

www.gbta.net
Help Desk: 785.372.4236



The Connection

A Monthly Newsletter for the GBT Communities and Patrons

Rush Center Office

103 Lincoln St. • Rush Center, KS 67575
785.372.4236
Hours: 8:00am - 5:00pm
| Mon-Fri

Ellis Office

101 W. 9th • Ellis, KS 67637
785.726.3200
Hours: 8:00am - 5:00pm | Mon-Wed-Fri
Closed for lunch 12:30pm-1:30pm

Ness City Office

114 W. Main
Ness City, KS 67560
785.798.3100
Hours:
8:00am - 5:00pm
Mon-Fri

Larned Office

122 W. 5th
Larned, KS 67550
620.910.7676
Hours:
8:30am - 11:30am &
Noon - 4:30pm
Mon-Fri

St. John Office

602 N US Hwy 281
St. John, KS 67576
620.377.5555
Hours:
11:00am - 5:00pm
Mon-Fri

Merry Christmas!



**GBT STORES WILL BE
CLOSED ON CHRISTMAS
EVE, DEC. 24th**
and will close on New Year's
Eve, December 31st.

Emergency Broadband Benefit - Helping Families Connect During the Pandemic

The Federal Communications Commission launched this temporary program to help families and households struggling to afford Internet service during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing a discount up to \$50 per month toward broadband service for eligible households. A household is eligible for the EBB if:

- (1) it qualifies for the FCC Lifeline program
- (2) it receives benefits under the free and reduced-price school lunch program or the school breakfast program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision, or did so in the 2019-2020 school year
- (3) it received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year
- (4) it experienced a substantial loss of income since February 29, 2020 and the household had a total income in 2020 below \$99,000 for single filers and \$198,000 for joint filers;

Eligible households can enroll through www.getemergencybroadband.org. The recently passed Infrastructure Bill included a permanent "Affordable Connectivity Program" to replace the EBB. The discount will be up to \$30 per month toward broadband service beginning in 2022.



You can learn more about the benefit, including eligibility and enrollment information, by visiting www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit, or by calling GBT at 785-372-4236.

Capital Credit Checks

As many of our customers know, for those that live in one of GBT's 18 telephone exchanges and have subscribed to or currently subscribe to traditional telephone service, you are a member owner of the Golden Belt Telephone cooperative. Many of our customers know that by being a part of the cooperative, you have a vested interest in the company and get to vote on the 7 Board of Directors who represent the area exchanges. The Board of Directors has retired \$1.4 Million in capital credits which have been paid back to our cooperative members in 2021. Capital Credit checks were issued and mailed back to qualifying members the week of November 22nd. Beau Rebel, General Manager of GBT, stated "It is always a goal of the Board and our staff to make decisions and operate our business with the interests of our cooperative members in mind. We are pleased to pay out capital credits back to our members for the 33rd year in a row." If you have questions about capital credits, please contact us at customerservice@gbtlive.com.

Follow Us
on Social Media





From our crew to you, thank you.



Our customers are the best, and we don't take that for granted. It is a joy and honor to bring state-of-the-art communication services to you. *From the bottom of our hearts, thank you!*

*To express our gratitude, we're giving all **new customers 1 month free of Internet**, and all **existing customers a 3 month free Internet upgrade** this holiday season.*

*1 month of free Internet available for NEW GBT Internet customers only. Current customers must call in and speak to a GBT representative or fill out a form at www.gbt.net/promopage to receive a 3 month free upgrade. May not be available in all areas. Certain restrictions apply. Offer expires 12/31/21.

YOU HAVE A VERY SPECIALIZED JOB, HOW DID YOU GET TO THIS POSITION AT GBT?

I'm going on 25 years with GBT as Construction, but I've been learning about Construction since I was 10 years old, and around the telephone and broadband Industry for over 50 years. My dad used to do what I am doing and contracted out work for local technology companies. When it came time for my dad to retire, I decided to not take over the business and went to floral school with plans to open a flower shop in La Crosse. Gerald Washburn, GBT's General Manager at the time, stopped me and gave me an opportunity at GBT that was too good to pass up, and I have been here ever since.



WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO NEW GBT EMPLOYEES OR NEW HIRES ANYWHERE IN THE WORKFORCE?

Don't cut corners, because it will eventually show up on you. Take a little time and do it the right way the first time, because it affects everyone else. I've had less than a handful of cuts over the past 25 years, and that's because I've done this. I think this applies to all lines of work.

“Don't cut corners, take a little time, and do things the right way the first time.”

WHAT MAKES YOU PROUD TO WORK FOR GBT?

I'm most proud about working with a good group of people.

FAVORITE HOBBIES OUTSIDE OF GBT?

My wife and I like to travel and have been all over the world. I also like riding my bike, camping, and spending time with my grandkids.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT:
GERALD





Do you have fast Internet? Do you have great Wifi?

It's Christmas time, which means many of you will be introducing more Internet-connected devices to your home. It can be challenging to buy something that doesn't need the Internet to make it work, including TVs, gaming devices, cameras, appliances, and exercise equipment to name a few. So, what does your home need to ensure you can make these devices work and function at their optimal performance?

The two biggest factors impacting your Internet-connected devices and how enjoyable your experience is include: 1) how fast your Internet connection is; and 2) how good your wifi is throughout your entire home. A quick google search of "what is fast Internet" offers many links and articles saying Internet download speeds of 100Mbps or higher are considered fast Internet. Just three years ago in 2018, 25Mbps was considered by many standards to be fast Internet. So why does Internet speed matter and why does the Internet speed that you used to have possibly not work any longer?

