Page 2: Go GIG Speed Up & Enjoy $100

Page 4-6: New Look WRT & BAND

Special Insert Unclaimed Checks
feeling a little behind?
sluggish?

SPEED up & get $100

• PICK: $100 Visa Gift Card or $100 WRT Bill Credit when you sign up or increase your speed to Double GIG 1,000 Mbps Download AND Upload Speed

• Want PHONE?: Try 3 FREE Months of Cloud Voice CLOUD VOICE = Same call. Smarter service! Use your same phone number & get FREE Long Distance lower 48 states & 22 countries

• BONUS!! WRT Members EARN Co-Op Cash! avg. member received $500+ last year

Call WRT at 748-2211 & save

WRT is the FIRST & ONLY in the area to offer speeds up to 1GIG (1,000 Mbps) both download & upload. NO PHONE Required. Great for streaming TV, multiple devices, working from home, etc.

Choice of $100 WRT Bill Credit or $100 Visa Gift Card (sent via email). Available to new members & current members who increase internet speed to DOUBLE GIG 1,000 Mbps x 1,000 Mbps. Where service is available. No phone service required. 3 FREE Months of Cloud Voice - residential only ($30 value). Offer Ends 11-30-19.
WRT Employee Updates

WRT employees proudly serve our members from Goodrich to Golden Valley, Mercer to Mobridge, Washburn to Wakpala and everywhere in between. We’d like to introduce you to the faces behind the phone calls and techs serving your area!

**Tori Wahlman**
Customer Sales & Service Representative (CSR) - Hazen
Victoria (Tori) Wahlman recently joined WRT as a CSR in the Hazen office. She is originally from Center and received an Associates in Business Degree from Bismarck State College. Tori most recently worked at Sakakawea Medical Center before joining WRT. Tori is currently in training at WRT and noted, “The biggest surprise that I learned was that WRT has services all the way down in South Dakota. I didn’t realize that our services went all over both North Dakota and South Dakota.” We look forward to sharing Tori’s enthusiasm for helping others and technology. She also shared, “My favorite tech is Hulu because I love the next day streaming you get.”

**Travis Davenport**
Installer Repair Technician
Washburn
Travis Davenport joined WRT in April 2013, as an Installer Repair Technician in McLaughlin. In January 2014, Travis accepted the Installer Repair Technician position in Center. Travis, originally from the Baldwin area, was recently married to Amanda (Nelson) Davenport. He will be reporting to WRT’s Washburn office.

**Evan Martin**
Installer Repair Technician
Hazen
Evan Martin was hired in May 2012, as an Installer Repair Technician in McLaughlin. In May 2013, he accepted an Installer Repair position in Beulah. Evan was then promoted to Combination Specialist in 2014. He moved into an Installer Technician position reporting to Hazen in July 2019. Evan and his wife, Kelly, live in Hazen.

**Jeff Hanson**
Installer Repair Technician
Turtle Lake
Jeff Hanson was hired in November 2007, as an Installer Repair Technician in Hazen. In October 2013, he accepted the Washburn Installer Repair position. Jeff will be reporting closer to home at the Turtle Lake office, along with current tech, Jackson Hagen. Jeff and his wife, Kate, live in rural Turtle Lake with their two boys and daughter.

**Casey Blohm**
Installer Repair Technician
Center
Casey started at WRT in June 2008, as an Installer Repair Technician. He was promoted to Combination Technician in July 2013. Casey recently accepted the Installer Repair Technician position, based out of New Salem and then Center, getting him closer to home. Casey and his wife, Stacy, live and ranch in the rural Hanover area.

**Jesse Wetzel**
Seasonal Construction Tech
Hazen
We welcome back Jesse Wetzel to WRT’s Construction Department. Jesse first started with WRT back in 2007 and traveled across our service area as a Construction Technician. Jesse and his wife, Kari, have two small children and currently live in Glen Ullin.

**Vaughn Anderson**
Best Wishes Vaughn & Family!
Former WRT employee Vaughn Anderson and his family are moving to Florida, where Vaughn will attend the River Bible Institute. Vaughn joined WRT in September 2012 as an Internet/Data Technician in Hazen and was later promoted to Combination Specialist in April 2015. We wish Vaughn and his family the best!
Anytime you unwrap a stick of Land O’Lakes butter, you’re likely looking at a product made with Northern Lights Dairy milk. Northern Lights Dairy is a Grade-A dairy farm facility located just south of Mandan, owned and operated by the Holle family. Andrew Holle is a 4th generation dairy producer, and he lives there with his wife, Jennifer, their four kids, and over 725 milk cows.

