

the NETWORK



Built by James Valley
Telecommunications

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Scholarship Winners

We are pleased to announce the winners of the three \$2,000 Bob Peterson Memorial Telecommunications Scholarships for 2026!

Congratulations to (left to right): Noah Felderman of Doland High School, son of Chad and Mati Felderman; Drake Peterson of Groton Area High School, son of Ben and Kristi Peterson; and Nathan Unzen of Groton Area High School, son of Jacob and Tiffany Unzen.

Any graduating senior whose parents or legal guardians are members of the cooperative could apply for the scholarships. The winners were selected based in part on an essay on the theme, "What innovation do you think will have the biggest impact in the next 10 years - and why?" Each winner's essay will be printed in a future issue of the Network.



Grand Giveaway Winner

Congratulations to Deb Sippel, who won a \$200 Visa gift card in our Grand Giveaway!

Wondering how to register? No problem, because there's no purchase or registration, just winners! Each month we randomly select one of our "grand" residential customers to win. Our next winner could be you!

Streaming Presentation

Join us Thursday, April 23, at 1:30 pm at the Aberdeen Area Senior Center to learn more about streaming services. Jeff Evenson is pictured below



at a prior training.

Streaming has become incredibly popular, with many people choosing

it over traditional cable or broadcast TV. According to the Pew Research Center, as of late 2025, streaming accounted for a record 47.5% of total TV viewing time, surpassing the combined viewership of cable and broadcast TV. Roughly 88% of U.S. households have at least one streaming subscription.

Things are changing, and it can be confusing to keep up! The presentation will cover what streaming is and why so many people have cut the cord, what streaming services are available, and how to choose what's best for you. There will be plenty of time for your questions after the presentation.

Phone Scams That Still Fool Millions

Phone scams come in many forms, ranging from robocalls to texts, but tend to make similar threats and promises, according to the Federal Trade Commission. Below are common phone scams that regularly target everyday people.

1. Business & Investment Scams

In this popular scam, the caller promises to help you start your own business or guarantees big profits from an investment. You'll be asked to provide funds -- and if you fall for it, you'll probably never see those funds again.

2. Impersonator Scams

A caller pretending to be someone you can trust, such a government agency, law enforcement officer, court official, family member, or business you recognize will ask you to provide financial or personal information to address some kind of fake problem.

3. Debt Relief and Credit Repair Scams

You'll receive an offer to have loans forgiven, lower your credit card interest rates, improve your credit score, etc. in this scam. You'll likely ruin your credit or lose money if you fall for this one.

4. Charity Scams

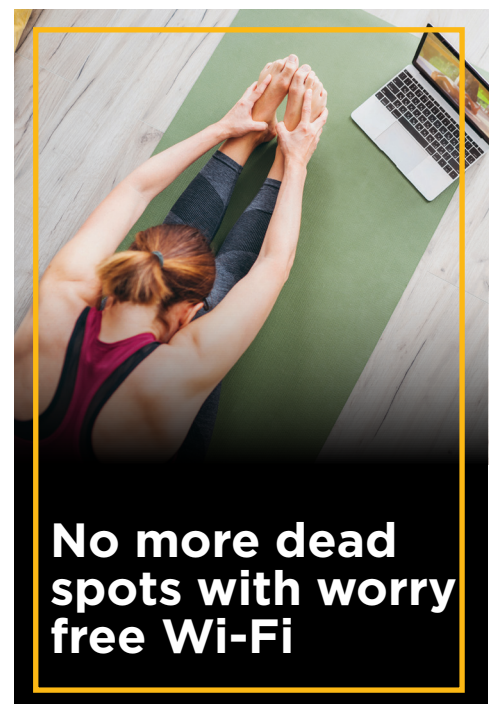
Here's another popular scam involving callers posing as real charities and asking for donations. Before handing over your money, take the time to vet the charity on your own and then donate through its official channels, such as an official website or app.

5. Prize Scams

In a typical prize scam, the caller will tell you that you've won a prize but need to pay taxes, registration fees or shipping charges to get it. If you get one of these calls, you can be sure it's a scam.

The best thing to do in each of these scenarios is to hang up and block the number. Do not trust the caller ID.

