

Connections

MAY 2020

Before You Dig, Call 811

All sorts of utility lines, pipes, and cables could be buried on your property and easily damaged by even shallow digging. This can result in service interruptions to your entire neighborhood. Before you dig, call 811 to have utility lines marked. The affected local utilities will send a locator to your property, free of charge. Then you'll know what's below and be able to dig safely.

Win a \$10 Bill Credit

How many giant corporations own or control nearly 90% of today's TV networks?

Answer: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Clip and return by May 31, 2020 to
Guthrie Center Communications, 403
State Street, Guthrie Center, IA 50115.

Congratulations to Jordan Liggett, the
most recent winner.

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



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

Internet Speed Matters, But So Does Reliability

Discussions about what to consider when choosing an internet plan tend to focus on speed. That's certainly understandable, given that the more speed you have, the less time you'll spend waiting for big files to load or video buffering to stop. However, the way families and businesses evaluate internet service is evolving beyond just speed to also include reliability.

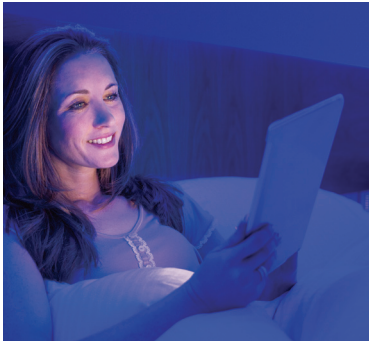
You can think of it this way:
Internet speed is like the speed
limit of a highway versus
the number of lanes and the
likelihood of roadblocks. How
valuable is the ability to travel
quickly if there's congestion and
unreliable conditions that often
hinder you from doing so?

For many businesses and
homes, internet access is nearly
as important as other utilities
such as electricity, natural gas,
and water. Having unreliable
internet is stressful and counter-
productive. If there's downtime,
businesses simply can't operate
in an efficient manner and productivity suffers. For families, unreliable internet can be an annoyance that occasionally prevents the enjoyment of streaming services and social media. For those who work from home, the consequences are more serious. It can severely limit the ability to complete projects and connect with colleagues.

You can rest assured that Guthrie Center Communications makes internet reliability a high priority. We've invested heavily in our fiber network, and we proactively monitor it to minimize service interruptions. The internet reliability you experience is further enhanced by the knowledgeable, professional support you receive from our local team of employees

For complete details about the reliable, fast, and affordable internet plans we offer, call (641) 332-2000 or visit www.guthriecentercom.com.





Top 3 Advantages of Streaming Services

Compared to traditional TV plans like satellite or cable, streaming services offer many advantages including these:

1. **Cost Savings** – Using streaming services usually ends up costing less than paying for satellite or cable TV. Hulu Plus, Netflix, and Amazon each cost only about \$10 a month, and many offer a free trial month so you can test out the service to see if it meets your needs.
2. **Bigger Variety of Content** – Streaming services maintain huge libraries of TV shows and movies you can enjoy whenever you want. Binge-watch shows, pick any movie of your choice, or spend an entire weekend watching documentaries if you want.
3. **Less Mindless TV Viewing** – Instead of turning on the TV to watch whatever is on or engage in aimless channel surfing, users of streaming service tend to turn it on to intentionally watch a specific show or movie. This can lead to less time being a couch potato and more time being active.

An essential companion to streaming services is a fast and reliable internet connection. For the latest on our internet speeds and pricing, call (641) 332-2000.

Anti-Robocall Measure is Signed into Law

The measure is called the Pallone-Thune TRACED Act, named for key proponents Rep. Frank Pallone, D-New Jersey, and Sen. John Thune, R-South Dakota. TRACED stands for Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence. It was created to take aim at the illegal robocalls and spoofed calls often used by scammers.

Under the TRACED Act:

- Phone companies over time must implement call-authentication technology to ensure the information that appears on Caller ID is correct. Consumers would face no additional line-item charge for the service.
- The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) within a year must ensure consumers are offered robocall-blocking services with no additional line-item charge.
- The FCC will have greater powers to deter violators with larger fines (as much as \$10,000 per call) and a longer statute of limitations.
- The FCC must tell the U.S. attorney general if it finds repeated robocall violations with an intent to defraud, cause harm, or wrongfully obtain anything of value. The aim is to step up criminal prosecutions by the Justice Department.

Certain robocalls remain legal, such as those from legitimate charities, and informational calls about school closures and the like.

Strategies for Maximizing Your Home's Wi-Fi Performance

Given how much you use your home's Wi-Fi network, you want the signals to be strong and reliable all over. If they're not, give these strategies a try:

- **Place your router in the most central location possible.** As you consider a central location, think top to bottom as well as side to side. In addition, don't put your router in an enclosed place.
- **Restart your router weekly.** Some router firmware is a little "buggy," and over time it gets slow. A simple restart often helps. Unplug your router, wait 30 seconds, and then plug it back in.
- **Get a new router.** Yours may not be built to accommodate today's faster internet speeds.
- **Buy a wireless range extender.** Routers typically broadcast Wi-Fi signals pretty well up to about 150 feet, beyond which the signal can get weak. For a large area, or if you have thick walls, a wireless range extender can boost your signal.

Want to leave Wi-Fi equipment decisions to us? Call (641) 332-2000 to sign up for Managed Wi-Fi service.

