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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2011

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Happy Holidays

The staff and management of West Central Telephone would like to wish you a happy holiday season. We hope it's filled with many sweet moments to treasure with friends and family.

We'd also like to thank you for choosing WCTA as your phone, Internet, and TV provider. It is a pleasure to serve you and help you stay connected.

Our offices will be closed on the following days to allow our employees time to celebrate.

- Thursday, November 24, 2011, for Thanksgiving
- Monday, December 26, 2011, in observance of Christmas
- Monday, January 2, 2012, in observance of New Year's

In case of a service emergency during these days, please call us at 888-207-6274.



CNS Moves into Addition at Menahga Office

Cooperative Network Services (CNS) has completed the move into the newly-constructed addition to the existing WCTA building in Menahga. The communications engineering firm has grown to 25 employees in a little more than a year in business, and as a result, had outgrown the office space they were leasing from us.

One of the reasons that CNS chose to open shop in the Menahga location was the immediate availability of office space and support staff. Now, with 25 CNS employees and four WCTA employees working in the building, it was overcrowded to say the least. In order to keep the engineering firm in Menahga, an office expansion built to suit their needs was necessary. Now, with construction complete, CNS has moved into the new office space.

All local contractors were used for the construction project, and with CNS employees considering moving to Menahga, it could be a continuous boost to the community of Menahga.

If you aren't familiar with CNS, the LLC was formed in 2010 by 15 Minnesota cooperative telephone companies—including WCTA. Jason Dale, CEO of CNS, predicted that within a year they would have 8-10 full-time employees; slightly more than a year later, they had 17 full-time employees along with five part-time and one contract employee. The engineering firm has been so successful that they've also attracted additional cooperatives for a total of 19 cooperative telephone company owners, and now a total of 25 employees.

CNS was initially formed to provide the owners with services they were outsourcing to private engineering companies and network consultants to create leaner, more efficient businesses. Just shy of a year and a half in business, what CNS has accomplished is impressive. This year alone they have seven major fiber cable construction projects amounting to 1,122.54 miles of fiber installation bringing broadband to 3,430 customers.



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We Love It When You “Like” Us on Facebook

West Central Telephone is on Facebook, and we encourage you to visit our page and “Like” us. By doing so, you’ll be able to take advantage of special fan-only promotions and events. You’ll also be the first to know what’s happening at WCTA including:

- Addition of new products and services
- Company developments
- Contests and voting
- Upcoming promotions
- Customer alerts

To join our Facebook community, search for West Central Telephone at www.facebook.com or click on the Facebook link on our homepage at www.wcta.net. Once you’re there, simply click on the “Like” button at the top of the screen.

Not on Facebook yet? Give it a try. Facebook can help you more easily stay in touch with family and friends, share photos, get support when life is a challenge, and celebrate big accomplishments.



‘Tis the Season to Enjoy New Toys

New Money-saving Bundles

West Central now offers more bundle choices than ever, so you’re sure to find the perfect one to save you money on your family’s telephone, Internet, and TV services. Our bundles start at just \$79.95* a month for everything you need to stay connected, informed, and entertained.

New Faster Internet Speeds

Christmas brings out the kid in all of us, and we want to go faster and faster — whether sledding on a hill or surfing online. You’ll be happy to hear that our new bundles include Internet service with much faster speeds, up to 40 Mbps!

New TV Lineup

There’s something for everyone to enjoy with our whole new TV lineup, including 34 HD channels. Surprise your family with a Whole-Home DVR and HD combo as part of a bundle; it’s the holiday gift they’ll enjoy all year.

New TV You Could Win

Sign up for one of our new bundles by December 1, 2011, and you could win a FREE 42-inch LCD HDTV. It’s valued at \$1,100 and is a toy that kids of all ages will love! Contact us for more details.

*Bundle pricing does not include mandatory fees, state or federal taxes; not available in all areas. No purchase necessary to win enter the prize TV drawing.

