

Trivia~Trivia~Trivia

What is the location of the first Fiber-to-the-Home construction project?

(Hint: the answer can be found in last months issue of the Midstate Messenger)

****Deadline to enter is the 15th of the Month.** All correct entries will be entered into a drawing for \$10.00. We will contact the winner for a brief interview and feature that customer in the following month's newsletter. Submit your answers by: 1) Writing your answer on a piece of paper with your name, address and telephone number and mailing to our Midstate office at PO Box 48, Kimball SD 57355 or 2) Go online to our website at www.midstatesd.net and click on the Trivia link and submit your answer online following the online instructions. *Trivia submissions will not be taken by telephone.*

And the Winner is...

Congratulations to Doreen Clark. She knew that the March Digital Channel of the Month was "The Golf Channel".

The Hot Dog Wagon is Cooking up Treats again this Summer!

The Midstate Communications Hot Dog Wagon is on the roll again this summer cooking up our special hot dogs, along with chips and drinks to show our appreciation of your support. Come join us from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. in the following exchanges for a free lunch and door prizes. Free to all Midstate Communications customers in these exchanges:

June 21 – Delmont, Delmont City park

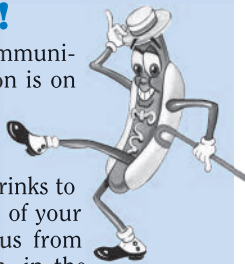
June 8 – Gann Valley, Gann Valley Fire Hall

Important Dates to Remember...

Please mark the following dates, regarding our billing schedule, on your calendar. Bills are mailed the last business day of each month, and payment is due on the 20th of the month. Paying on time saves frustrating calls and unwanted late fees.

- **Last Business Day of Each Month**
Bills mailed out from Midstate's office
- **5th of Each Month**
Disconnect of all accounts with a 30 day balance.
- **20th of Each Month**
Bills are due in either Midstate office by 12:00 p.m.
- **20th of Each Month**
Overdue notices mailed out and late fees will be applied to all delinquent accounts.

**All Midstate bills are due upon receipt. Any bills that have not been received by the 5th of the following month will be disconnected. To be reconnected the bill must be paid in full and will be subject to a down payment and appropriate reconnect fees.*



Midstate Board of Director Elections...

Three district exchange board positions are up for election this July. Eligible members interested in running for the Midstate Board of Directors must request an application and petition from the Midstate Communications Office, then obtain fifteen signatures of Cooperative members from the same district you live in and are running for. The completed petition must be submitted to the Cooperative no later than 30-days prior to the announced election date in each exchange.

Director elections will be held during the month of July at voting places located in each district exchange in which an election will be hosted. If more than one person files a petition in proper form within the proper time, the Secretary of the company shall mail each member of the district entitled to vote thereon a ballot for the district director election no later than twenty days before such election and each member residing in said district shall express their vote. Each member shall enclose their ballot in a sealed blank envelope. The blank envelope will be placed in a second envelope bearing the member's name and address, and shall be returned to the Secretary at the headquarters of the Company (Kimball, SD). When such written vote so enclosed is timely received by mail or by being hand delivered by a member on or before the date and time of the district director election meeting then it shall be counted as a vote of such member. A member may also be personally present at the election meeting and cast their ballot, unless such member has previously submitted a ballot by mail which has not been cancelled. If a husband and a wife hold a joint membership, then they shall jointly be entitled to receive one vote by mail.

July 12 – New Holland Bob Holleman is incumbent
Hosted at Overweg Grocery & Feed

July 14 – Stickney Exchange Randy Breukelman is incumbent
Hosted at the Stumble Inn

July 18 – Kimball Exchange David Lehr is incumbent
Hosted at Club Vega

If only one person submits a petition, we will cancel the election and not host an election event in that exchange. If there is an election, people may either vote at the election place from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. or by mail as noted above.

