

**BEK**

VOLUME 4 | MARCH/APRIL 2014

BEACON

DATES TO REMEMBER

BEK bill payments are due on the 20th of each month.

- ▶ **March 20**
First Day of Spring

- ▶ **April 13**
Palm Sunday
- ▶ **April 15**
Tax Day
- ▶ **April 18**
Good Friday
BEK Office Closed for Holiday
- ▶ **April 20**
Easter
- ▶ **April 23**
Administrative Professionals Day
- ▶ **April 25**
National Arbor Day

- ▶ **May 1**
May Day
- ▶ **May 2**
N.D. Arbor Day
- ▶ **May 11**
Mother's Day
- ▶ **May 17**
Armed Forces Day
- ▶ **May 26**
Memorial Day
BEK Office Closed for Holiday



A Company Legacy

Excerpts from Steele Ozone Kidder County Press

BEK Communications Cooperative has been delivering phone service to rural North Dakotans for more than sixty years...

In that time, the company evolved to provide Internet, television, and business services; and, more recently, web-based security and surveillance systems. But BEK is more than a local cooperative telecommunications company; it is a very real example of rural ingenuity and vision. That has never been more apparent than over the last 10 years. Let's take a look at some of the company's history and share with you what you can expect to see from BEK in the coming months.

First, it is important to point out that BEK likes to deliver services via fiber optic cable. That means that BEK customers are part of the 18% of the entire US that even have access to fiber technology. That's right. Your services ride on the best infrastructure available anywhere in the world. Isn't that crazy to think about? Consider the vision needed to decide, many years ago, that the right thing to do was to invest in, and then build, the best connectivity available. The fiber infrastructure you enjoy means that no matter what new devices, Internet-based apps, or streaming entertainment options come into being in future years, you have the foundation needed to enjoy them.

Providing services to additional locations like rural Bismarck has strengthened the entire company. Think about all the choices you have - from satellite providers and cell phone providers to Internet services like Hulu, NetFlix and Amazon. BEK operates in an incredibly competitive market, and that is why we continue to explore and build into new locations - to strengthen and grow our company. In addition to customers in the original cooperative area, rural Bismarck and select Bismarck businesses, BEK recently entered into a franchise agreement with the City of Valley City to undertake an intense build into rural Barnes County and Valley City beginning this year.

Despite plans to broaden the company's fiber optic footprint, BEK remains committed to our local communities. In the past, reliable, advanced, quality service helped to lure new companies into our towns and cities; and allowed individuals to earn income by working from home via robust Internet connections. This remains a key goal and one of the primary reasons for the company's efforts to create and deliver even more web-based services, such as surveillance and security products.

Continued on page 2

A Company Legacy Cont.

If there is anything stronger than BEK's commitment to the community, it is the company's renewed focus on all BEK customers. In 2014, the company intends to bring greater value to its customers and engage in all types of conversation. Have you liked BEK on Facebook yet? You might want to because you can get some great last minute deals. BEK routinely posts promotions such as free VOD coupons, special offers for new products, giveaways, and trivia questions with prizes. If you haven't liked BEK on Facebook, you won't see these offers. You may also want to check out the BEK Sports channels, which are increasing in popularity. BEK Sports maintains profiles on Facebook and Twitter and is expected to grow in the off-season. We can hardly wait to see what new programming they have in store for us next year.

So, yes, there is a lot going on behind the scenes at BEK and we're so happy that you are a part of it!

TERMS & CONDITIONS

BEK's Terms & Conditions relating to all BEK products and services have recently been updated and can be found at www.bektel.com. Click on Products & Services, then Terms & Conditions. They are also posted on BEK's www.bekspyder.com website. Here you can click on Terms & Conditions at the bottom left of the BEK Spyder homepage.

BEK Featured in March ND Living Magazine

Late last year, BEK Communications was among a select group of local telephone cooperatives nationwide to receive a "Smart Rural Community Trailblazer Award" and this accomplishment was recognized in the March 2014 North Dakota Living magazine. Here are excerpts from the featured article.

BEK Earns Smart Community Trailblazer Award

By Kent Brick

The Smart Rural Community Trailblazer Award is conferred by NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association. This award signifies that the local company being recognized excels in delivering state-of-the-art broadband service, helping communities advance through distance learning, telehealth services, public safety and security, and business enterprise. BEK was one of 12 local companies to receive the Trailblazer Award.