If you've lost money to a phone scam or have information about the company or scammer who called you, let the FTC know by visiting [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov). If you didn't lose money and just want to report a call, use the reporting form at [DoNotCall.gov](https://www.donotcall.gov).



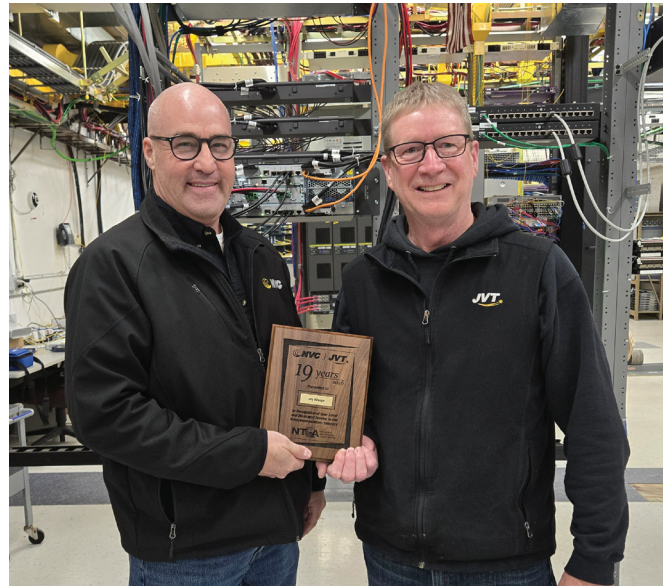
Jay Waage Retires

Jay Waage (below and at right with CEO James Groft) followed a family tradition in telecommunications when he began working part-time at JVT in 1986. Both of his parents worked in the industry, and his mother, Rose, retired from our billing department in 2001. A Groton Area HS graduate, Jay completed his studies at Lake Area Technical College in 1985. He gained valuable experience working for Northern Telecom, Venture Communications, and ITC before returning to NVC/JVT full-time in November 2006.



Throughout his career as a Network Operations Technician, Jay witnessed and adapted to major advancements in telephone switching technology, beginning with mechanical “stepper” switches in the early

1980s, transitioning to digital switching in the late 1980s, and eventually working with today’s soft switching systems. In fact, cutting the Metaswitch soft switch into service remains one of Jay’s favorite memories (along with working with a great group of



coworkers). Jay also set up and maintained routers, fiber-optic cables, and other critical equipment that kept internet and TV services running smoothly for customers every day.

As Jay enters retirement, he looks forward to tackling the “honey-do list” his wife, Jonna, has likely prepared, helping his kids with their projects, and spending more time watching his grandchildren enjoy their activities.

Jay’s dedication, technical expertise, and commitment to both his colleagues and our community have left a lasting impression. Thank you for your many years of service, Jay, and congratulations on a well-earned retirement!

SDTA Scholarship

The South Dakota Telecommunications Association (SDTA) is offering three scholarships: two valued at \$2,000 each and one at \$2,500.

The SDTA Scholarships will be awarded to students who have a High School Diploma or GED equivalent; are accepted into or attending a multi-year program degree at any accredited technical college or other accredited post-secondary higher education institution in South Dakota for the fall 2026 semester; are majoring in a degree/program or field of study that is useful in the

telecommunications or broadband industry or which significantly relies on the use of broadband services and related technologies. Applicants must be a member/customer or have a parent or legal guardian that is a member/customer of an SDTA member company. Previous SDTA Memorial Scholarship recipients are not eligible to apply.

The deadline to apply for the scholarship is April 17, 2026. The application and details can be found online at sdtaonline.com/sdta_scholarships.php

AAHS Sponsored Pet

As of printing deadline, our March Aberdeen Area Humane Society sponsored pet, Tazzle, is still available for adoption.

Tazzle is an almost 2-year-old DSH that came to AAHHS as a feral kitten who needed a lot of socializing. She's made great strides, but she's still very shy. She would do best in a quiet household with less commotion. She enjoys the company of another cat and would do best with a confident cat that can help her break out of her shell. One way to her heart is through wet food!

We donate \$250 to the AAHS if our sponsored pet is adopted during that month. Thank you to all who shared our post on Facebook! The AAHS is full of amazing animals waiting to find homes. Visit anewleashonlife.net to find your new best friend!



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