

the Wheat Belt Connection

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OCTOBER 2019



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OCTOBER 19
11:00 AM TO 8:00 PM

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Wheat Belt Connection

Editor
Pam Wieser

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Drawing Winner

Yolanda Hruska

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Covalt, our "Lucky Winners" for the month of August. The Covalts, of Morrill County, have been Wheat Belt customers for over 50 years! They received a \$50 credit for their prompt payment.

If you would like to be included in our next drawing, and avoid the \$5 delinquent fee, please send your payment before the 15th of the month. For your convenience we offer several options. Please give us a call or visit wheatbelt.com and select the Customer Services menu.



Help the Committee Make this 8th Annual Event
a Huge Success



JOIN US AT THE TRUCK OR TREAT

LOCATED
AT HICKORY
SQUARE IN
SIDNEY

OCTOBER 31
4:00 PM TO 6:00 PM

Quotes to Ponder

"Try not to complicate your life anymore than it already is. Sometimes it takes more strength to let go than to hold on. Let it go!"

Unknown

"Your direction is more important than your speed."

Richard L. Evans

"I can't understand today's generation. Don't they understand if work was all fun, you would have to pay to go."

Unknown

"A breaking point, may also be a turning point."

Unknown

"There is only one thing more precious than our time, and that's who we spend it on."

Leo Christopher

"It won't be long until black friday. Instead of material things, why not give the gift of your presence, like at the Thanksgiving dinner. Just say no to Thursday shopping!"

Unknown

"If your compassion does not include yourself, it is not complete!"

Jack Kornfield

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Tim Lindahl
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Tim's Tidbits

BROADBAND UPDATE



Modern Society is built on an evolution of foundational technologies that allow it to flourish and progress. Every few decades, a new foundational technology emerges and becomes critical to communities trying to keep up. We have seen a new technology emerge in the last twenty years with the rapid development of the internet, and more recently, the need for a high-speed connection to the internet, commonly known now as broadband. Even the very definition of broadband evolves. The speed in which data is transmitted over an internet connection to an end consumer is measured in megabits per second (Mbps). The current Federal Communications Commission's definition of broadband is a connection that can transmit 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload. This was revised from 10 Mbps a few years ago.

We typically see high levels of expansion and adoption of technologies in the urban areas first and later, a migration to the rural areas. Primarily, cost and profitability become the drivers for the urban expansions. Many times, there needs to be a catalyst to help keep our rural areas on par with our urban counter parts, and the catalyst does not always need to be funding. Broadband has become the latest societal foundational technology that is lagging in our rural areas, and especially in Nebraska.

Community vitality is becoming increasingly

Broadband has become the latest societal foundational technology that is lagging in our rural areas.

important to the rural parts of our state. In order to maintain our vitality, we need economic drivers, both from agriculture, business, and industry. We also need an edge to be able to attract and retain our population to help drive the industries. One good way to survive as a business is to find efficiencies, many times utilizing the tools that could be available. With the rapid development of Internet of Things (IoT) devices, the science of utilizing data, and the ability to communicate and learn from others make broadband a key foundation to the future of our rural areas. To help solve this "digital poverty" before it sets in and to help maintain our competitiveness as a state and as a community, there are several initiatives looking at the challenges.

The Nebraska Unicameral passed and Governor Ricketts signed LB 994 in 2018 which established a rural broadband task-force, bringing together a wide variety of people to take a hard look at how to keep us on pace. I was fortunate to be appointed to the task force to represent the public power industry in Nebraska. If you wish to see more information on the history and progress of the task-force, you can find it at ruralbroadband.nebraska.gov. We have been meeting since late 2018, and have several subcommittees that are addressing various components of the broadband challenge. We will be creating a report for the Unicameral by November of this year.

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Tim's Tidbits

Broadband Update Continued from 14-C

There will be a legislative hearing set for early December to address the report. We will produce a draft report around September 26th and accept public comment until October 10th, with completion of the report on October 18th. Since this is such a significant community issue, I am always happy to listen to ideas on how we can move this initiative forward, in the most economic and efficient manner possible. As a community, and especially as a business community, we all rely on each other for the success of each other. This foundational technology is something that we all will benefit from and can give our community the edge in remaining vibrant.

There is another initiative in Nebraska looking at how we can improve as a state. Blueprint Nebraska, blueprint-nebraska.org, is a grass-roots plan to improve our economic standing as a state. One of the top items identified in the Blueprint Nebraska plan is the need for rural broadband. I would encourage you to engage with this initiative so that we can keep and improve upon our success as a state.

Having a robust communication network will be a necessity, in the near future. Access to this communication is only part of the challenge. The remaining challenge is doing it in an affordable way. As we move forward, we need to improve on the data of what is actually available. We have partnered with the University of Nebraska at Kearney to conduct a study of broadband speeds in Nebraska. In the near future, we will be conducting the study in and around Sidney. If you are willing to be a part of the study, please watch for future announcements.

We can all continue to work together to make our communities better. Finding projects, such as broadband, that benefit us all allow us to overcome the challenges and improve our way of life.

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P O Box 177, Sidney, Nebraska
Serving parts of Cheyenne, Deuel, Morrill, Garden, Arthur and Keith Counties

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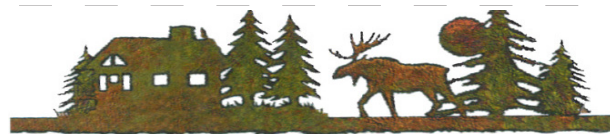
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