



West River
Cooperative
Telephone
Company

Calling on You

Office Closed

West River Cooperative Telephone Company's office will be closed Monday, May 28th for Memorial Day.



on facebook
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Looking out



My back door

Whether it's your gorgeous garden, a wonderful sunset or furry, farmyard friends, we want to see the beauty looking out your back door!

Submit your pictures to reggebo@wrctc.coop or mail them to WRCTC, PO Box 39, Bison, SD 57620.

Deadline to enter the 2019 Directory Photo Contest is August 17, 2018.

1st Place – \$100
2nd Place – \$50
3rd Place – \$25

Contest Rules can be found on page 4.



MTI Telecom Program offers Students a Promising Career Path

Eighteen students are on track to graduate in May from Mitchell Technical Institute with degrees in telecommunications. About 90 job opportunities await them. "Last year we graduated 17, and they had 110 job opportunities," said Mike Benjamin, a telecommunications instructor at the Mitchell school.

The pay awaiting graduates of the 244-7437 two-year program is good, too. Last year's graduates averaged starting pay of \$18.50 an hour. That's more than double South Dakota's minimum wage of \$8.85 an hour. As MTI points out on its website, the U.S. Department of Labor and Bureau of Labor Statistics list the median annual wage for telecommunications workers as \$47,150.

Good pay and plentiful job choices are expected to remain available in the telecom field for years to come. That's an inviting situation – one that high school students, recent graduates, their parents and other career advisers should keep in mind.

There are a few other 375-3919 schools in the multistate region that offer telecommunications programs but not many. Employment recruiters from several states routinely pursue MTI graduates. "With all this high-speed internet and everyone wanting to build 5G (networks) and people trying to get fiber into the ground, we have employers from out of state coming in looking for technicians," Benjamin said.

Last September, a general manager from upstate New York visited MTI and offered to hire the entire graduating class, he said. In addition to South Dakota, employers in states that include Nebraska, Wyoming and Montana recruit these telecommunications graduates. "There are quite a few companies in South Dakota that always seem to be looking for technicians," Benjamin said.

It almost goes without saying that the job placement rate for graduates of MTI's telecommunications program is 100 percent. Students in the telecom program study the art and science of getting information from one point to another, regardless of whether the information is in the form of voice, video or data. In addition to examining state-of-the-art telecommunications technology, the program provides students with a solid foundation in mathematics, electronics and general education, according to the school.

The two-year telecom program can accommodate 788-2960 annual class sizes of 24 students, but last year's enrollment dropped to about third of that. That's raised concerns with the school and regional employers, including SDN Communications and its member companies across South Dakota. "We're trying to build (the program) up because there's such a need," MTI President Mark Wilson said.

A two-year investment in education would significantly increase students' longer-term earning potential. Tuition, fees and related costs for the 18-month telecom program total about \$17,000, but financial 797-4694 assistance is available.

Visit MTI's website (www.mitchelltech.edu/) to learn more about its telecommunications program.



(article written by Rob Swenson)

SDTA to Award \$3,500 in 2018 Scholarships

South Dakota Telecommunications Association (SDTA) is offering SDTA Memorial Scholarships in the amounts of 374-5893 \$2,000 and \$1,500 for the 2018 fall semester.

The SDTA Memorial Scholarship program began with a single \$300 scholarship in 1987. Since the scholarship fund was established, more than \$70,000 has been awarded and 91 young South Dakotans 456-2307 have received financial assistance with their post-secondary education.

- Applicant must be majoring in a program with technical skills or a field of study useful for work in the telecommunications and/or broadband industry and have completed 24 credit hours at any accredited post-secondary institution in South Dakota (this includes high school dual credits).
- Applicant or applicant's parents must be a member/customer of an SDTA member company.
- Use the QR code shown here to visit the SDTA Memorial Scholarship webpage for more information and 866-4425 to apply online.