Scholarships Available from SDATC

The South Dakota Association of Telephone Cooperatives (SDATC) has announced that it will award three \$1,000 SDATC Memorial Scholarships for the 2011 fall semester.

The SDATC Memorial Scholarships are available to students who have completed at least two semesters of course work at an accredited post-secondary school in South Dakota and who are members/customers or whose parent(s) are members/customers of an SDATC member company. The scholarship can be used at any post-secondary educational institution in South Dakota, including public and private universities, technical schools, and community colleges.

The scholarship program began with a single \$300 scholarship in 1987. Since the scholarship fund was established, SDATC has awarded \$47,825 to help 72 South Dakota students receive their post-secondary education.

The deadline to apply is May 31, 2011. Applications are available at www.sdatconline.com, or from any South Dakota post-secondary institution student financial aid office, the SDATC office (605-224-7629 or ginigrannes@sdaonline.com), or any SDATC member company.

SDATC member companies include Alliance Communications; Beresford Municipal Telephone; Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Telephone Authority; Faith Municipal Telephone; Fort Randall Telephone; Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative; Interstate Telecommunications Cooperative; James Valley Telecommunications; Kennebec Telephone Company; Long Lines; TrioTel Communications; Midstate Communications; RC Communications and Roberts County Telephone Cooperative; Knology Community Telephone; Santel Communications; Stockholm-Strandburg Telephone; Swiftel Communications; Valley Telecommunications; Venture Communications; West River Cooperative Telephone; West River Telecommunications Cooperative; and Western Telephone Company.

Midstate Communications Inc. will be closed Monday, May 30th in observance of Memorial Day.

Scareware....Beware!

Q. I have PC Tools Spyware Doctor with antivirus installed from Midstate Communications but I still got infected by a fake security program that completely took over my computer. Should I be using something else for protection?

-Gina

A. In the world of computers, there is currently a 'scareware pandemic' in play that is fooling millions of users every day. Scareware refers to rogue programs that scare folks into doing something that, in this case, actually infects their computer.

Typically, users are initially exposed to these programs when visiting a website that is laced with the instructions to pop-up a fake warning that your computer is infected. These warnings look very similar to Windows screens and cause most folks to follow the prompts to 'scan' or 'fix' the problem. Eventually, the 'fix' asks the user for a credit card number, which is when most folks realize something 'phishy' is going on, but by that time it's too late. The second that anyone clicks on the button to 'scan' or 'fix', it instructs your computer to install the evil code in the background while making you believe that it's scanning your computer for viruses. Once they infect you, they can steal your credit card information, infect the machine for use as a silent soldier in a 'botnet' army, or install anything else that they so desire.

The reason your antivirus didn't protect you is that it couldn't and neither would any other companies' antivirus because you clicked on a button that told Windows and your security program that you wanted to install a program. So if you are thinking of switching and going to Norton, McAfee, Kaspersky, or any other anti-virus, you are still able to be attacked by this scareware. Keep in mind, while these evil programmers are cooking up these fake anti-viruses, they have the ability to test it on every major antivirus program on the market before they launch it. In other words, they can keep working with the code until they know that your antivirus program will think it is a legitimate program.

This, unfortunately, is why so many people are getting infected and your antivirus program is powerless to protect you from yourself. In the future, pay very close attention to warning screens. In your case, if you have Spyware Doctor installed, if the warning is not clearly coming from the Spyware Doctor program, cancel the warning and do not run it.

If you know that you have been attacked by "scareware", give our office a call at 605-778-8028. We have a computer technician on staff that can clean up your system and get it running to the best of it's ability again.

Telephone Directories Have Been Delivered...

The new Central Connections telephone directories have been delivered. Each customer premise received one copy of the Central Connections directory but additional copies are available for pick up at no additional charge at the following locations:

Chamberlain Midstate Telecom Office
Delmont First State Bank
Fort Thompson ... Crow Creek Housing Authority Office
Gann Valley Court House Treasurer's Office
Geddes First State Bank
Platte First Fidelity Bank & Bank of the West
Kimball Midstate Communications Office
New Holland Overweg Feed & Grocery
Pukwana Brule County Co-op
White Lake Farmers & Merchants Bank
Stickney Farmer's State Bank

Long Distance Calls Not Being Completed? You're Not Alone...

