



Bell Ringer

Volume 57, No 9 January 2024
Clear Lake, South Dakota 57226

WELCOME TO THE COOP, MN EXPANSIONS!

In September, at the ITC Annual Meeting, the members of the Coop voted unanimously to include Minnesota CLEC Expansion Areas into the Cooperative. ITC is excited to have these customers now be members.

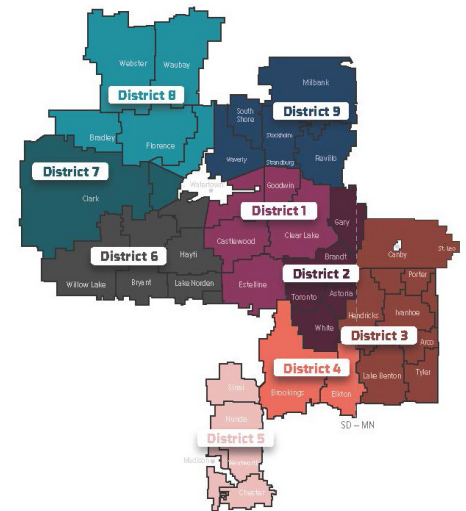
On January 1, 2024, our current customers in the expansions of Lincoln County and the City of Ivanhoe are officially Cooperative members. Customers from the two areas who receive services and qualify for membership under the By-Laws will automatically become Cooperative members. As new members of the Cooperative, customers will begin accumulating capital credits for subscribed services on January 1, 2024. The distribution of capital credits is under the discretion of ITC's Board of Directors.

From a customer standpoint, there will be a few changes; they will begin receiving this Bell Ringer as their monthly publication and utilize www.itc-web.com as their website. The newsletter and website are the best sources for company information, changes, and new products and services. ITC will send new members a letter at the beginning of 2024 to verify their membership listing.

What does it mean to be a Cooperative Member at ITC?

- We are community-focused and proud to support our local clubs and organizations.
- We provide local customer service with offices in four of our communities.
- Members have ownership and a say; Members have a vote.
- Members receive capital credits based on Coop margins for the ITC services they subscribe to.

We are excited about adding new members to the Cooperative. As always, if customers have questions, please call us at 1.800.417.8667.



PROTECT YOUR WI-FI



As new smart technologies enable data to move more freely across networks and devices, users must be equally smart about defending their data against hackers. Blast Wi-Fi Powered by ITC gives you superior Wi-Fi strength with device connection support. It offers apps to manage and control your Wi-Fi, including ProtectIQ®, which helps to protect your devices against malicious websites and other intrusions.

With ProtectIQ®, you will receive the Internet security you need. It leverages a large cloud database of known virus and ransomware threats. By looking for the specific signatures of these threats in real time, ProtectIQ® can terminate the transfer of data before a malicious payload is delivered to any vulnerable devices in the network. As new threats are emerging daily, the threat database is continuously updated

to offer protection against the latest threats. ProtectIQ® is a network-level security application that works quietly in the background and proactively keeps malicious websites, viruses, and intrusions away from your home 24/7.

If you are interested in home network protection that includes a self-managed app, call ITC at 1.800.417.8667 to sign up for Blast Wi-Fi and the ProtectIQ® app.

MULTIPLE DEVICES & SPEED

By Michael Martinell, Network Broadband Technician

One common question arises regarding Internet speed: How does it work with multiple connected devices? Understanding how Internet speed works is like skillfully navigating traffic flow on a busy road with several cars at once. Many members wonder whether having multiple devices slows things down or, conversely, why a single device might use less bandwidth.

Imagine your Internet speed as a digital highway where data travels like cars. Much like a physical road, this highway has a maximum capacity for handling data flow, known as bandwidth. Different Internet connections can manage varying amounts of data, similar to how other roads accommodate different traffic levels. A road like the interstate can handle substantial digital traffic, while an alley can only allow a few cars at a time. It's also worth noting that some cars can't go as fast as the posted speed limit due to slower Internet engines, which we call protocols. These protocols, like road rules for drivers, dictate how efficiently your devices can communicate on the digital road.

However, your Internet speed limit isn't about how fast each device can go. Instead, it's about how much traffic (bandwidth) the road can handle. Browsing web pages or sending emails is similar to riding a motorcycle on a flat, wide-open highway with minimal traffic. On the flip side, streaming movies or downloading significant game updates is comparable to navigating a semi-truck uphill, with various cars and trucks occupying a substantial portion of the road.

Consider the traffic coming from the other direction, too. Uploading large files from your device to services like Microsoft OneDrive or Dropbox also affects your connection. If your upload speed is maxed out, it can affect your download speed too. The reason behind this is simple: your device and the server continually check to ensure they can communicate with each other, and an excessive amount of uploads can interfere with these checks. This impacts both your upload and download speeds.

When you connect multiple devices to the Internet, each device takes a share of the bandwidth. It's like having multiple cars on the road – the more cars, the more traffic. This can impact overall performance, so it's crucial to consider online activities and connected devices to ensure smooth navigation on your Internet road.

Beyond this, various factors can influence your Internet speed, such as interference, distance from the router, and even the age of your devices. Think of these as road conditions – sometimes smooth, sometimes bumpy. If you ever wonder about your Internet speed or are facing any roadblocks, don't hesitate to call ITC at 1.800.417.8667.

IT'S FARM SHOW SEASON

By Holly Stormo, Marketing Communications Specialist

It's time for farm show season! ITC will attend shows in Webster and Watertown this year.

The Webster Area Farm and Home Show will take place on January 19 - 20 at the Webster Armory. The Watertown Winter Farm Show is from February 7 - 10 at the Watertown Extension Center. These shows are a good opportunity for ITC staff to meet and greet our members in person. It is also the perfect place to ask questions you might have about your Cooperative.

Please stop by, check us out, and say hello!

ESPORTS

ITC is partnering with area schools to help start esports as a school activity. Esports turns online gaming into a spectator sport centered around organized, competitive gameplay. Esports requires reliable broadband infrastructure to ensure seamless gameplay and connectivity for participants and viewers. Since ITC is a broadband service provider, we are excited to partner with area schools.

Here are the benefits esports participants will experience:

- **Cognitive Skills:** Esports requires strategic thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills, which can have a positive impact on academic performance.
- **Teamwork:** Competitive esports promotes teamwork, communication, and cooperation among students, fostering essential social skills.
- **Physical Health:** Esports can encourage a healthier lifestyle as players often engage in regular physical activities and healthier eating habits to maintain peak performance.
- **Educational Engagement:** School-sanctioned esports can also build school pride among students who don't traditionally participate in school activities. Surveys have found esports is the first extracurricular event for as many as 80% of participating students.
- **Mental Well-Being:** Participation in a school-sponsored esports program can give students a sense of belonging and reduce feelings of isolation.

For the current school year, ITC partnered with Deuel School which has an active esports club. We wish those students the best of luck with their competitions.

If you have any questions about esports, please call ITC at 1.800.417.8667.

