



# Bell Ringer

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## SDTA Scholarship

South Dakota Telecommunications Association (SDTA), of which ITC is a member, offers four \$1,500 scholarships! This is an excellent opportunity for students within the ITC area.

To apply for this scholarship, you must: have a High School Diploma or GED equivalent, have been accepted into a multi-year program degree at any accredited technical college or accredited post-secondary higher education institution in South Dakota for the fall 2021 semester, be enrolled in a degree/program or field of study that is useful in the telecommunications or broadband industry or which significantly relies on the use of broadband services and related technologies, and either be a customer or have a parent or legal guardian that is a customer of a SDTA member company, like ITC.

The applicant must complete the information and essay sections of the application. Also, they must provide two letters of recommendation and their unofficial transcripts. At least one of the letters of recommendation must be from a teacher, instructor, or advisor. The other may be from someone who knows you well (but not a family member).

For more info and to apply online, go to [https://sdtaonline.com/sdta\\_scholarships.php](https://sdtaonline.com/sdta_scholarships.php) or submit a completed application by email to [karasemmler@sdtaonline.com](mailto:karasemmler@sdtaonline.com) or by mail to South Dakota Telecommunications Association, PO Box 57, Pierre, SD 57501.

The selection of awards will be announced on or before July 15th. If a scholarship winner does not wish to accept the award, SDTA should be notified promptly but no later than August 15th. The scholarship will be distributed for the spring semester (2022).



## Programs for Deaf, Hearing, or Speech Impaired

**What is South Dakota TED?** TED is the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program for South Dakota. It allows those who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and/or speech disabled to communicate effectively on the telephone by obtaining special equipment. There is little or no cost for the customer.

To be eligible for the equipment, you must be a resident of South Dakota. You must also have difficulty communicating on the telephone because of a hearing or speech disability. You also need to have an existing telephone service in your home.

The Telecommunications Equipment Distribution program stocks phones that offer speakerphone with volume adjustments, volume amplifier, and large visual display. They also provide oversized and lighted dial buttons, hearing aid compatible phones, visual ringer alert or adjustable loud ringer, sound frequency clarifying adjustment, and tone adjustment.

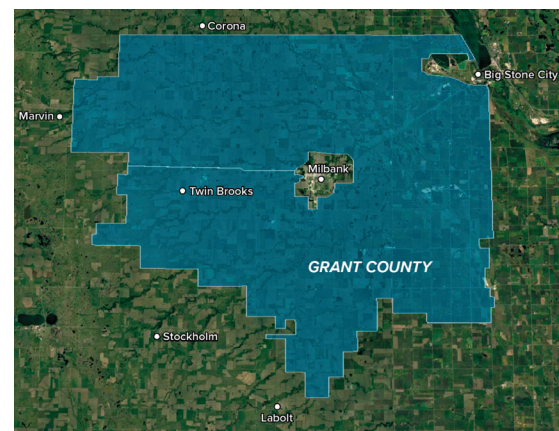
To apply, visit [www.relaysd.com](http://www.relaysd.com). Under the TED program at the top is a section called TED Program Overview. There is a place on the site for you to apply for a free or reduced phone. If you have any questions about service or need help, call 711 or customer service assistance at 1.877.866.8950 (TTY/Voice).

**South Dakota Relay Service:** If you require assistance using the telephone system due to a hearing or speech impairment or need to communicate with someone who has such an impairment, contact the Communication Service for the Deaf. They are equipped with Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDDs) and provide the service. For information on Voice Carry-over and Hearing Carry-over services, call 1.800.676.3777 (TTY/Voice). To contact and use the USA Relay for call processing, call 711 or 1.800.877.1113.

Note: Info regarding the Minnesota service will be available at a later date.

## ITC Expanding to Rural Grant County

ITC is excited to announce a fiber-optic expansion to the rural 432 and 862 exchange areas of Grant County. This new fiber-optic connection will offer residents and businesses a reliable, unlimited, Fiber- Fast Internet connection, local phone service, along with TV service. Please help ITC spread the word about this expansion. If you know people that live in the area, please encourage them to sign up! To learn more about the Grant County expansion, visit [www.itc-web/grant-county](http://www.itc-web/grant-county)





## Internet 911: Wi-Fi Vocabulary Words

*By Michael Martinell, Network Broadband Technician*

Sometimes understanding wireless technology can be confusing. There are so many terms and definitions to learn and know that it can be challenging to keep up. This is especially true when it comes to getting coverage everywhere in the house. Since school is getting out in May, now might be the time to make sure you have the bandwidth you will need for all those online games and streaming movies. In that spirit, let's study some vocabulary words.

