SOLUTIONS
FOR BUSINESS

Celebrating 30 Years at Guthrie County Veterinary Services

PANORA TELCO

Guthrie Center
communications

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No matter what kind of business you have, technology is a part of it.
These days, there aren't too many businesses without a website or high-speed Internet connection. We've grown to rely on technology for so many aspects of our work.

This issue of *Solutions for Business* takes a look at technology from several angles. On page 3, you'll learn why you may need to **Increase Your Internet Speed to Increase Productivity**. If it's been years since you've had an upgrade, it's time to reassess your Internet needs.
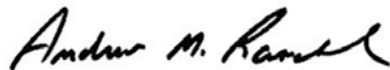
You'll find a **Business Spotlight on Guthrie County Veterinary Services** on pages 4 and 5. Located in Guthrie Center, this business has been serving clients and their animals throughout the area for 30 years. Guthrie Center Communications is pleased to help Guthrie County Veterinary Services with its technology, from selecting the right equipment and services to providing responsive tech support.

This issue also includes **Fiber is the Next Utility** on page 6, paired with an overview of our **FiberFast Internet Solutions**. Then on page 7, check out tips to help you **Work Less, Accomplish More**. That page also features an employee profile on **David Garland**, Data Network/Telecom Service Technician.

You know your business, and we know technology. Let us know how we can help make everything work together for maximum results.

Sincerely,

Andrew M. Randol
General Manager
Panora Telco & Guthrie Center Communications

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Increase Your Internet Speed to **Increase Productivity**

Bandwidth is vital for small business growth and competitiveness

Is your current Internet speed keeping up with the demands of your employees and customers? Ask yourself these questions:

- Does it take too much time for your staff to do online research or receive large files?

- Are your employees frustrated with the Internet speeds at your business?

- Do your customers have to wait on the phone while their account information is being loaded or transactions are being processed?

- Is your staff unable to effectively use video conferencing for collaboration?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, it may be time to consider increasing the speed of your Internet connection. But before you explore what a higher bandwidth would do for your business, it's important to understand the terminology.

What exactly is bandwidth? The term refers to how much data you can send through a network or modem connection. Bandwidth is usually measured in bits per second, such as 10 Mbps (10 million bits per second). You can think of bandwidth as a highway with vehicles traveling on it; the highway is the network connection and the vehicles are the data. The wider the highway, the more vehicles can travel on it at one time and the faster they get to their destinations.

The same principle applies to computer data — the more bandwidth, the more information that can be transferred within a given amount of time.

Many different businesses can reap rewards by upgrading to a higher-speed Internet connection. This is particularly true for businesses that fit these criteria:

- Conduct business at multiple (two to four) locations

- Leverage the Internet for 60 percent of their business operations or more

- Deploy 16 or more computers, including laptops and desktop machines

- Employ three or more employees

The bottom line is this: An increasing amount of business activity is now done online, and data-intensive applications require faster data speeds. If you want to stay ahead of your competition, you need to be traveling as fast, or faster, than they are. By equipping your business with more bandwidth, your employees can move data more quickly and efficiently, resulting in a better overall experience for your customers.

To find out more about the Internet options available to your business, call Panora Telco at (641) 755-2424 or Guthrie Center Communications at (641) 332-2000.

Guthrie County Veterinary Services

From cattle to cats, patients benefit from training and technology

In 2016, Guthrie County Veterinary Services will celebrate 30 years of service to this area of Iowa. It's a family business—owned by veterinarians Dr. Doug Frels and his wife, Dr. Donna Paglialunga—with occasional help from their son, William Frels, a veterinary student at Iowa State University. The staff also includes a Registered Veterinary Technician and Head Receptionist.

A Variety of Animals and Services

Located at 2305 Maple Avenue in Guthrie Center, Guthrie County Veterinary Services provides care to large and small animals. Dr. Frels notes, "We do about 50 percent of our business with large animals—cattle, swine, sheep, goats, alpaca, elk, and horses. In these cases, the patients often represent the client's livelihood. The other half of our work is with small animals, mostly dogs and cats which are cherished family pets."

