymond Klein



DEUEL
Laycee Andersen



ELKTON-LB
Jocelyn Prosch



ESTELLINE
Kyler Carlson



FLORENCE
Alli Busskohl



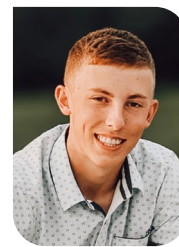
HAMLIN
Clara Carstensen



HENRY
Natasha Huppler



MILBANK
Dana Chan



RTR
Gavin Schreurs



RUTLAND
Cooper Merager



SIOUX VALLEY
Ethan Barsness



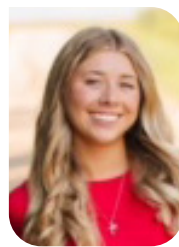
WATERTOWN
Katelyn Yexley



WAUBAY
Tripp Gaikowski



WAVERLY/SS
Kyle Kneeland



WEBSTER
Maci Kurkowski



WILLOW LAKE
Zoe Nichols



OPEN ENROLL
Lucas Johnson

EMAIL SCAMS THAT LOOK LIKE THEY COME FROM ITC

By Michael Martinell, Network Broadband Technician

If you receive an email that says something like: “Your Email settings details need to be secured urgently. Please use the link below to avoid service disruption.”

It is not from ITC. Do not click any links. Delete it.

No, ITC does not send emails telling you your account is expiring.

No, ITC does not send emails telling you to “secure your mailbox.”

No, ITC does not send urgent links threatening service disruption.

We have been seeing a growing number of messages just like this. They may be signed with something that sounds official. They may even include a copy of the ITC logo to look legitimate.

They are scams.

These emails are designed to create urgency and panic. The goal is simple: get you to click the link and enter your email password. Once that happens, scammers can access your account, reset passwords to other services, and even send more scam messages from your address.

One reason these emails are becoming more convincing is the use of artificial intelligence, AI. Scammers now use AI tools to write professional-sounding messages with correct grammar and polished wording. The days of obvious spelling mistakes and broken English are fading. Today’s scam emails can look clean, confident, and official.

AI is also being used by criminals to create fake login pages that look nearly identical to real ones. You may click a link thinking you are signing in to your email, when in reality you are handing your password directly to a scammer.

And it isn’t just email where AI is being used. We are seeing a rise in AI-generated content across the board. This includes fake audio and video, called deepfakes. The technology itself is not bad, but it is being used in bad ways. And it is getting worse.

That is why it is more important than ever to slow down and think before clicking. If there were ever a legitimate issue with your service, we would communicate clearly and directly, and not through vague threats and suspicious buttons.

If you receive one of these messages, do not click the link. Do not enter your password. Delete it.

Scammers rely on fear. We rely on clear communication and common sense.

When in doubt, pause. And remember: if an email is pressuring you to act immediately to “save” your account, it is not from ITC.

And if you are ever unsure, call us. The 24/7 helpdesk phone number is 1.888.217.5718. We would much rather answer a quick question and reassure you than have you deal with the frustration of a compromised account.

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.

How to Apply

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. To apply, you will need to provide your first and last name, your home address, date of birth, last four digits of your social security number (or Tribal ID number), and your email address.

You may also need to provide a 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 their own lines. Private lines must be located by the private locating firm and are your responsibility. (For MN, call 811 or 1.800.252.1166.)