**Wi-Fi Booster:** This is one of those generic marketing terms that add to the confusion. It can mean Wi-Fi repeaters, Wi-Fi extenders, and Mesh Wi-Fi solutions. Basically, they help us get rid of Wi-Fi dead zones.

**Dead Zone:** These are areas where it is difficult to connect to Wi-Fi. They are caused by the size of the house and the location of the router. Building materials, such as metal and concrete, are also a factor. Imagine that you are in the basement of the house and want to talk to somebody on the second floor. No matter how much you yell, they probably won't hear you clearly.

**Wi-Fi Repeater:** If somebody were on the first floor of the house and could hear both of you, they could repeat your messages to each other. It works, but you must take turns talking to each other, and the person in the middle can't relay messages at the same time. This is what a Wi-Fi repeater does, only with wireless signals.

**Wi-Fi Extender:** To help you out, you could ask a second person on the first floor of the house to help relay your conversation. The silly part happens when the person on the second floor comes to the basement. Both of you will still have the people on the first floor relay your messages to each other, even though you are standing next to each other. The Wi-Fi extender does this. It operates on two different radio bands, but when you move closer to the router, it still insists on doing the talking, even though it would be better to talk directly to the router.

**Mesh Wi-Fi:** There is now a better way to communicate. Instead of getting somebody on the first floor to relay your conversation with the person on the second floor of your house, both of you could use a small electronic device to talk directly to each other. This is what Mesh Wi-Fi does. Instead of getting people to stand around yelling messages to each other like repeaters and extenders do, the Mesh Wi-Fi creates a seamless wireless network throughout the home. They don't have the silly limitation of the extender, and they don't lose bandwidth like the booster does.

If you are interested in learning more, please give us a call to discuss our Blast Wi-Fi options and how they can help you eliminate dead zones. The good news is, there won't be a test.



## ITC University: Watch for Pedestals

*By Holly Stormo, Marketing Communications Specialist*

ITC asks you to be careful and watch for pedestals. Most pedestals are located in ditches and alleys. They are a distribution center that provides fiber-optic services to you and your neighbors. These pedestals offer network access to emergency services, cellular services, TV, and broadband services. If one becomes damaged, services could be affected.

During the spring and summer, burning ditches becomes a threat for pedestals. Please don't burn the ditch by the utilities, whether by ITC's pedestals or other utility structures. You will be liable for the damage. Always be cautious of your surroundings when working in the ditch or alleys. You don't want to be the cause of a significant outage.

Finally, please keep things clear of the pedestals. If a repair is needed, an ITC technician needs to be able to access the pedestal.

ITC wants to keep you connected. Don't be the cause of an outage.

**Pedestals  
are important  
for your  
service!  
Don't burn  
next to them!**



## 2021 Director Elections

ITC has 11 Directors who represent Coop members in nine districts. This year there are four of the districts up for election.

This year ITC will be holding director elections in Districts One (Castlewood, Clear Lake, Estelline, Goodwin), Two (Astoria, Brandt, Gary, Toronto, White), Four (Brookings, Elkton), and Eight (Bradley, Florence, Waubay, Webster). On May 25, 2021, a "Notice of Election" will be sent to the members in these districts. Anyone seeking a nomination petition can pick one up after May 26 at the ITC office in Clear Lake. Petitions must be completed and filed at the headquarters office in Clear Lake on or before June 11, 2021. If the director of that district runs unopposed, the election will be canceled, and members will be notified. Members in the districts where there will be elections will have ballots and bios mailed to them on June 29, 2021. Ballots must be returned to the ITC office by July 9, 2021.

An election meeting will be held in Clear Lake on July 9, 2021, from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM for members who want to cast their ballots in person. A Credentials Committee will count the mail-in ballots on July 12, 2021. If you have any questions, call ITC at 1.800.417.8667.