

February 2018

# RINGER

photo by Eric Viall



## 2018 NCC Scholarship Programs:

In support of continuing education for rural youth, Northwest Communications Cooperative (NCC) is proud to sponsor three scholarship programs. To qualify, the applicants' parents or legal guardians must be members of and receiving local exchange telephone service from NCC.

Applications for the following scholarships were sent to the schools previously. Additional applications may be obtained by contacting NCC at 701-568-3331 or 800-245-5884. The scholarship applications are also available on our website at [www.nccray.com](http://www.nccray.com).

**Arthur S. Johnson Scholarship:** For the 33rd year, NCC is sponsoring this scholarship which was established in honor of previous manager, Art Johnson, who worked for NCC from 1951 to 1985. NCC will be awarding four (4) \$1,000 scholarships in 2018. These scholarships are available to graduating high school seniors and students in post secondary institutions. Application deadline is March 16, 2018.

**Kenneth Lund, Jr. Scholarship:** For the 16th year, NCC is pleased to sponsor a technology scholarship. This scholarship was established in honor of previous General Mgr. Kenneth Lund, Jr., who worked for NCC from 1969 to 2003. NCC will be awarding two (2) \$1,000 technology scholarships in 2018. These scholarships are available to graduating high school seniors and undergraduate students enrolled in a curriculum studying the telecommunications and/or computer technology field at an accredited technical school or a two or four-year college/university. Application deadline is March 16, 2018.

**The Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) Scholarship:** For the 14th year, NCC is excited to offer students in our local school districts the opportunity to apply for this national scholarship program sponsored by our national affiliate, the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA).

In 2018, FRS will award thirty (30) \$2,500 scholarships to rural high school seniors. This scholarship is not available to students in post secondary institutions. Local students in our service area will be competing with other rural students in our NTCA region, which includes ND, SD, MN, and WI. Should a student from our service area be selected to receive one of the 30 scholarships, FRS will fund \$2,000 and NCC will fund \$500. The FRS scholarship is not a scholarship based on grade point average. Rather, it is geared toward seniors who are good, solid students, but may not qualify for scholarship programs based solely upon GPA. Some preference may be given to individuals expressing an interest to return to work in a rural area following graduation. Applications must be submitted to

## Scholarships

NCC by February 26, 2018, so they can be signed by our General Manager and mailed to FRS by March 1, 2018.

**The FRS Staurulakis Family Scholarship:** The FRS is proud to announce the seventh year of four scholarships funded by Manny and Leo Staurulakis, of John Staurulakis, Inc. (JSI) in honor of their parents, John and Chresanthe Staurulakis and to celebrate 50 years of service to the rural telephone industry. In 2018 JSI will award four (4) \$5,000 scholarships to rural high school seniors. This scholarship is not available to students in post secondary institutions. The application used for the above FRS Scholarship will be used for this scholarship. Students with a focus in the science, math, medicine, or engineering will be automatically considered for these Staurulakis Family Scholarships. With the generous addition of the Staurulakis Family Scholarships, the Foundation will offer nearly \$100,000 annually to help rural students attain a higher education. As stated above, applications must be submitted to NCC by February 26, 2018 so they can be signed by our General Manager and mailed to FRS by March 1, 2018.

[www.nccray.com](http://www.nccray.com)

701-568-3331

[go.nccray.com](http://go.nccray.com)



**Retransmission agreements for local networks will result in increase to local broadcast fee.**

NCC's costs from TV networks continue to increase every year. We have finished the negotiating process with local broadcast networks including, ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC for retransmission consent agreements. The negotiations with these networks have resulted in the inevitable price increase in 2018. We do not like to raise rates, but are forced to do so by the networks that charge us on a per subscriber fee every month for every channel, whether you watch them or not. You have maybe heard this same story across the TV industry. If we want to carry these channels, we must pay the fees associated with them. TV customers will see this change effective on your March 2018 statements.

**Catch the 2018 Winter Olympics on NCC TV.**

**THE WINTER OLYMPICS FEB 8-25**

**PyeongChang 2018**

**NCC**

Games will be broadcast on NBCUniversal networks or register for watchTVEverywhere and download the NBC Sports app to stream from your device! Schedule can be found at [www.nbcolympics.com](http://www.nbcolympics.com).

## Battery Backup for Fiber-to-the-Home Customers

**ATTENTION NCC FTTH Customers:** A recent FCC ruling was issued in regards to NCC's obligation to provide access to 911 service during a power outage.