Remote Work is Working Well for a Growing Number of People

Working from home is expected to become more commonplace in the coming years. That's because remote work offers economic and social benefits including cost savings, improved work/life balance, and higher productivity. It's not just freelancers who work remotely, either. *The State of Remote Work 2018* found 58% of remote workers were company employees.

Do you currently work remotely or wish you could do so? You'll find these statistics interesting:

- **2/3** of employers report **increased productivity** for remote workers compared to in-office workers.
- **Remote workers** can **save \$7,000 a year** and employers up to \$11,000.
- Remote workers report **82% reduced stress**.
- **57%** of the **IT industry** in the U.S. is now remote.
- **50.9%** of the U.S. workforce, or 86.5 million people, could be **freelancing** by 2028.
- About **one in four Americans** are now **working remotely** on an occasional basis.
- The **10 most popular work from home positions** in America are accountant, engineer, instructor, writer, consultant, program manager, project manager, customer service representative, business development manager, and account executive.
- Gallup predicts **73% of employers** will have some **remote employees** by 2028.
- **1/3 of workers** would change jobs for remote work opportunities.
- **43% of remote workers** consider a **flexible schedule** to be the biggest benefit.
- Companies with female CEOs **were four times more likely** to offer **remote work opportunities** than those with men at the helm.
- **Less than one-third** of remote workers have a **home office**. Instead, **27%** say they work from the living room, **16%** from the bedroom, **13%** from the dining room, and **10%** from the kitchen.

Guthrie Center Communications can equip your home with a reliable high-speed internet connection to meet the requirements of remote work. We also offer a variety of phone and security solutions. To get details, call (641) 332-2000.

Sources: www.tecla.io/blog/2019-remote-it-workers-stats-companies-should-know, www.greatworklife.com/telecommuting-remote-working-statistics-trends



We've Been Named a Smart Rural Community Provider

NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association has named Panora Telco/Guthrie Center Communications as a Smart Rural Community Provider in recognition of our work to bring broadband-enabled advances to rural America.

Rural, community-based broadband providers across the United States are serving small towns with robust broadband networks to support critical and innovative solutions for their communities to create a brighter future.

To qualify for recognition as a Smart Rural Community Provider, Panora Telco/Guthrie Center Communications had to meet these requirements:

1. Offer 25/3 Mbps broadband to 50% or more of their service area;
2. Have broadband subscription rates of at least 50%, and;
3. Affirm their commitment to SRC principles of collaborative innovation.

Andrew Randol, General Manager/CEO, said, "It's an honor for us to be added to the list of Smart Rural Community Providers. This distinction reflects more than our company's fiber-rich infrastructure. It also pays tribute to our community partners who are using technology to help improve the lives of local residents."



Save Trees, Time, and Trouble by Using eBilling

You've probably heard many times that switching to eBilling is good for the environment by reducing paper use and saving trees. What you might not realize is just how beneficial eBilling is in other ways.

First of all, eBilling is much faster than paying bills the old-fashioned way by writing checks and mailing them. Secondly, replacing paper bills and statements with electronic versions allows you to reduce the flow of personal information from unsecured mailboxes, where it can be a target for identity theft.

Panora Telco offers free eBilling, which lets you receive your monthly bills from us by email and pay them online with your credit card or debit card. No need to worry about lost or stolen paper statements! You also have the option to choose Automatic Payment to have your payment automatically deducted from your chosen bank account each month.

To get started with eBilling and set up your account, simply visit www.guthriecentercom.com and follow the step-by-step instructions. If you have questions, call (641) 332-2000.

Feel Free to Check Out These Free Streaming Services

When you think of streaming services, the first names to come to mind might be Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Hulu. While these services offer hundreds of titles—including recent releases and original movies and TV series—they require you to pay a monthly fee. If you're watching your pennies but still want to watch great entertainment, consider free streaming services.

Keep in mind, however, that there are downsides. Most of these free streaming services are supported by ads, provide only regular HD video (not 4K), and will lack the selection of titles offered by paid streaming services.

Here are some popular options to consider:

Crackle (crackle.com) hosts a library of mainstream titles, including popular older TV shows and movies. Crackle has also been developing some of its own content.

Hoopla (hoopladigital.com) can be your ticket to free movies and more if you have a library card and your local library participates in this system. To get started, go to the site, create an account, then find your local library.

IMDb TV (imdb.com/tv) is Amazon's free, ad-supported streaming service powered by the IMDb movie and TV show database. It focuses on older movies and TV shows, plus IMDb programs such as celebrity interviews, documentaries, and coverage of film festivals and award shows.

Pluto TV (pluto.tv/on-demand) offers an impressive collection of modern movies and earlier-era classics as well as popular TV series.

Tubi TV (tubitv.com) has more than 12,000 titles, including selections from the libraries of Lionsgate, MGM, and Paramount Pictures, as well as Starz Digital.

Vudu (vudu.com) features a rotating collection of hundreds of popular old movies and TV shows. To access the free content, you need a Vudu account, but you don't have to provide payment information.

XUMO (xumo.com) offers live and on-demand streaming entertainment with over 190 different channels. You'll find options across a wide array of entertainment, lifestyle, news, pop culture, and technology content providers.

For the best streaming experience, you'll want high-speed internet. Call Guthrie Center Communications at (641) 332-2000 to find the right internet plan for you.