The amount of Internet speed (also known as bandwidth) is a set speed depending on what your home subscribes to. If you are using more bandwidth than what you are subscribed to, you will experience buffering or appearances that your Internet is not working at all. When you don't have enough bandwidth, at times devices fight each other and lock up or appear to quit, which then causes user frustration!

The number of Internet-connected devices in homes today has generally led to a need for faster Internet. Pair that up with how information is now delivered, and you are looking at even more bandwidth usage! If you notice, companies have gotten very clever at implementing video in everything they deliver to you over the Internet. Humans are more attracted to video than reading articles (like this), which means there's a greater chance the video will catch your attention. Videos use constant and much more Internet bandwidth than reading an article with just text.



What Internet speed does your home or business have today? Your GBT Invoice lists the download and upload speed you are subscribed to. We also are proud to say over 90% of our customers can receive 100Mbps or faster! If you want to try a faster Internet speed, now is a great time to take advantage of our Christmas offering: upgrade your connection and pay the same price as you're paying now for 3 months! The second factor that affects your Internet experience is your wifi connection or coverage. Long gone are the days where you have 1 desktop computer plugged into the router and that's your only device connected to the Internet. Today, most homes don't even have a device connected via hardwire and utilize the Internet all through wireless connections. Routers and the wireless coverage they provide continue to improve. If your router does not have AC or AX (Wifi 6) technology, you really need to look at upgrading your equipment. Outdated routers that are not supported or don't have the latest security patches can open your home up to cyber vulnerabilities as well.

Sometimes a router isn't enough to cover your entire home or business. If you have cameras on the outside of your home, or TVs, laptops, and other connected devices in the outer rooms or far away from your router that don't seem to function properly or are always buffering, it might be time for an access point. An access point can help broadcast wifi coverage out further, reaching areas that your router can't. If you have an old router or would like to extend your wifi coverage further, GBT has a great solution in our Managed Protection offering which includes Wifi 6 technology, automatic security updates, and the ability to add additional access points, increasing your wifi coverage. Contact GBT today at 785-372-4236, customerservice@gbtlive.com, or www.gbta.net to help you get the best user experience for your Internet-connected devices this holiday season!



GBT Directories are here!

Within the next couple of weeks, our cooperative members will receive a 2022 GBT directory in the mail. This year's cover photo is compliments of Debbie Stiawalt. Once again this year's directory has a peel-off magnet on the back of the book with GBT's contact information, so be sure to look for that and put it on your fridge for a quick reference to contact us. GBT also offers an online directory lookup on our website at www.gbta.net.



GBT Hunting

Ronda Fondoble won a \$10 bill credit from GBT just for playing November's Hunting Game! There were 14 Fiber Optic Cables in the November Issue.

Count this
one too!



It's time to count... throughout this issue of the Connection there are TV Remotes. Can you count them? When you find them all, e-mail us by the 10th of the month at gbthunting@gbta.net with the total number of TV Remotes, and you will be entered into a drawing to win a \$10 bill credit on your next GBT bill!

If you have questions or comments about this newsletter or any of our services, please email us at marketing@gbtlive.com

Kyle Bahr, Editor
Kara Jecha, Editor
Addison Flax, Graphic Design

TV Network Prices - Onward and Upward

The landscape of television keeps changing, but the one constant is rising prices. GBT works hard to bring you the shows you enjoy at a reasonable price, but it's a challenge with 8 Media Giants (Disney, Warner, NBCUniversal, Discovery, Viacom, Fox, A&E Networks, AMC Networks) controlling 90% of the Market. Network negotiations result in a "take it or the channel will go dark" scenario, and the multi-year agreements include incremental price increases for each year of the agreement. Couple this with skyrocketing sports programming rights, and there seems to be no limit on network programming prices (check out www.tvonmyside.com for more information).

Our January 2020 newsletter article, "A Decade of TV" stated "With no end in sight in what programmers charge for TV content, we anticipate seeing more of a trend of programmers launching their own direct-to-consumer applications." This is evident in the ever-increasing number of streaming apps available today (e.g. Disney+, Peacock, discovery+), with many having exclusive content you can only see in the app rather than the traditional network channel. Did you know in 2022, all Thursday night NFL football games will be on Amazon Prime?

Although GBT has not received the confirmed rate increases from the programmers which are still in "negotiations," we anticipate 2022 programming rates will increase an average of 10-12%. GBT wants you to know, like the last several years, we will only be passing on the rate increases we incur from the programmers. If you have any questions about your television programming or any other GBT services, please contact us at 785-372-4236 or email customerservice@gbtlive.com.

Cheesy Chicken Noodle Soup

The comforts of chicken noodle soup - only better when you add cheese and bacon!

Ingredients:

- 3 cups chopped cooked chicken
- 1 (10.75-oz) can condensed cheese soup
- 6 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup milk
- 2 stalks celery chopped
- 2 carrots thinly sliced
- 1 (1-oz) package Ranch Seasoning Mix
- ½ cup cooked chopped bacon
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 8 oz dried fine egg noodles uncooked

Directions:

1. In a large stockpot/Dutch oven, combine cooked chicken, cheese soup, chicken broth, milk, chopped celery, sliced carrots, Ranch Seasoning Mix and bacon.
2. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to simmer and cook for 20 to 25 minutes, until vegetables are soft.
3. Stir in dried noodles and shredded cheddar cheese. Cook for 5 minutes, until noodles are soft. Store in the refrigerator or (for longer storage) in zippered freezer bags in the freezer.



PHONE



TV



INTERNET



COMPUTERS



BUSINESS
TECHNOLOGY



SECURITY



WIRELESS

