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DAKOTA
CENTRAL



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Don's House of Flowers

SUMMER 2023

dakotacentral.com



**CONNECTING YOU
TO THE WORLD.**

A letter from our General Manager



The Why Has Always Been You.

Around here, things are finally moving and shaking. We spent the long winter waiting for days like this and now it's go time! Our technicians are busy with typical spring work like locating, fiber maintenance, and new construction. The rest of the team is gearing up for summer events like parades, community picnics, and county fairs. We're happy to be able to get out and enjoy the beautiful area we call home, but mostly we're excited to connect more with you.

There is a lot of noise being made in the news regarding broadband infrastructure. The Broadband Equity Access and Deployment program (BEAD) approved by Congress allocates \$42.5 billion to provide connectivity to unserved and underserved areas throughout the country. It raises the question: why in the world aren't these people connected?

At Dakota Central, we saw the importance of building fiber broadband early on and began our fiber deployment nearly two decades ago. Our sister companies of the Broadband Association of North Dakota did the same. Because of that dedication,

North Dakota is the most connected state in the union. It's hard to believe there are still areas that lack adequate internet access after North Dakota has been connected with fiber for so long. The effects of being fiber lit from an economic, educational, and social perspective are immeasurable and the reason behind these efforts has always been you, our customers. We're proud to say that each community in the Dakota Central service territory has been certified a Smart Rural Community by the NTCA Rural Broadband Association. We want to ensure you always have the most reliable and robust broadband and communications services available.

Providing you with high-quality services has always been more personal than just business. Our customer support and technical teams are always here to help consult, advise, and train on any technology, app, or platform you're working on. Whether it is streaming tv, email assistance, or Wi-Fi networking, we're here. We recently offered two community classes on email phishing and what to look out for and appreciate everyone that attended the lunch-and-learn. We love hosting in our

offices, so stay tuned for additional classes that might be beneficial for you.

We look forward to another season of barbecues, campfires, car shows, and fireworks. The Dakota Central team wishes you and your family a safe and happy summer. As always, it's an absolute pleasure to serve you.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Holly Utke'.

Holly Utke
Chief Executive Officer/
General Manager

RDFC Grant Program

The Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC) is happy to announce a 2023 grant allotment of \$3,000 per member-cooperative to be used to support community owned entities, nonprofits, and community-based projects.

Eligible projects include community owned businesses (café, grocery store, motel, other), community facilities (such as ambulance services, fire districts, recreation, hospital/clinic, community center, etc.), or community-based projects (such as school/youth projects, other) that benefit rural areas.

The grant application deadline is December 31, 2023.

For grant guidelines and the application form, contact Brianne at 701-652-3184 or email her at bpartlow@dakotacentral.com.



Medina City Park, 2022 RDFC grant recipient, will be purchasing bleachers and picnic tables with funding received.



Montpelier Baseball Club, 2022 RDFC grant recipient, is currently working on baseball field renovations

WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

Lifeline and the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) are assistance programs that help connect families and households that struggle to afford internet service.

These benefits provide a discount of up to \$30 per month toward broadband service or \$5.25 toward telephone service for eligible households.

Eligible households can enroll through Dakota Central or learn more at:

dakotacentral.com/lifeline-support/

You can learn more about the ACP benefit, including eligibility and enrollment information, by visiting: www.fcc.gov/ACP, or by calling 877-384-2575.

Business Spotlight: Don's House of Flowers

What started out as a high school job turned into a career and business venture for Cara Prescott, owner and operator of Don's House of Flowers in Jamestown. Over the past 12 years, Cara has transformed Don's House of Flowers from what was originally a floral and garden

shop to a specialty custom-floral arrangement store.

After gaining knowledge of the basics from the original owner Don, Cara went on to become certified in floral design after realizing that's what she wanted to focus on.



I appreciate the fact that I can call when I have an issue and speak to someone right away, and I know they will take care of it.

—Cara Prescott, Owner/Operator





“My passion is creating custom, unique arrangements for the special events in my customers’ lives,” Cara explained. The shop also has a variety of plants and décor for sale, which are great ideas for gifting.

When it comes to doing business, Don’s House of Flowers is completely internet based. From phones to orders, everything is connected online. Dakota Central recently installed a Cloud Voice system—which is an internet-based phone system—for Don’s House of Flowers. This includes features like voicemail to email, easy web management, conferencing, and call forwarding. A stable internet connection and business-class Managed Wi-Fi is also crucial for online ordering and order management.

“When deciding on a provider, the most important factors were dependable service and the ability to call local support and speak

to a live representative,” Cara said. “Dakota Central checked those two boxes, and we were pleasantly surprised that the price was comparable to our previous service as well.”

