



## **What if I don't want phone service in order to get advanced broadband services?**

ITC shares your concerns and recognizes that our member customers have ever-changing needs. As a rural carrier operating in high cost areas, we are reliant on existing federal universal service support funds to provide both basic and advanced communications services. ITC would not be able to deploy advanced broadband network facilities or provide affordable broadband connections to either residential or business customers without the assistance of these support amounts. We would very much like to provide a “broadband only” package but the current federal universal service support rules do not realistically give us that option. Under existing federal regulations, if ITC were to provide a stand-alone broadband service – one that does not also include its non-IP voice service – it would lose all “high cost” universal service support received in serving your location. The “high cost” support amounts that ITC receives, as a whole, are substantial and absolutely essential to ITC as a company, to recoup broadband network deployment costs, provide affordable basic and advanced services throughout the ITC service area, and maintain our very viability as an operating business.

On this issue, ITC can report that good progress is being made before the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and we are hopeful that before too long we can make available to all of our members/customers a more affordable broadband only service. Very recently, after significant advocacy by rural area interests, the FCC has finally proposed changes that would allow rural carriers like ITC to provide a broadband only service and not lose essential federal universal service fund dollars. ITC, along with other industry associations such as the National Telephone Cooperative Association (NTCA) and the South Dakota Telecommunications Association (SDTA) have for some time been pressing the FCC to make these changes. Numerous U.S. Senators, including Senators Thune and Johnson have joined in these efforts, voicing their concerns that the current federal regulations are unfairly impacting rural carriers and rural area residents, and in response the FCC has indicated that it will be taking action to address the problem.