

## The Backbone of the Cooperative

*BEK Communications Cooperative is a business owned and governed by its primary users, the member-owners. In a cooperative, the Directors are democratically elected by members whose votes are equal (one-member, one-vote).*

Cooperatives have a 5,000 year history dating back to the ancient Egyptian craftsman associations. BEK Communications Cooperative has been a part of this rich democratic heritage for 56 years. BEK operates much the same way as legislatures of democratic governments in that the cooperative's elected board is accountable to the members.

Member-owners of BEK rely on the Board of Directors to safeguard the cooperative's resources, which include plant facilities and equipment, financial assets and human resources. In setting board policies for telco management, the directors serve as a vital link between the cooperative, member-owners/consumers, employees and the community at large. Member-owners can expect and have the right to information about the status of the telco's resources and the use of these resources to provide services to the community.

BEK has had the privilege of being governed by hard-working, dedicated directors who have collectively given years of service to the cooperative. It is important for us to plan for the continued succession of our Board of Directors. Providing for a cross-section of community interest on the board can help ensure sound leadership for the cooperative into future generations.

In 2009, director elections will be held in District II, District III and District IV.

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## Dates to Remember

- | January 1  
New Years Day 2009
- | January 2  
January Bills Mailed
- | January 12  
Disconnect Day
- | January 15  
Common Cents Grant Applications Due
- | January 19  
Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- | January 20  
Reminder Notices Mailed  
Inauguration Day
- | February 2  
Directory Cover Photo Contest Deadline

**BEK Communications  
Office CLOSED for Holiday  
January 1, 2009**





Imagine if you could create a personalized newspaper loaded with the type of news you like to read. You can!

Countless websites have a little known feature called RSS. The most common definition of RSS is "Really Simple Syndication." Enough jargon, let's talk benefits.

When you surf the Internet, you "pull" content from websites into your web browser. It can be time consuming. RSS helps selected websites "push" content to you. You spend a little time upfront choosing which sites to take, then sit back and wait for the news to accumulate.

So how do you corral all the information you want? You use something called a news aggregator. An aggregator is a computer application that pulls information from a variety of RSS feeds. A simple aggregator can be found at [bloglines.com](http://bloglines.com).

The great thing – it's FREE!

Bloglines.com will walk you through setup. It is a web-based application, so there is no need to mess with software. Plus, you can access your news feeds from any computer with an Internet connection.

To check for fresh news, simply log-in. New content will display with a headline and a short snippet of the article. A simple mouse click will bring up the full story. Once stories are accessed, they will automatically delete unless you opt to save them.

It is a quick and easy way to keep informed. So if your time is valuable, a news aggregator is worth a test drive.



# Universal Service and You

*Did you know that no matter where you live, one of your legally protected rights as an American is access to affordable telecommunications?*

Our nation's telecommunications laws embrace the philosophy that all Americans, both urban and rural, are entitled to quality telecommunications services that are comparable in price and scope. A cornerstone of achieving this goal and delivering on this promise to the American people is the Universal Service Fund.

Our telephone company uses Universal Service Funds received from the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) to build, maintain and upgrade our telephone networks to provide you with the latest technologies available at affordable rates. Supporting the principles of universal service ensure that all communities can connect to the rest of the world.

BEK Communications is a member of the North Dakota Association of Telephone Cooperatives (NDATC) and the National Telephone Cooperative Association (NTCA). Both NDATC and NTCA diligently lobby on your behalf to keep the Universal Service Fund in tact which will help ensure our future of a solid and affordable nationwide communications network.\*

As Congress continues to rewrite the nation's telecommunications laws, our company will advocate to ensure the goal that universal service is protected.

\* To read more about how NDATC and NTCA have been working for you and your cooperative, visit [www.ndatc.com](http://www.ndatc.com) and [www.ntca.org](http://www.ntca.org) and check out their featured articles and testimony on Universal Service Fund (USF).

## Claim Your Cash

*Listed below are the names of BEK Communications Cooperative members or former members who had capital credit checks mailed to them in June 2008. These capital credits have been retired, but the checks have not been cashed.*

Maybe the check was set aside to cash at a later date, or it was forgotten. Perhaps you simply did not receive the check that was issued to you. If your name appears on the list below, you have some extra cash coming to you! Please call BEK today at 1-888-475-2361 to claim your money.