**Backup Power For Home Phone Service During Power Outages:** A backup power supply (battery) is required for your digital voice service to be in service in the event of a power outage. A backup battery, such as what NCC has provided and installed, will allow regular corded land line phones to work during a power outage and to maintain the ability to connect to 911 emergency services. When a power outage occurs, you should ensure that you have one corded single-line touchtone phone connected directly to the Wi-Fi gateway or your in-home wiring (wall jack) and the gateway connected directly to the battery backup unit. If you connect a cordless phone, it will not function without a separate battery backup, and not all cordless phones are so equipped.

**What Your Battery Can & Can't Do for You:** Our backup battery allows you to continue to use your home voice service during a power outage. Without a backup battery, you will not be able to make any calls, including emergency calls to 911. Our backup battery does not provide power to any service other than voice. Home security systems, medical monitoring devices and other equipment will not run on a home phone backup battery.

**Purchase & Replacement Options:** NCC provides battery backup at no extra charge. Backup battery replacements are available directly from NCC. Additional battery backup can be purchased

from many local retailers or online. Be sure to purchase the battery model that matches the type of modem that you have. If you have any questions on how to request and obtain a replacement unit and instruction on the installation of the replacement unit, please call 701-568-3331.

**Expected Backup Power Duration:** The battery backup is expected to last up to 8 hours during a power outage depending upon battery age, usage, and environment. The estimated life expectancy for the battery is 2-4 years depending on power outage frequency and environment.

**Instructions for Battery Use and Proper Care:** Please follow the instructions included with your battery for proper use, storage, and care. Batteries should be stored in locations under normal room temperatures. You should periodically remove and test your battery to verify both operation of the backup battery and its condition. The battery backup unit can be tested by unplugging it from the power outlet. If it is working correctly, the Optical Network Terminal will remain powered and regular corded land line phones will still work in the house. Make sure to plug the unit back in at the end of testing. Battery backup units will display a battery light when the battery needs replaced. Please refer to the battery backup unit's instruction manual for details on the warning indicator lights and the battery replacement procedure. NCC does not supply any warranty on the battery backup unit.



## NCC Fiber to the Home Update

### FTTH Construction Project Continues in 2018

NCC will have another very busy construction season this year with plans to bring fiber optics to the entire Bowbells exchange, Ray town and Crosby town. Customers in the rural areas of Ray and Crosby exchanges have previously been cutover to fiber optics.

Two separate contractors will be working on the construction part of these projects, which includes plowing fiber optics for main lines near the roads and to each individual home/business. The NCC Board of Directors approved the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) loan resolutions to accept Ernst Trenching, Inc. from Fargo as the FTTH contractor for the Bowbells exchange in the amount of \$2.42 million. Bid opening for the Ray town and Crosby town project was scheduled for the end of January.

**Easements are being mailed to landowners. We appreciate your response as soon as possible so as to not delay these projects.** We anticipate construction beginning this spring and summer, with cutovers starting this fall.

NCC servicemen have begun pre-installations at each home/business in these areas. They will be contacting each customer involved in the fiber project to schedule a date and time to complete the pre-install. It is being done before construction in hopes that we can better accommodate customer requests for where the fiber is plowed and enters your home/business.

Customers involved with the FTTH projects should have already received a letter with the details of the project. If you want more information or have questions, we've scheduled the following informational Open Houses.

- Wednesday, Feb. 14th – Crosby Courthouse Community Room
- Wednesday, Feb. 21st – NCC office in Ray
- Thursday, Feb. 22nd – Bowbells Bistro Hotel

#### SCHEDULE FOR OPEN HOUSE:

12:00 to 1:00 p.m. – *Lunch available*

12:30 p.m. – *Short presentation*

12:00 to 2:00 p.m. – *NCC employees available to answer questions on projects, services available, pricing, and to accept signed easements from landowners.*

#### Other FTTH happenings:

Cutover to the new fiber optic network is ongoing in the town of Tioga by contractors and by NCC servicemen in the rural Tioga area. Packets of information were mailed to customers. If you have not called the NCC office to start a service order for your cutover, please do so as soon as possible. If you placed an order quite awhile ago and did not hear about our new Advanced TV available with the fiber cutover, please call to get more details!

Splicing has finished up and cutover installations will soon begin in the Marmon and Alamo exchanges to all premises which were plowed to and received a fiber drop this past fall. Packets of information will be mailed to customers the end of January.