Because Don’s House of Flowers operates with a small crew, local support is important if they have any issues.

“I appreciate the fact that I can call when I have an issue and speak to someone right away, and I know they will take care of it,” Cara explained. Dakota Central is happy to provide service and support to Don’s House of Flowers, so they can focus on doing what they do best, creating beautiful and meaningful arrangements for special occasions.

Cara and her crew are in the midst of their busy season, but said she has expansion plans in the works for when the time is right.

To check out Don’s House of Flowers online, visit donshouseofflowers.com



Company News

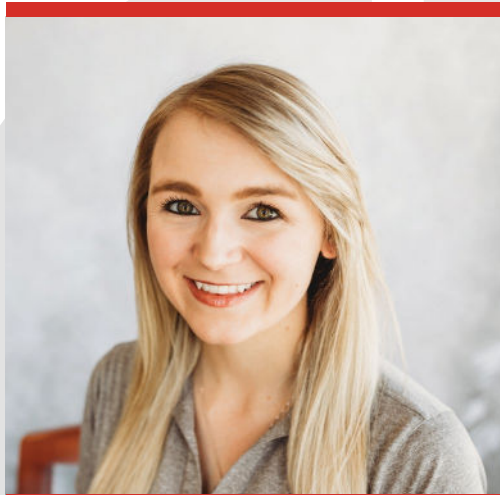
Embracing New Horizons

Congratulations to these employees on their exciting transition to a new role within our company! Their dedication and growth mindset have opened doors to fresh opportunities.

As they embark on this next chapter, we wish them continued success and fulfillment in their journey of personal and professional development. Here's to embracing change and reaching new heights together!



Jordan Berg
Network Technician



Kiahna Vennes
Marketing and Administrative Assistant



Thank you, Doug!

We recently celebrated another employee retiring: one of our dependable Field Technicians, Doug Greb.

After ten years at Dakota Central and many more in the industry, Doug is looking forward to enjoying his hobbies in retirement. On Doug's last day, he was also awarded the Jamestown Chamber of Commerce's May Customer Service Award. As described in his nomination letter, "Doug went over and above expectations and was so patient, kind, and understanding of the circumstances." Dakota Central is thankful for Doug's dedication to our customers for the last ten years, and we wish him the best in retirement!

Welcome to the team!



Ryan Zink

Field Technician, Jamestown

Hometown: Bismarck, ND

Experience: I went to school at Northwest Tech, then worked for BEK for almost 15 years.

What is your favorite part of your new role so far?

I'm already being treated like family here.

Fun Fact: In my spare time I like to fish.



Cameron Hoyt

Customer Service Rep, Jamestown

Hometown: Park Rapids, MN

Experience: I graduated from University of Jamestown with my bachelor's in business administration with a concentration in marketing and management. I have worked odd jobs for years.

What are you most excited for in your new role?

I am excited about getting to talk to people and my nice co-workers.

Fun Fact: I played football for the Jimmies.



Embracing Community

Dakota Central employees and families handed out giveaways and door prizes while enjoying a University of Jamestown basketball double header at the Harold Newman Arena on February 18th. We are gearing up for another busy summer of events in your communities, which is our favorite time of the year! Parades, fairs, races, concerts and picnics; you name it, we'll be there! We hope to see you around; be sure to stop and say "Hi!" if you see any of our Dakota Central team members out and about!

L to R: Cameron Hoyt, Ashley Kramer, Ben Steinolfson, Joanie Somsen, Kiahna Vennes, and Brianne Partlow

Dakota Central awards \$5,500 in scholarships!

Dakota Central is proud to announce the 2023 Dakota Central Scholarship winners!

Five \$1,000 scholarships have been awarded to outstanding graduating seniors whose parents or guardians are customers of Dakota Central.

The Jerry Eissinger Memorial Scholarship of \$500 has been awarded to the top scoring applicant, in addition to the \$1,000 Dakota Central Scholarship.

Applicants were judged on community activities, school activities, financial need, grades, and achievement. Consideration was also given to those looking to pursue a career in the telecommunications or technology industry, as well as those looking to return to a rural area after college.

This marks the 22nd year of the scholarship program having awarded over \$115,000 to date. Dakota Central is proud to offer the scholarship program to show its commitment to area youth.

Hats off to this year's Dakota Central Scholarship winners and to the entire class of 2023!



Allison Jarrett
Carrington
Bobbi & Jason Jarrett



Will Nelson
Jamestown
Stephanie & William Nelson



Jera Truax
Jamestown
Ronald & Lisa Truax



Jordan Dooley
Jamestown
David & Tiffany Dooley



Chloe Hovdenes
Carrington
Jason & Jodi Hovdenes



You're Invited!

