



# Bell Ringer

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Clear Lake, South Dakota 57226

## SDTA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Is your student looking for scholarship opportunities? South Dakota Telecommunications Association (SDTA), of which ITC is a member, offers one \$2,000 and two \$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 2022 semester, be majoring 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. Previous SDTA scholarship winners are not eligible.

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 (2023).



## 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.

# WI-FI INTERFERENCE

*By Michael Martinell, Network Broadband Technician*

Most Internet users enjoy the many benefits of having a wireless connection. It enables you to move freely around the house with your devices and even enjoy the shady areas outside the home. Sometimes though, the connection seems slow. Clicking on a link appears to take several extra seconds, and streaming sometimes stutters out. This can get frustrating, especially when you are just trying to relax.

While devices connected with wireless Internet will not typically be as fast as the same device when it is hardwired, the overall experience should be similar. Of course, this is under perfect conditions. Various types of wireless interference can cause your Wi-Fi speeds to be up to 50% slower than expected compared to having the same device hardwired. This interference can come from various sources, including microwave ovens, cordless phones, and even the materials the house is built from, such as concrete and metal. Even mirrors can cause problems. Many times, it is difficult to determine the exact source of interference.

To help troubleshoot Wi-Fi, you can try to hardwire your computer to the router. Of course, this only works if you have an ethernet port. These days it seems like many desktop and laptop computers don't have them built-in, so that is not an option for many people. If you have a new ITC router and the Blast Wi-Fi service with app, you can run a speed test directly from the router. This is beneficial because it will give you a true test of speed as it comes into the house. If the speed is significantly below your subscribed speed, the next step is to figure out what is using the bandwidth. If you own your router, check your documentation to see if it includes this handy feature.

To help figure out what is using your bandwidth, you can try turning off your various devices one by one and then doing a new test after each. Once you figure out the device that is the culprit, you can check the software that is running on it. A common culprit is backup software, which can often be scheduled to work at a different time.

If the speed test from the router shows the speed is good, then the usual offender is interference. To troubleshoot interference, try moving your device to a different spot. Even a couple of feet can sometimes make a huge difference. Another thing to try is to temporarily power off and even unplug various devices in your home. Any electrical device has the potential to create interference.

Older devices were designed around older protocols. Older devices may struggle to transmit at faster speeds, especially older than 2016. Not only that, but older devices tend to slow down the entire wireless connection because of how they were originally designed. Disconnecting an older wireless device may be all it takes to significantly speed up your home network.

Troubleshooting slow Wi-Fi can take time, and often the culprit isn't the first thing checked. If you have ITC's Blast Wi-Fi service, you can use it to help find network hogs in your home.

# 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!**



## 2022 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 Four (Brookings, Elkton), Seven (Clark), Eight (Bradley, Florence, Waubay, Webster), and Nine (Labolt, Milbank, Stockholm, Strandburg, South Shore, Revillo). On May 31, 2022, a "Notice of Election" will be sent to the members in these districts. Anyone seeking a nomination petition can pick one up after May 31 at the ITC office in Clear Lake. Petitions must be completed and filed at the headquarters office in Clear Lake on or before June 15, 2022. 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 30, 2022. Ballots must be returned to the ITC office by July 15, 2022.

An election meeting will be held in Clear Lake on July 15, 2022, 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 22, 2022. If you have any questions, call ITC at 1.800.417.8667.

*Happy Mother's Day!*