

Connections

FEBRUARY 2018



PANORA TELCO

114 East Main Street
Panora, IA 50216
(641) 755-2424
Online: www.panoratelco.com
Office Hours: M-F 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.



403 State Street
Guthrie Center, IA 50115
(641) 332-2000
Online: www.guthriecentercom.com
Office Hours: M-F 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
but closed 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. for lunch



HOW FAST INTERNET *Feels*

Does speed get your heart racing? Those thrills aren't limited to a snowy trail. Accelerate your internet speed at home this winter and save cold cash.

FEEL FASTER FOR FREE
Upgrade your internet speed FREE for 30 days.*

**CALL (641) 755-2424 OR
(641) 332-2000 FOR AN
INTERNET UPGRADE**

**Service availability and internet speed will depend on location. Contact us for details.*



Win a \$10 Bill Credit

What government agency is responsible for the rules and regulations regarding retransmission fees?

Answer: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Clip and return by March 31, 2018 to either Panora Telco, 114 East Main Street, Panora, IA 50216 or Guthrie Center Communications, 403 State Street, Guthrie Center, IA 50115.

Congratulations to Amy Johnson, the most recent Panora Telco winner; and Kay Phippen, the most recent Guthrie Center Communications winner.

One winner chosen at random per quarter. Contest open to Panora Telco and GCC customers age 18 and over. Applicants can win once per 12-month period. Other restrictions may apply.



Clean Out Your Computer Day

The second Monday in February is designated as Clean Out Your Computer Day. It was started in 2000 by the Institute of Business Technology.

Granted, this holiday doesn't exactly merit a party. But it's a good reminder to take care of some computer maintenance tasks you may be putting off. Over time, unused files and programs take up precious memory and can slow down your computer. So celebrate by doing the following:

- Clear off your desktop by deleting or archiving files you no longer need there.
- Organize your folders, files, and bookmarks.
- Uninstall programs you no longer use.
- Delete junk or duplicate files.

You may also want to carefully clean off your computer on this day using special products designed for this purpose. It's amazing how much better the screen and keyboard will look after a few minutes of wiping and dusting.

FTC Tells Secret to Avoiding Mystery Shopper Scams

A mystery (or secret) shopper is a person paid by a retailer to make purchases at a store and then turn in reports about the shopping experience. The retailer uses the information to guide decisions about pricing, product displays, staff training, and so on.

While there are legitimate secret shopper jobs available, scammers are also out there ready to take advantage of desperate job seekers.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) warns of an email offering "secret shopper" jobs with retailers like Wal-Mart, Kmart, Best Buy, or Home Depot. If you click through, it appears to be a retailer's site but is actually a lookalike site designed to fool you. You're asked to provide some personal information to get started and told you'll soon get a cashier's check for around \$1,500. Next, you're instructed to deposit the check into your account to "activate" your employment, keep \$300 as "advance payment" to cover initial expenses, and wire back the rest. The check is a fake, and if you deposit it, you're on the hook to pay the bank back any money you withdrew.

Follow these tips from the FTC to help you avoid a mystery shopping scam:

- **Do your research.** Most legitimate secret shopper jobs are posted online by reputable marketing research or merchandising companies. A quick internet search can help you verify the company's reputation and legitimacy or flag any complaints. Scammers like to use the names of well-known companies like Home Depot or Wal-Mart to gain your trust.
- **Never wire money to someone you don't know.** Wiring money is the same as sending cash. Once you send it, you can't get it back.
- **Never agree to deposit a check from someone you don't know.** If the check turns out to be fake, it will eventually bounce.
- **Never give your personal or financial information out online.** Guard your personal information and treat it as if it were cash. Do not enter your Social Security, bank account, or credit card numbers online or by phone to someone who gets in touch with you.

Scammers may be shopping for victims, but you don't have to become one of them.





Do You Know What These Acronyms Mean?

From time to time, you probably come across a series of capital letters that make no sense to you in a Facebook post, tweet, or text. So to help you out, we're listing the meanings of some of the most common acronyms used online.