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Anderson, Robert W                    | Lubitz, Robert & Marcia                     |
| Barth, Jeff & Vickie                  | Mehlhoff, Blaine & Joy                      |
| Baumiller, Arnold & Carole            | Minard, Michael & Billie                    |
| Brandner, Martin & Evelyn             | Mycogen Plant Sciences, C/O Allen Soderfelt |
| Breidenbach, Amy M                    | Piatz, Simon & Ann                          |
| Burian Harvesting, C/O Kenneth Burian | Simmons, Rex & Betty                        |
| Campbell, Stacy                       | Stramer, Douglas W                          |
| Clark, Duane G                        | Svalen, Del & Arleen                        |
| Commnet Cellular Inc.                 | Ternes, Gary D                              |
| Cook, Ron & Pam                       | Tillotson, Steven                           |
| Feist, Ronald                         | Vander Vorst, Tim & Pam                     |
| Fischer, Mary and Dale                | Vander Vorste, Larry & Marilyn              |
| Gunia, Michel & Terry                 | Vetsch, Phillip                             |
| Herr, James A                         | Weiser, Kent & Bernice                      |
| Hulm, Gerald & Cathy                  |   |
| Jangula, Brian & Terri                |   |

## Seeking Director Nominations

To accomplish our cooperative's mission, BEK needs your involvement. We rely on members to nominate and elect directors with sound business sense and vision. Their vision to shape the cooperative's future five, ten and twenty years ahead is a road map for the general manager who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the cooperative.

If you think you might be interested in guiding the success of BEK as a director, now is the time to make your decision. The Nominating Committee will be selected in December and they will make their nominations (in February 2009) for director candidates. From these candidates, the member/owners will elect directors from District II, District III and District IV at the BEK Communications Cooperative Annual Meeting on June 11, 2009.

Do you want to help make your cooperative the best that it can be? Then we want to hear from you. Be sure to express your interest in being nominated for director for District II, District III or District IV to one of the Nominating Committee members. These individuals will be selected in December and announced in local newspapers and the February BEK Beacon.

## Do you meet these qualifications to be nominated as a director?

- ⇒ You are a cooperative member and have telephone service in your name.
- ⇒ You reside in the district from which you are nominated.
- ⇒ You are not employed or financially involved in a competing business.
- ⇒ You recognize the need for cooperatives to serve rural America.
- ⇒ You are willing to work to further the cooperative.
- ⇒ You are willing to spend at least 12 days a year and up to 20-30 days per year away from personal business to conduct cooperative business.
- ⇒ You are willing to be responsible for directing \$58,000,000 in assets of the cooperative.
- ⇒ You are a good communicator.

## Way BEK When...

BEK is in its sixth decade of operation. Come along with us as we journey back in time to explore the historic events of our country and coop "Way BEK When."

The 1950's is referred to as the rebuilding decade from World War II. Rebuilding came in many forms. Concerned farmers in south-central North Dakota met to discuss rebuilding a broken down telephone network. With low interest REA loans approved in an amendment to the 1935 Rural Electrification Act, the dream of telephone service to rural areas was becoming a reality.

Nine months after Dick Clark made his debut appearance on ABC television with "American Bandstand," a cooperative in North Dakota was born. The Articles of Incorporation were signed for BEK Telephone Mutual Aid Corporation on October 3, 1952 at the Kidder County Courthouse.

In 1953, 27 year old Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain was crowned, the Korean War ended and the BEK Board secured loans to bring telephone service to 529 subscribers in rural areas.

In 1954, BEK acquired its first formal telephone property through the purchase of the Hazelton exchange. This purchase made BEK the first cooperative in our state to complete such a negotiation. What an incredible victory! As Willie Mays was voted MVP in the National League, our cooperative was making some pretty spectacular plays as well! BEK President George Jackson attended the organization meeting of the National Telephone Cooperative Association (NTCA) in Washington, D.C. There, BEK had the honor of receiving NTCA Membership Certificate No. 1.

What excitement and trials lie ahead for this start up cooperative... many adventures were coming; many obstacles as well. In the background, the American Civil Rights Movement is building momentum and a nineteen year old southern boy named Elvis (destined to be the King of Rock and Roll) reassures us all with his first produced song, "That's All Right, Mama."

Coming next month...1955-1959.

## Non-Discrimination Statement

BEK Communications Cooperative is the recipient of Federal financial assistance from the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is Derrick Bulawa, Chief Executive Officer of BEK Communications Cooperative. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from and/or file a written complaint with this organization or write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S. W., Washington, D. C. 20250-0703, or call (800) 787-8821 (voice) and select Option 2, or (202) 692-0107 (TDD). "USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender".

## Protecting Your Privacy

In December, 2007, BEK began implementing its new Privacy Practice rules for Customer Proprietary Network Information (CPNI). As mandated by the FCC, BEK increased its security measures to protect the customer's personal information or CPNI. As a BEK customer, it is important that you set up authorized account contacts and a password for your account if you have not done so already.

Without this information on file, BEK is not able to discuss specific information with you regarding your account. This may cause some frustration. BEK would like to avoid any inconvenience to you, so we ask that you take control over how your account will be handled when you contact BEK with questions or changes to your account.

Here is how BEK handles calls and personal contacts:

When you, or an authorized contact, stops by our office or calls us to receive or discuss information on your account, we ask for a photo ID or a password that has been previously supplied by you or other authorized contacts listed on your account. If you are the only person listed on your account, you are the only one that can call to discuss or change your information with BEK. For example, your spouse will not be able to receive information unless they are listed on the account. Also, every time a change is made to your records or certain information is accessed (i.e., address changes, password changes, security questions utilized, etc.), you will receive a letter in the mail to notify you of such changes or access to your account.