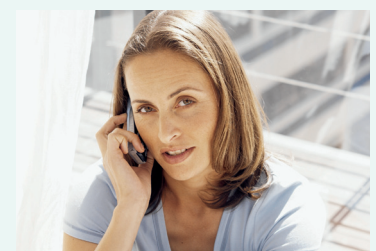
Link-Up, Lifeline, and Telephone Assistance Plan

WCTA is authorized to provide one state funded and two federally funded telephone service discount programs that were designed to promote universal service by providing low-income individuals with new telephone service installations and monthly telephone service discounts.

The Link-Up program provides a discount on connection charges when installing new telephone service. The Lifeline and Telephone Assistance Plan (TAP) programs provide a monthly discount on your local service telephone bill.

For eligibility guidelines, please refer to the information pages in the West Central Telephone Directory. Call 888-830-6392 to apply.

Once approved, you will receive the applicable credit(s) on your telephone bill. Please do not call the business office; you must call 888-830-6392 to apply.





Holiday Color Contest

All children 12 years old or younger are invited to take part in the West Central Telephone 2011 Coloring Contest. Stop by and pick up an entry form, then color or decorate to your liking. When finished, drop off or mail your entry to Coloring Contest, West Central Telephone, PO Box 304, Sebeka, MN 56477.

Entries must be received by Friday, December 2, 2011. Winners will be notified the following week. Official rules will be on the entry forms.

Join Us in the Spirit of Giving

The holidays will soon be here and we hope you will join us in the spirit of giving as we collect toys and gifts for those in need. All donations of toys, games, gifts, and money will be distributed to area families just in time for Christmas. The donations should be dropped off at our office by December 9, 2011, so that they can be wrapped and matched up and delivered to families. The Empty Stocking Fund is a local organization that works with area churches and schools to help needy families at holiday time. Families in need may be working families with a lower income that just covers the basic needs, or a family that, because of a tragedy, can no longer afford Christmas presents. If you would like to donate, please bring new, unwrapped gifts to WCTA in Sebeka or Menahga.

The cold weather has arrived, and serves as a reminder that many young people in Wadena County and surrounding areas are without warm winter coats. We hope to help by collecting gently used coats, hats, scarves, and gloves to distribute to families in need. From now until mid-December, WCTA will accept donations at the Sebeka and the Menahga offices. Gently used coats should be clean and in good condition. We are working with the Todd-Wadena-Ottertail County Community Action Council to distribute the coats. If you are in need of a coat, you should contact your county office.

Let's help make Christmas special for everyone in our communities!



Upcoming Winter MIRC Business Computer Workshops

All classes are offered free through the Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities (MIRC) programs in Sebeka and Menahga, and will be taught by University of Minnesota Extension Service instructors. Light refreshments will be provided by West Central Telephone Association.

Call WCTA at 837-5151 to register, or your MIRC community coordinator for more information:

Menahga area MIRC coordinators:

Steve Peterson, 218-564-6420
or speter@wcta.net
Linda Peterson, 218-564-4620
or lindyo@wcta.net

Sebeka area MIRC coordinators:

Monica Quaschnick, 218-837-5151
or monicaq@wcta.net
Pam Mahling, 218-837-5151
or pamm@wcta.net

Mobile e-Marketing

*Monday, November 28, 2011, 6 to 9pm,
Sebeka School Computer Lab OR
Wednesday, December 7, 2011, 6 to 9pm,
Menahga High School Computer Lab*

People everywhere are using handheld mobile devices like Android, iPhones, and iPads to search the Internet. It has become increasingly vital that websites are optimized for viewing through this miniaturized, but highly functional platform. Find out how to build your own mobile website or app, and how you can integrate things like QR codes and digital coupons into your business.