A wide variety of veterinary services are offered, including:

- Diagnosis and disease treatment
- Dermatologic, orthopedic, ophthalmic, and obstetric evaluation
- Surgical procedures
- Dental treatment and procedures
- Preventative care and vaccine programs
- Boarding of dogs and cats is also available, with separate inside environments for each. Dogs also have access to a fenced-in grass area for exercise and play.

Technology Help from Guthrie Center Communications

Guthrie County Veterinary Services has been a customer of Guthrie Center Communications since 2005. David Garland, Data Network/Telecom Service Technician, notes, "In 2015, they approached Guthrie Center Communications to see if we could offer a solution to upgrade their office server and computers as well as assist in the upgrade of their veterinary office software. We reviewed the requirements for the software, taking into account the critical nature of that software in running their business. We designed a server based around several redundant components, which helped control costs."

Garland adds, "As part of the overall review and implementation, we discussed the Internet speeds needed by Guthrie Center Veterinary Services. We also reviewed their overall bill and worked to add the services required and delete the services that no longer made sense. As a result, they have a handle on monthly expenses and the right solutions for them."

Since that discussion in 2015, Guthrie Center Veterinary Services has purchased a server, laptop, desktop, AC

router, and laserjet printer from the Solutions Technology Experience Center. In addition, they currently use Internet, SecureIT Live, and voice services from Guthrie Center Communications.

Responsive Customer Support

Why was Guthrie Center Communications chosen as the provider for Guthrie Center Veterinary Services? Dr. Frels answers, "We've always tried to do our computer hardware business locally if possible, so we have local support when we need it. We use a commercial evolving practice management program, and when we did a major system upgrade, we needed assistance. DavId Garland from Guthrie Center Communications came over here, went through what we wanted to do, and came back with a proposal for the sale and installation of all the products. He was able to work with some technology we already had and upgraded other technology."

The responsiveness of a provider is a key criterion for Dr. Frels. He says, "We need someone to call who responds quickly. I know animals, but I'm not a computer guy. When we've had little glitches that we can't figure out ourselves, I just call David. Sometimes he can walk us through things over the phone, and if not, he comes over to our office to help. Guthrie Center Communications also assists with our software vendors to help resolve issues."

During the last year, Guthrie Center Veterinary Services started using a digital x-ray system. This increased the value of the fast and reliable Internet connection they get from Guthrie Center Communications. "We can instantly send patient x-rays to reference labs and specialists, including those at Iowa State University. We've never had an issue with our Internet from Guthrie Center Communications," notes Dr. Frel.

After 30 years in business, he attributes their success to several things: "We work closely with the Guthrie County community to understand our clients. We're also committed to consistently providing good veterinary services using state-of-the-art technology. Year after year, we do everything we can to keep our clients (and patients) happy."

> **"We've always tried to do our computer hardware business locally if possible, so we have local support when we need it."**
>
> —DR. DOUG FRELS, OWNER, GUTHRIE CENTER VETERINARY SERVICES

REST EASY WITH 24/7 TECH SUPPORT

We understand the challenge. Technology is absolutely vital to the running of your business, yet you may not be a techie yourself or have an IT person on staff. When something goes wrong with your communications services, simply call Panora Telco at (641) 755-8324 or Guthrie Center Communications at (641) 332-2225.

We offer free tech support around the clock, and we'll do everything we can to help you fix the issue and get your business back on track quickly. You can get assistance with your Internet, TV, or phone services, including troubleshooting, or request a service call.

To complement this support, your business can also choose to have SecureIT protection installed on your devices to help keep them safe from virus and malware threats. Ask us for more details.

Fiber
is the Next Utility

It's also a key to business growth, especially in rural areas

Our FiberFast Network Keeps Pace With Your Needs

As a customer of Panora Telco or Guthrie Center Communications, you can be connected to the world with our FiberFast network. It delivers the reliability and ultra-fast Internet speeds required for today's many online applications.