One would think in today's world, with all the technological advancements made in the past decade, that the telecommunications network in the USA would still be capable of completing all long distance calls. After all, telecom companies have been routing and completing long distance calls across the country since the late 1800's. Making a long distance call is something that, "just seems to always work."

Unfortunately a problem has arisen, as some long distance calls originating outside of Midstate Communications network are not being completed or are experiencing a range of other problems. These problems are occurring across the country, but most often being reported by customers of rural telecom companies such as ours. Some calls never connect; other times the phone on the receiving end rings but the caller's voice cannot be heard once the phone is answered. Poor voice quality is the most common problem reported, but we have also noted that Caller ID information is not correct either.

Technicians and engineers have been working tirelessly to find the answer to the problems but up to this point have been unable to pinpoint the exact cause. We do know and can prove that Midstate Communications' network is functioning properly and is not the cause of these bad calls. The troubled calls which pass through several carriers do not reach our network.

Since the problem has spread throughout the country, a few state public utility commissions and national associations are becoming more involved. Some state commissions have already opened dockets to investigate the issue. This is where we need your help. If someone is attempting to call you, or you are making a long distance call, and experience these troubles, please gather as many details as you can including:

- 1) The time the call was placed
- 2) The phone number from which the call was originated or the number in which you were calling
- 3) The long distance or wireless provider for the phone number from which the call originated.
- 4) Details about what, if anything, occurred on the receiving end.

You can report these incidents to Midstate by calling our offices at 778-6221 or 234-8000. You can also report problems to the Public Utilities Commission's (PUC) Consumer Affairs Division by calling toll-free 1-800-332-1782.

Lifeline & Link Up Programs

Lifeline and Link Up telephone assistance programs are available to qualifying customers of Midstate Communications and Midstate Telecom. Lifeline & Link Up support provide discounts to eligible low-income consumers to help them establish and maintain telephone service.

Lifeline assistance lowers the cost of basic monthly local telephone service. Eligible consumers can receive up to \$8.25 per month in discounts. Link Up reduces the cost of initiating new telephone service. Eligible customers can receive a 50% discount off of the one-time costs associated with initiating phone service, up to a maximum of \$30.00.

Who is eligible? Customers who qualify under one of the four major economic assistance programs: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Food Stamps, Energy Assistance, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Federal Public Housing Assistance, National School Lunch (NSL) or income guidelines of 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The named subscriber to the local telephone service must participate in one of these assistance programs in order for that household to receive Lifeline support. When you qualify for any of the above programs, you must self-certify in our office by completing a Lifeline-Link Up Assistance Application.

If you no longer qualify for any of the economic programs, then you no longer qualify for Lifeline or Link Up and must contact our office to discontinue this discount. For more information on Lifeline or Link Up, call our office at 778-6221 or 234-8000. For questions on eligibility, call your county social services office.

Mini Ham & Cheese Sandwiches

2 cups Original Bisquick Mix	1 cup Milk
1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese (4oz)	1 Egg
1 pkg (6oz) thinly sliced fully cooked lean ham, chopped	2 tbs Yellow Mustard

Heat oven to 350°. Grease square baking dish, 8x8x2 in. Mix Bisquick, milk, mustard and egg until blended. Pour half of the batter into baking dish.

Top with half of the ham and ½ cup of the cheese. Top with remaining ham.

Pour remaining batter over ham. Bake 45-50 min. or until golden brown and set. Sprinkle with remaining ½ cup of cheese. Let stand 5 minutes before cutting. Cut into 9 squares, cut each square diagonally in half.

Did you know... Appetizers for adults make perfectly sized sandwiches for little kids!