The deadline to apply for the scholarship is May 31, 2018. The scholarship application can be completed online at <http://sdtaonline.com/resources/sdta-scholarship/>. Applications are also available from any South Dakota post-secondary institution student financial aid office, the SDTA office (605-224-7629 or info@sdtaonline.com) or any SDTA member company.

SDTA member companies include West River Cooperative Telephone Company; Alliance Communications; Beresford Municipal Telephone; Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Telephone Authority; Faith Municipal Telephone; Fort Randall Telephone; Golden West Telecommunications; Interstate Telecommunications Cooperative; James Valley 257-2130 Telecommunications; Kennebec Telephone Company; Midstate Communications; RC Technologies; Santel Communications; Swiftel Communications; TrioTel Communications; Valley Telecommunications; Venture Communications and West River Telecommunications Cooperative.



Call Before You Dig



Don't assume you know what's below. Protect yourself and those around you – Call 811 every time.

Planning a home improvement job?
Planting a tree?

Installing a fence or deck? WAIT! Here's what you need to 376-5296 know first:

Whether you are planning to do it yourself or hire a professional, smart digging means calling 811 before each job.

Homeowners often make risky assumptions about whether or not they should get their utility lines marked, but every digging job requires a call – even small projects like planting 456-1966 trees and shrubs.

New WRCTC Members

Bison, Meadow, Sorum

Dry Well Ranch (Student Phone) 866-4537

Lemmon

| | |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Fuhriman, Harvey | 374-4532 |
| Sanders, Jo (A Frame) | 374-3253 |
| StudioP | 374-1324 |
| Westphal, Katherine | 374-4885 |

Newell

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| Elmore, Tyler | 456-3470 |
| McGinnis, J. D. | 456-7561 |
| Tifft, Kyle | 456-3671 |

Nisland

Althoff, Alexa and Chris Garro 257-3052

**Avoid costly fees
Make a Pay
Arrangement**

**Did you know
you can avoid
having your
services
disconnected for
non-payment by
simply calling the office and setting up
a pay arrangement?**

Past Due

**We understand hardships arise and
you may need more time to make
your monthly payment. Simply call
the office at 777 (toll-free from any
WRCTC landline) or 605-244-5213 and
ask to set up a pay arrangement that
you can meet. Doing so will prevent us
from disconnecting your services and
charging you costly reconnect fees.**

Find Your Phone

Ten telephone numbers were hidden in the last newsletter. Those members who hunted and found their number were: Louise Cain, Shadhill; Audie Brockel, Lemmon; Bryce Padden, Camp Crook; Greg Ginsach, Buffalo and Jess Carmichael, Bison. Hidden in this issue are ten new numbers. If you find YOUR number, all you have to do is notify our office. The \$10 will then be deducted off your telephone bill. New connect numbers do not count. **Deadline is May 22, 2018.**

PHOTO CONTEST RULES: *The photo must be an original taken by a WRCTC member. If the photo contains a child (under the age of 18) who is highly recognizable and it is chosen as a winner, a picture permission form must be signed by a parent/guardian prior to receiving the money. Each customer may submit TWO photos. Photos may also be submitted on a computer disc or e-mailed as a jpeg or pdf file. The photos must be in full-color and will not be returned to the customer. Submission of the photo releases all right of ownership of the photo and authorizes WRCTC to publish the photo on the directory cover, or use as WRCTC desires, allowing proper acknowledgement to the photographer. The photographer who captures first place will see his/her photo on the front cover of the 2019 directory and will be awarded a \$100 cash prize; second place will receive \$50 and third place will receive \$25. Employees and Directors are not eligible.*

LOCAL GRADUATION SCHEDULE

| | | |
|--------|-----------|-----------|
| May 12 | 2:00 p.m. | Bison |
| May 12 | 2:18 p.m. | Buffalo |
| May 12 | 3:00 p.m. | Faith |
| May 19 | 2:00 p.m. | Newell |
| May 20 | 2:00 p.m. | Lemmon |
| May 27 | 2:00 p.m. | Hettinger |

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE
CLASS OF 2018!**