Regardless of the size of your business —from a small shop to a large corporation—we can provide the right FiberFast Internet solution. You'll have an Internet connection you can count on, and one that works in concert with your network. In fact, we'll help make sure your Internet and network are both working well. Ask us about these features:

- Unlimited use with no data/usage limits
- Connect all your devices
- No contracts
- Virtually unlimited speed options

Find out which FiberFast Internet solution is best for you. Call Panora Telco at (641) 755-2424 or Guthrie Center Communications at (641) 332-2000.

To understand the importance of building fiber networks, it's useful to look back at a couple of other life-changing infrastructure projects. By 1900, much of our nation's railroad system was in place; it cleared the way for the settlement of the West, provided new economic opportunities, and stimulated the development of communities. In the 1950s and 1960s, the new Interstate Highway System brought business to the towns it went through while towns far from the new faster roads struggled to survive. Today, fiber is becoming as essential to business growth, and everyday life in general, as railroad tracks and highways were in the previous century.

The huge impact of fiber is even more amazing when you consider just how tiny fiber is; each strand of glass is only about the size of a human hair. Fiber uses light to transmit data and is unique in its ability to transport virtually unlimited bandwidth over long distances. It's the only technology that delivers enough bandwidth — reliably and at a low enough cost — to meet the ever-increasing demand for more robust Internet, video, and voice services as well as other applications.

Why do we need all this bandwidth? Here are a few reasons:

- Businesses are making a massive shift to cloud services. For economic efficiency, their critical systems now operate at remote data centers rather than on-site computers. The speed, reliability, and security of fiber connections make cloud services viable.

- The American Telemedicine Association estimates there are now 200 telemedicine networks in the U.S., connecting over 3,000 institutions.

- Services such as distance learning and remote energy management are expected to grow considerably over the next several years.

When fiber networks come to smaller cities and rural communities, it helps level the playing field and close the urban-rural technology gap. Existing businesses can access the Internet speeds and reliability needed to expand e-commerce. Economic development organizations have an easier time attracting new businesses. And educational opportunities, once only found in large schools, can now be delivered to rural classrooms via online education.

Work Less,
Accomplish More

Technology makes it so easy to work. Just press a few buttons and you have all the tools to need. You can work from home, correspond 24/7/365, and take your work with you wherever you go. And that's a good thing, right? Maybe. Flexibility in your work schedule is clearly good. But the temptation, or even the compulsion, to work around the clock can sabotage the quality of your work and even be detrimental to your health.

Studies have shown that those who work longer hours are at greater risk for such conditions as high blood pressure, heart disease, depression, diabetes, general health complaints, chronic infections, and even death. Clearly, your health is one big reason to work fewer hours.

Another is that putting in more time isn't necessarily better. In fact, working fewer hours may actually make you more productive, since it forces you to prioritize, delegate, and improve your workflow. You may not realize you're regularly engaging in time-wasters — such as interruptions, unnecessary meetings, and preoccupation with personal tasks you don't have time to address — until you make a conscious effort to eliminate them. Turning off your "work brain" can actually provide just the refreshment you need to find solutions to work problems that have been plaguing you.

The bottom line is this: In many cases, working too many hours can become detrimental to achieving your business goals. Concentrate on working smarter, rather than working longer, and see how much farther you can go.

WHO'S MINDING YOUR BUSINESS?

David Garland
Data Network/Telecom
Service Technician

David Garland joined Panora Communications Cooperative and Guthrie Center Communications as Data Network/Telecom Service Technician in January 2014.

Garland says, "My primary responsibilities are to work with customers and businesses to assess their critical IT needs, and to design and support solutions that address those needs. This role includes support of Internet routers (enterprise and home), managed Ethernet switches, wireless access points, Windows Servers, and other related hardware and software. I also perform these same functions for our internal operations. What I enjoy most about my job is the constant variety of IT challenges I get to solve."

As life outside of work, he notes, "I'm a computer geek and have my own home lab of equipment. We're still trying to get settled into our house, but when I can get away from that 'honey do' list, I like to go camping with our travel trailer. I have one daughter in the local high school and another attending college. As for community activities, I'm an avid supporter of Girl Scout cookies. I'm also an Eagle Scout and am happy to help others with their Eagle Scout projects."