Marketing your Website

*Thursday, December 8, 2011, 6 to 9pm,
Sebeka School Computer Lab*

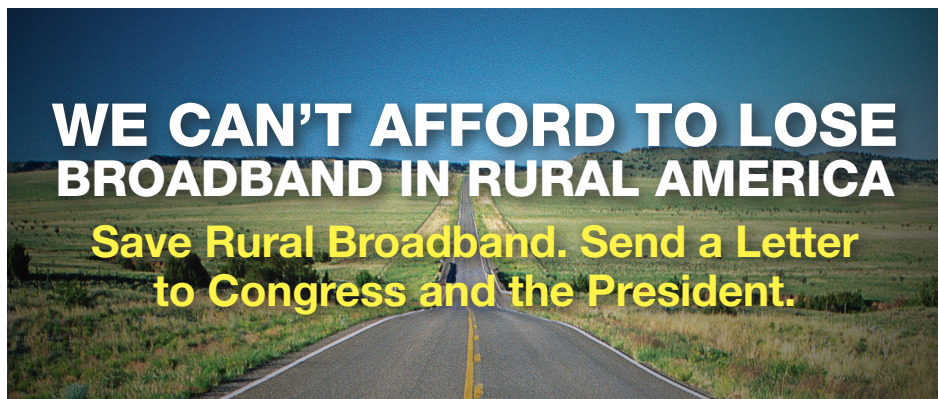
Explore strategies for getting your website found by customers. Just having a website is not enough—you need visitors to find and use your site. This hands-on workshop will help you understand how customers find websites and how you can improve the chances they will find yours. We'll also explore how social media like Twitter and Facebook, online advertising, blogs, and e-newsletters can drive traffic and business to your site.





Welcome, New Members

- Allen, Bobbi 837-6013
- Allen, Teresa 564-5663
- Buckley, Jeremiah..... 564-5631
- Chock, Randy 445-5991
- Doebbeling, Alison S 445-5597
- Dwire, Jeremiah..... 837-6196
- Eitel, Jon 564-5584
- Faulkner, Travus..... 837-5889
- Hahn, Jeannie 472-3154
- Haley, Bobby 837-6032
- Hanes, Ethan..... 445-5603
- Hanson, Dan 564-5675
- Hartley, Fred 445-5598
- Heinen, Joel 564-5611
- Hillstrom, Kenny 564-5626
- Johnson, Larae..... 837-5899
- Livingston, Bradley 564-4950
- Maaninga, Justin 564-5621
- Mensingher, Jeremy 445-5575
- Neseth, Corey 837-6008
- Nevala-Loper, Dawne 538-6048
- Pedersen, Alvin..... 538-6049
- Pinoniemi, David..... 564-5654
- Rollins, Sharon M 837-6031
- Schwartz, Emily N 445-5609
- Smith, Diane..... 564-5632
- Strauss, Steven M 837-6011
- Thrasher, Alexandra..... 445-5593
- Truax, Michael 837-5994



High speed broadband Internet access has become today's essential service, but new government rules being proposed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) could impact your access to broadband Internet service. You can help by lending your voice to the debate.

At the onset of telephone service back in the 1950s, the federal government created a universal service policy to ensure that all Americans — including those in rural areas — have access to affordable communications services. The government decided these were essential services that required financial support to build and maintain. As a result, it created something called the Universal Service Fund (USF).


Like many rural companies, West Central Telephone has been the recipient of USF and invested millions of dollars over the years to build advanced fiber-optic networks to meet the needs of customers. We've done this with the understanding that the government would continue to support our efforts through USF. Without receiving support from the federal government, it would be impossible for us to maintain our existing infrastructure as well as expand our capabilities to meet our customers' needs in the future. As with our national highway system, the information highway costs money to sustain.



Federal support has made it possible for our company to deliver the network that spurs economic opportunity, supports educational options, and increases our ability to attract new businesses to our area. Now, the government is thinking about changing the fund. If this federal support gets cut, our town and outlying areas could get stuck on the wrong side of the digital divide.

The FCC wants to do away with the USF and other financing methods that support rural, high cost telephone and broadband services. FCC officials need to ensure that they don't destroy the funding that now delivers telecommunications services to the rural areas of America.

All rural consumers need to get educated about the proposed policies and communicate to members of Congress and the White House about the negative impact this could have on our community. **Do your part to avoid devastating effects on our local economic development. Contact your Congressman via the letter to Washington on this website: <http://www.saveruralbroadband.org/>.**



Santa and Sleigh Rides

West Central is finalizing plans to get Santa AND his reindeer to return to the Sebek and Menahga office this holiday season! Keep an eye out for details, and if you haven't already, become a fan of West Central Telephone on Facebook. Our fans are always the first to know!