Today, Northern Lights is a recognizable name and has found success selling milk to Land O’Lakes in Bismarck for many years. They’ve established themselves as innovators in the industry, utilizing the latest precision ag technology to optimize their operations.

However, when Andrew and Jennifer first bought the farm 16 years ago, that kind of future was nearly impossible to imagine.

“It was just a shell of a dairy farm at the time,” Jennifer said. “Just the roof and the parlor. There was no infrastructure.”

At the time, the newlyweds had just graduated from college with degrees in Animal Science and knew they wanted to expand Andrew’s multi-generational dairy farm. When they heard of a foreclosed dairy farm not far from the family dairy in New Salem, they took a tour. Though it didn’t offer much, the 36-stall rotary parlor caught their eye. Besides, both of them had a passion for Precision Ag and AgTech. This was a chance to build a new, innovative facility from the ground up.

It’s a commitment they implement to this day, Jennifer says.

“Our motto is to work smarter, not harder,” Jennifer said. “We’re constantly upgrading and implementing new technology. We always ask ourselves, ‘What can we use to make the cows more comfortable? How can we help our farm? How can we make it more successful?’”

As the family began to grow their farm, an important need quickly emerged: a way to monitor the various aspects of their business. It was increasingly difficult to accurately monitor the cows, employees, and various stations — all crucial for running a smooth operation.

Their solution: broadband and a security camera system from local cooperative, WRT.

“A camera system provides security for employees, helps...
with quality control, and gives you flexibility with time management,” Andrew explained. “In our industry there’s a lot of manual labor required. Being able to remotely monitor allows us to be more flexible and feel comfortable leaving the farm.”

Their first attempt was a do-it-yourself system. They had high hopes that this would enable them to keep a close eye on their operation. However, they were soon fighting an uphill battle; poor quality cameras, metal buildings causing problems, and poor internet connection made the system more hassle than help.

They soon realized they’d invested a lot of time and money into a system that wasn’t working as they’d hoped. As their operation continued to grow, they needed help, and fast.

They found their answer with their local BAND member organization, WRT. They heard about the security camera systems that WRT offers and decided to give it a shot.

“We knew we were getting a quality system,” Andrew Holle said. “And there’s the added benefit of having someone there in person to install it, make sure it’s working right, and come back if needed.”

The results were instantaneous — literally. While WRT team members were installing the cameras, the Holles noticed a cow had tipped over in one of the pens. Curious how this happened, they were able to rewind the DVR recording and see that another cow had hit the other and knocked it down.

With over 725 cows, a method of surveillance is vital to the animals’ success. Monitoring each cow’s health and milk production are all part of maintaining a healthy herd. Thanks to WRT’s broadband services, they are able to use RFID tags as “Fitbits” for their cows; tracking their temperature, heart rate, eating, and sleeping habits, all to ensure they are in good health.

“We care about our animals,” she said. “This is what we do day in and day out because we love it. We don’t look at our cows as money-makers. They’re an extension of our family.”

Of course, although they love their work, running a dairy farm at this scale can be exhausting. In the early years, without a way to monitor the farm, the family was unable to travel far from home. With the security cameras in place, the Holles are now able to ensure their bovine cameras is well cared for, even from abroad. Now, they’re able to check in on their cows from anywhere; trade shows, visiting family, even during a well-earned family vacation to Cancun.

“I got up in the morning and checked on all the baby calves through my phone. Andrew could go into the milking system and see what our milk production was like that day, and check on the sick cows,” Jennifer said. “All while sitting on the beach with a drink in our hand.”

Utilizing WRT’s technology is part of the Holles greater vision to create a successful and innovative dairy farm; one that puts animal care at the center and creates a safe environment for animals and employees alike.

“We rely very heavily on WRT and broadband. It really is priceless how much time we save by utilizing the security system,” Jennifer said. “If we didn’t have that kind of technology, we couldn’t be a successful farm.”

With how much technology has transformed the ag industry in the past decade, the Holles can only imagine what it will look like for the next generation. Already, their four kids — now 5th generation farmers — are learning a new, innovative way of farming. And while Jennifer never puts any pressure on any of them to one day take over their farm, she sees a particular affinity for the work in her 9-year-old son, Devon.

“He is his father’s shadow,” she said with a laugh. “He’s got the pens in his pocket, wears the same boots, and drives the payloader and the Bobcat.”

This is what Andrew and Jennifer love most — a business and lifestyle that allows them to grow, learn, and be together as a family while doing work that they love. They both know that no matter how technology continues to change the industry, the heart of why they do what they do remains the same.