If you have any questions about CPNI, authorized account contacts or account passwords, please call our office at 1-888-475-2361 and we will be happy to assist you.

## NEW MEMBERS

- | Linton  
Bosch Kayla..... 254-4111  
Himmerich K ..... 254-4238
- | McKenzie - Menoken  
Johnson Daron ..... 673-1644
- | Napoleon  
Bell Sasha ..... 754-2240  
Miller N L..... 754-2351
- | Steele  
Carlson R E ..... 475-2240  
Christenson Ron & Gayle .... 475-4395  
Iszler Leona ..... 475-2002  
Riederer Chance ..... 475-2158
- | Strasburg - Hague  
Grits Travel ..... 336-5555
- | Wilton  
Aarhus Adam ..... 734-6129  
Schmidt Nicole & Nick ..... 734-6119
- | Wing - Arena  
Eide Gene..... 943-2480
- | Wishek  
Ketterling Arndt & Frieda.... 452-2145  
Miller Walter ..... 452-4459  
Rudolf Curtis & Mary Beth.... 452-2176  
Schauer Ruth..... 452-4457  
Shields Agnes..... 452-2017  
Swarts Lisa ..... 452-4463  
Walters D..... 452-4453

### Reminder

On February 17, 2009, local off-air TV stations will cease broadcasting in analog and switch to digital signals.

'Analog' TV sets not connected to cable, satellite or other pay TV service (in other words, TVs that use an antenna or rabbit ears for over-the-air TV) will need a digital converter box after February 17, 2009.

The federal government is offering discount coupons for viewers who need to purchase converter boxes for analog TV sets. More information about the DTV transition is available at [www.DTV.gov](http://www.DTV.gov) or by contacting BEK at 1-888-475-2361. For discount coupons, visit [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov) or call 1-888-DTV-2009 (1-888-388-2009).



# BEK Christmas Open House

*On December 16, 2008, BEK cooperative members gathered at BEK headquarters for a Christmas Open House of holiday treats, hot beverages and fellowship.*

BEK employees welcomed people in from the frigid temperatures to exchange warm Christmas greetings and good conversation. The lobby of BEK was filled with friends gathering around tables to visit and enjoy the treats made by employees.

A Christmas basket filled with special gifts was on display for registration as well as four beautiful poinsettias and two Christmas (red) telephones. Congratulations to the following winners of these gifts:

### Red Phones

LaVonne Mittleider, Tappen  
Donald Schnabel, Steele

### Poinsettias

Linda Rudolph, Dawson  
Yvonne Kuntz, Steele  
John G. Becker, Napoleon  
Harold Lautt, Steele

### Christmas Basket of Gifts

Bonney Stroh, Tappen

Thank you to all who attended BEK's Christmas Open House. We appreciate the patronage of all our members and we enjoy visiting with each of you who walk through our doors, those we meet on the street, talk to on the phone or those who communicate with us through email. Each contact is valued; it doesn't matter if the miles between "our house" and yours are few or many, we are always at your BEK and call. We look forward to serving you throughout the New Year!



A Christmas smorgasbord of tempting goodies.



Sippin' coffee, watching BEKTV and visiting with friends and neighbors.



Enjoying tasty treats.



PO Box 230 • 200 E Broadway  
Steele, North Dakota 58482

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## November Trivia Winners:

Larry Enzminger, Tappen;  
Harry Serr, Linton;  
Lois Gordian, Wilton;  
Cynthia Doll, Napoleon  
and Phyllis Will, Hazelton.



## Board of Directors

- Leo Meier, President ..... Hague .....336-7258
- Doug Kalianoff, Vice President ..... Steele .....475-2839
- Sanford Williams, Secretary/Treasurer .... Wing .....943-2474
- William (Bill) Becker ..... Wishek .....452-2928
- Anton Braun..... Napoleon .....754-4440
- Richard Hausauer ..... Wilton .....734-6116
- Virgil Horner ..... Strasburg .....336-7208
- Brett Stroh ..... Tappen .....327-8201
- Michael Wickenheiser..... Linton .....254-4949
- Derrick Bulawa, CEO/General Manager,  
Manager Feedback..... 701-475-1234  
managerfeedback@bektel.com

## Beacon Trivia Questions

- Funds received from the Universal Service Fund are used to build, maintain and \_\_\_\_\_ our telephone network.
- There are \_\_\_\_\_ new BEK Coop members (listings) in the Wishek exchange.
- All BEK members are encouraged to set up authorized account contacts and a \_\_\_\_\_ to help protect their privacy.

**Entries must be received by February 6, 2009.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Clip and send to the BEK office with your phone payment. You can also email to bekcomm@bektel.com. We will be drawing for five \$5.00 credits to be applied to the winners' phone bill.