Winners from NCC's 12 Days of Christmas on SmartHub NCC gave away a device each day for the 12 days leading up to Christmas Day! This was done in an effort to invite more customers to register and access the online customer portal called SmartHub. The winners who were announced on the NCC Facebook page are:

- Day 1 - Echo Dot  
Devin Lindsey, Crosby
- Day 2 - Smart Bulb Starter Kit  
Jessica & Greg Busch, Columbus
- Day 3 - Fire TV  
Jan Munyon, Ray
- Day 4 - Google Home Mini  
Robert Jensen, Powers Lake
- Day 5 - Samsung Smart Outlet  
Zachary & Krista Verlinde, Noonan
- Day 6 - LED Toilet Night Light  
Bonnie Bohnsack, Bowbells
- Day 7 - Samsung Smart Home Hub  
Marilee Nelson, Noonan
- Day 8 - Smart LED Light Bulb  
Tami Solberg, Williston
- Day 9 - Kids GPS Tracker Watch  
Linda Holmen, Tioga
- Day 10 - Fitbit Smart Scale  
Gene & Michelle Pulvermacher,  
Crosby
- Day 11 - Wemo Smart Plug  
Sam & Kristle Sagaser, Tioga
- Day 12 - Roomba  
Bowbells Insurance

Thank you to everyone who participated and congratulations to the winners! We hope you're enjoying your new devices!



## New Listings

### BOWBELLS

Pandolfo Paula ..... 377-3775

### COLUMBUS

Columbus Café ..... 939-5485

### CROSBY

Langberg Chad & Jackie ..... 965-8237

### FLAXTON

Spielman Excavating LLC..... 596-2266

### McGREGOR

Morgan Chris ..... 546-2906

### POWERS LAKE

Ferry Rebecca..... 464-5329

Kearsley Samantha ..... 464-6567

Tinjum Sonja ..... 464-3164

### RAY

Imes Josh & Andrea ..... 568-3755

Lewis Cindy ..... 568-2295

McDonald Chanda ..... 568-4858

### ROUND PRAIRIE

Burch Carissa ..... 875-6648

### TIOGA

Darmour Paul ..... 664-4567

Hawbaker Ted & Mary..... 664-6885

Lair Brett..... 664-6789

Langberg Cody ..... 664-3322

Mitchell Monty..... 664-5033

Wagner Tyler..... 664-6091

Syverson Kyle ..... 664-4434

## Yes, YOU CAN Afford Telephone Service!

### - Lifeline provides a discount to eligible customers -

Community based telecom providers, such as NCC, believe that every person in America should have access to quality, affordable telecommunications service. Lifeline assistance provides a discount on telephone service for those who qualify. Qualifying for Lifeline assistance is gained by participating in one or more of the following programs:

- *Medicaid*
- *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*
- *Supplemental Security Income*
- *Federal Public Housing Assistance*
- *Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit Program*
- *Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance*
- *Tribally-administered Temporary Assistance of Needy Families*
- *Food Distribution on Indian Reservations*
- *Household income is below the Federal Poverty Guideline*

Individuals who might be eligible would need to fill out an application, which can be found on our website [www.nccray.com](http://www.nccray.com) or in our office in Ray. Documentation of eligibility of one of the above programs must accompany the completed application. One Lifeline discount per household is available.

By applying, customers must sign a consent to provide Lifeline Subscriber Information to the National Lifeline Accountability Database (NLAD) to detect and prevent consumers from receiving more than one discounted telephone service under the federal Lifeline program. Recertification occurs on an annual basis.



**Thank you ALL who participated and CONGRATULATIONS to all the NCC Pick-It Bowl Challenge Winners!**

Out of over 100 participants in our area, Ryan Bendixson from Zahl earned the most points in the contest for the second year in a row! He was awarded a Google Home voice activated speaker. Devin Jacobson from Alamo came in second place and won a Google Mini, and Monte Ellingson from Crosby finished in third and chose a \$25 gift certificate to Jason's Foods in Crosby. Jeff Dube from Williston was drawn randomly as the winner of a Google Home speaker.

Contest participants were invited to pick who they predicted to win the NCAA football bowl games and earned points for each game they picked correctly. The contest was conducted online and sponsored by NCC. The contest ended when The Alabama Crimson Tide defeated the Georgia Bulldogs in overtime, 26-23.

## Notes

- Please check your telephone directory listing for any errors or changes. Contact Sheri in our office if you would like any changes made for the 2018-2019 printed directory.

**Report Trouble: 611**  
**Email: [ncc@nccray.com](mailto:ncc@nccray.com)**  
**Ph: 701-568-3331 or 800-245-5884**  
**Dial Up Internet Help Desk: XXX-7666**  
**Directory Assistance: 411**  
**Call Before You Dig: 811**  
**Newsletter Editor: Angela Schepp**  
**Design: [lori@leutzgraphics.com](mailto:lori@leutzgraphics.com)**

**Business Hours: M-F 8am to 5pm.**  
**NCC Message Center will take calls outside of these hours.**

**Make a payment anytime by using Secure Pay 1-888-816-8068 or SmartHub [www.nccray.com](http://www.nccray.com) or download the app**

*Happy Valentine's Day!*

[www.nccray.com](http://www.nccray.com)

701-568-3331

[go.nccray.com](http://go.nccray.com)