- AFAIK** As Far As I Know
- AFAIR** As Far As I Recall/Remember
- BAE** Before Anyone Else
- BFF** Best Friends Forever
- DAE** Does Anyone Else, Did Anyone Else
- FTFY** Fixed That For You
- FTW** For The Win (indicating that something is extremely good)
- FWIW** For What It's Worth
- GG** Good Game, Good Going, Good Guy, Good Girl - usually used sarcastically
- HIFW** How I Feel When
- IANAL** I Am Not A Lawyer (disclaimer for when giving legal information)
- IDK** I Don't Know
- IIRC** If I Recall Correctly, If I Remember Correctly
- IKR** I Know, Right
- ILY** I Love You
- IMHO** In My Humble Opinion, In My Honest Opinion
- IMO** In My Opinion
- IRL** In Real Life (used to talk about something that is not online)
- MFW** My Face When
- MRW** My Reaction When; Me Right When
- NBD** No Big Deal
- NGL** Not Gonna Lie
- OMG** Oh My God, Oh My Goodness, Oh My Gosh
- OP** Original Poster (original person who posted the story)
- SMH** Shaking My Head
- TBH** To Be Honest
- TBT** Truth Be Told
- TIL** Today I Learned
- TMYK** The More You Know
- TYVM** Thank You Very Much
- TTYTT** To Tell You The Truth

As online communication evolves — and people keep looking for more writing shortcuts — the lexicon of acronyms will continue to grow. Along with emojis, these acronyms provide a way to express messages in the fastest, most efficient way possible.

Save With eBilling

Switching from paper billing to eBilling is a small change that yields big savings:

- **Save time.** Pay a bill online in seconds with your credit card or debit card.
- **Save money.** Cut back on the cost of checks and stamps.
- **Save trees.** Reduce paper use by receiving bills by email.

It's easy to get started with eBilling and go paperless. Call Panora Telco or Guthrie Center Communications today, mention this newsletter, and receive a one-time \$5 bill credit.



Prize Winners at Our Holiday Open Houses

Congratulations to these Holiday Open House attendees who won technology prizes. We hope you're enjoying them!

Winners:

- Mark Arganbright – Echo
- Carla Fitzgerald – Mobile device charger
- Lora Koch – Bluetooth speaker
- Bill Richey – Cordless phone set
- Bill Sparks – Echo



MSHS - Students in Mr. Druivenga's marketing class explain how the Padcaster works to Andrew Randol, Panora Telco CEO and General Manager. Pictured left to right are Alex Kurtz, Tanner Kuta, Emily Smith, Luke South, and Brooklyn Behrends.



Elementary - K-5th grade students are excited to try out the new Makerspace items. Shown with Andrew Randol, Panora Telco CEO and General Manager, are Kody Prince, Anthony Arbuckle, Ty Ratcliff, and Ines Perez in the front row; Eynn Stagg and Leah Kastner in the middle row; and Jaydan Wildt, Clayton Lestina, Karis Nunn, Jessica Randol, Elah Molloy, Treasure Moore, and Nerea Perez in the back row.

Panorama School District Thanks Us

We received kind words from the Panorama School District, thanking Panora Telco for supporting Makerspace programs that offer students more STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) opportunities.

THANK YOU to Panora Telco for their interest and support of the Panorama School District's Maker-space programs. Your donation allowed us to purchase:

- **A Padcaster mobile production unit for secondary students** – This lets them take their video/editing skills to a more professional level. Users will be able to shoot, edit and upload video on the fly using multiple mics, a wide-angle lens, teleprompter, and heavy-duty tripod on wheels.
- **Several items for elementary students** – They will learn about robotics and coding with Cubelets and a LittleBits Droid Inventor kit; use their imaginations with the Legos Simple Machine kits; create or retell stories with Bloxels, using computer science skills to turn ideas into interactive games on an iPad; and learn how to make stop-motion animation videos with the poseable Stikbot figures and mini green screen.

Due to Panora Telco's generous donation and support, we were able to purchase materials and equipment that will provide students with experiences they might not otherwise have.

MANAGER'S NOTE

2017 TV Negotiations and 2018 Annual Meeting

Every three years, Panora Telco is required by law to receive permission from local channels (ABC, CBS, FOX and NBC) to put their broadcasts on our TV lineup. We underwent this negotiation in 2017.

Many years ago, these channels were offered for free to companies such as Panora Telco to gain as many viewers as possible for advertising sales. In 2018, they will cost a combined \$15.00+ per month per customer and will go up in 2019 and 2020. While I mentioned negotiation above, there was very little negotiation involved. For the most part, it was a one-way street. Our choices were limited—either pay the rate a channel demanded or remove the channel from our lineup.

We tried to negotiate, using legal counsel which represented almost all the small, independent CATV operators in Iowa.

Yet not much movement was made on pricing or contract verbiage. Unfortunately, until the FCC changes the rules and regulations regarding retransmission fees, companies like ours will continue to face these challenges. We pledge to do our best to keep rates as low as possible, even when the cards are against us.

What else have we been doing? Find out at Panora Telco's Annual Meeting on March 19. It will be held at Panorama High School Auditorium, and registration begins at 6:30 p.m. with the meeting following at 7:00 p.m.

Andrew Randol
CEO and General Manager