“We do what we do because we love it. Come rain, snow, sunshine,” Jennifer said. “It’s hard to describe, because it’s so much a part of who you are. It’s not a job. It’s a livelihood.”

Learn more about BAND and how you can connect with WRT - your local BAND organization, at broadbandnd.com.
Welcome to BAND

A letter from Executive Director David Crothers

The story of North Dakota broadband across the state is one of the most remarkable stories in our history. Today, North Dakota regularly ranks in the top handful of states when measuring internet speeds and the percentage of people that have access to broadband services. One national publication even posed the question, “How did North Dakota become the crown jewel of the internet in the Midwest?” The answer is fascinating in its simplicity; it’s because of locally-owned broadband providers.

In 1953, local owners joined together to form an association to represent local interests. Working with policymakers in both North Dakota and Washington, D.C., they created an understanding of the importance vibrant communications networks have within our state. When founded, its name was the North Dakota Association of Telephone Cooperatives. Since then, it has evolved as the members, services, technology, but, most importantly, the needs of customers, have changed.

Today, we are known as the Broadband Association of North Dakota or “BAND.” This change reflects how we are no longer simply telephone companies, but are now state-of-the-art technology companies. Early on, BAND realized that success would be determined by the ability to prepare for the future. And they did just that. Members began to transition, offering new products and researching new communication technology. Now, a “telephone company” has become a “broadband company,” providing access to entertainment, opportunities, and a connection to the world.

In fact, it’s almost inconceivable, but the “telephone” services offered by BAND almost no longer exist. Today, customers’ wants and needs call for greater bandwidth in their homes to use streaming services, like Netflix and YouTube, which consume larger amounts of broadband. Phone services now make up a sliver of the traffic traveling through the broadband pipe to your home.

Unlike other states, in North Dakota, you likely receive broadband services from a local provider. BAND’s 18 members serve over 96% of the geographic territory across the state. Decisions regarding broadband networks that bring you services are being made in Park River, Hazen, Williston, and other local communities, not in a corporate board room in New York City.

For BAND and our member organizations, we see this local ownership as a unique strength. It’s how we are able to offer some of the fastest internet in the country. The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines high-speed broadband as “the ability to “download 4 megabits and send 1 megabit per second.” The Federal Communications Commission defines it as “downloading 25 megabits and sending 3 megabits.” Gigabit service is 1,000 megabits each way. Rural North Dakotans have access to speeds 250 times faster than the federally defined minimum.

And yet, despite that, North Dakota still experiences a “digital divide.” The digital divide exists when a state’s urban areas receive high-speed broadband funding and the rural areas receive virtually none, leaving rural areas with a lack of infrastructure to support new technologies.

In North Dakota, BAND is actively working to close that gap. In addition to advocating with policymakers in Congress to advance proposals that eliminate the digital divide, we are in the midst of completing the most ambitious technological build-out to deliver next-generation services across the state. We are committed to bringing gigabit-speed to every home, business, school, library, and government office we serve.

This effort is not cheap, easy, or some promise made for the future. It is happening now. Already, nine BAND members are 100% “fiber to the home.” Meaning, it doesn’t matter if you live in town or 30 miles outside its limits, you can have Gig service. Two more members will finish build-out this fall, another next year, and the rest within two years from now. North Dakota will be one of the most connected states in the nation.

The Broadband Association of North Dakota has changed over 70 years, but the guiding principals and promise to their customers remain the same. BAND continues to evolve as the needs of customers do, using the best technology available to give North Dakotans opportunities equal to anyone else in the world.
Welcome New WRT Members!

Please add the following new listings to your 2019-2020 WRT phone book printed by Northern Directory Publishers (NDP), as they may not appear in the current phone book. If you would like additional phone books, please contact WRT at 748-2211 or visit your local office.

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WRT is an equal opportunity provider & employer.

Let Us Help YOU!

Do you know of a local group, organization or benefit in the WRT area that is in need of financial assistance?

Thanks to many generous WRT employees who donate to wear denim on Fridays, special funding may be available to assist your local community group!

**SUBMIT YOUR DONATION REQUEST**
- Mail or Email -
**By November 15, 2019**

Mail to: WRT DENIM DAY REQUESTS, PO Box 467, Hazen, ND 58545
or Email to: michellep@wrtc.com

Note: Donations will be given out in early December.

Customers with disabilities affecting use of services, please contact WRT at 748-2211 or WRT@westriv.com. Assistance also available online at: www.relaynorthdakota.com &/or www.relaysd.com.
feeling a little behind? sluggish?

Look inside to Speed Up with WRT & SAVE $100