Join us for a customer appreciation picnic! We'll be serving up a delicious lunch and a chance to win some sweet prizes.

The Details

When: Wednesday, June 7
11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Where: Carrington Office
630 5th St N
Carrington, ND 58421



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Tech Tips: Phishing 101

Everything You Need to Know About Those Suspicious Emails

Phishing emails are fraudulent emails designed to trick recipients into sharing sensitive information, such as login credentials, financial data, or personal details. These emails often look like they come from a legitimate source, such as a bank or a social media platform, but they are sent by cybercriminals with the goal of stealing personal information or money.

Phishing emails often use social engineering tactics to persuade recipients to act, such as clicking on a link, downloading an attachment, or providing personal information. They may create a sense of urgency or use a threatening tone to convince the recipient to act quickly.

They may include links to fake websites or attachments that contain malicious software. These emails can be very convincing and sophisticated, so it's important to be vigilant and take steps to protect yourself from them.

To avoid falling victim to phishing emails, it's important to be cautious when opening emails from unknown senders or emails that seem suspicious. Look for red flags such as poor grammar, spelling errors, and unusual requests. Don't click on links or download attachments from unknown sources and be wary of emails that ask you to provide personal information. Always verify the authenticity of an email by checking the sender's email address, hovering over any links to see the destination URL, and contacting the organization directly through a trusted channel, such as their official website or customer service phone number.

In the case that you do open a malicious email and click the links, it is important to change all passwords and monitor your accounts for strange activity. When changing your password, we recommend using at least 16 characters with upper/lower case letters and at least one symbol. An easier way to come up with a password that is long enough is by using a sentence instead of a single word. By using a passphrase instead of a password, not only will it be easier for you to remember, but it will also be more difficult for someone to hack into your account.

If you notice that money has been taken from an account, it is also important to contact your bank immediately. When the bank is notified of fraudulent activity within 24 hours, you are more likely to get your money back.



These emails can be worrisome, but remember, when in doubt about suspicious email, the delete button is your best friend!

To avoid falling victim to phishing emails, it's important to:

- **Be wary of emails that ask you to provide personal or sensitive information.**
- **Verify the authenticity of the email by checking the sender's address, looking for spelling or grammatical errors, and examining any links or attachments carefully.**
- **Never click on links or download attachments from emails unless you are absolutely sure they are legitimate.**
- **Use a reputable antivirus program and keep it up to date.**
- **Use a unique, strong password for each of your accounts. We recommend using a passphrase instead of a password.**
- **Enable two-factor authentication wherever possible.**
- **Educate yourself and your family members about the risks of phishing scams and how to avoid them.**

Shop online, coming soon!

Manage account and services online with 24/7 self service. Stay tuned for more information!

Create your account at daktel.smarthub.coop/login, or by downloading the SmartHub app on your mobile device.

Easily manage contacts, notification methods and more!

For assistance, contact us at:
952-1000 or **652-3184**.



Learn with Dakota Central: Phishing 101 Class

We recently held a Phishing 101 class in both Carrington and Jamestown locations. During these classes, community members learned what to do when you suspect you have a phishing email or scam email in your inbox. Our knowledgeable help-desk representative, Laura, instructed the class and left everyone wanting more!

Give us a call if there is a specific topic you would like to learn more about, and stay tuned for more Dakota Central community classes!





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SAY “DO-NOT-CALL” TO UNWANTED TELEMARKETERS

The National Do Not Call Registry has been established to address unwelcome telemarketing calls. The registry applies to all telemarketers, with the exception of businesses with whom you have an existing relationship and certain non-profit and political organizations.

You can register your telephone numbers (both landline and cell phones) online at WWW.DONOTCALL.GOV or call toll-free, 1-888-382-1222 (TTY 1-866-290-4236), from the number you wish to register. Registration is free.

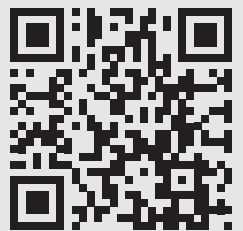
WIN CREDIT ON YOUR DAKOTA CENTRAL BILL!

Win a \$25 credit on your next Dakota Central bill!
Congratulations to last issue's winner: **Bob Woodward, Jamestown**
Next drawing date: **July 31, 2023**

NAME

PHONE NUMBER

Scan here to sign up online



CARRINGTON OFFICE
630 5th St. N Carrington, ND 58421 p: 701.652.3184 f: 701.674.8121

JAMESTOWN OFFICE
604 18th St. SW Jamestown, ND 58401 p: 701.952.1000 f: 701.952.1001

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