Derrick Bulawa, BEK CEO & general manager, says a commitment to members is at the heart of BEK's services and the call to excel in delivering modern technologies to them. "The directors set the tone for the posture of the cooperative, and for the last 61 years we have been focused on making available to our rural member owners the most recent technologies, so that they can live in a similar style that you would find in urban centers, and in some cases, better," Bulawa says.

Bulawa says the directors and staff at BEK view the cooperative as responsible for deploying technology - involving telecommunications, and more - to improve the lives of customers and members. "Our job is to service the community so that they can benefit personally, professionally and economically. We're always looking towards the future as well as meeting their current needs," Bulawa says.

The BEK service territory is about 7,000 square miles, encompassing rural areas east of Bismarck. This territory is marked by 18 telecom exchanges, serving that many communities and more, from Wilton to Zeeland, and Lehr to Crystal Springs. In addition, BEK operates a business subsidiary in Bismarck, offering BEK Spyder cloud-based technologies for the business community. These technologies include security, surveillance, phone communication and other Internet-based communications.

For several years, BEK has done some significant trailblazing in Internet-based television programming for communities and businesses. BEKTV began by broadcasting local sport events, and is now partnering with 13 other phone companies to broadcast 200 local North Dakota sports events annually. BEKTV now also provides live broadcasts from three local livestock auctions and weekly services from three local churches.

All this reflects the BEK commitment to delivering life quality technology services which will keep North Dakotans here - working, and building families and communities.

New Listings

BISMARCK-MANDAN-BALDWIN AREA

Camp Bros Heating & Air Conditioning.... 223-4154
Energy Land Services LLC..... 354-7567
Heim Granite 224-8300
Hirsch Floral & Gifts..... 258-3700
Hirsch Floral & Gifts..... 663-8535
National Medical Resources 221-9997

LEHR

Lind Erica 378-2413

MCKENZIE-MENOKEN

Job Chuck & Sheila..... 673-4396

ROBINSON

Hartwell Brad 392-5813

STRASBURG-HAGUE

Bender Magdalena..... 336-7983

TAPPEN-DAWSON

CRYSTAL SPRINGS-LAKE ISABEL

Wright Charles 327-2204

WILTON

Reiger Richard..... 734-2288

WING-ARENA

Brown Sandy & Shawn 943-2808

WISHEK

Wanner Bernice..... 452-4695

ZEELAND

Waldner Tyler..... 423-5325

Ziegler Susan..... 423-5606



BEK Awards Common Cents Grants

Since 2004, BEK Communications Cooperative has donated more than \$80,500 through its Common Cents Grant Program which is designed to help with community outreach and economic development in the BEK service area.

Do you know what is so special about the Common Cents Grant applications that BEK receives for various projects and needs in the communities? It's the people representing the organizations asking for the grants. The organizations applying are not looking to BEK to cover all expenses for their projects; they are primarily looking for a little additional help for their fundraising efforts. Almost all of the applications state that they plan, or do community fundraising. This tells us that your community has somehow already involved you in their fundraising efforts as well. So a big thank you is extended to all community fundraising volunteers and those who have contributed with labor and monetary gifts. You should all be proud of your community outreach and economic development successes!

The Board of Directors of BEK Communications Cooperative is happy to announce the latest contributions made by the cooperative through its Common Cents Grant program:



Emmons County ALS Ambulance asked for funds to purchase a Binder Lift. This device can be attached to a patient; it has handles that allow the emergency team to lift the patient. To get a visual of this apparatus, go to www.binderlift.com/. As you can

imagine, this makes a much easier lift than trying to lift a patient by the arms. BEK donated \$425 to the Emmons County ALS Ambulance for this purchase.



The Linton Fire Department recognizes the need to equip their firefighters with the right tools to make their job safer and a little easier. They asked BEK for a grant to use for the purchase of flashlights that

can be mounted on the firefighters' helmets. BEK awarded \$500 to the Linton Fire Department to use towards the purchase of flashlights.



The Steele Fire Department has a project goal of \$5,400 to equip their firefighters with Self Controlled Breathing Apparatuses (SCBA's). Their fundraising has included a community chili cook-off, raffle and applications for several grants. BEK's board of directors has awarded \$500 to the Steele Fire Department to help reach their fundraising goal to purchase SCBA's for their volunteer firemen.

Other organizations receiving support through the Common Cents grant program in January were:

- \$500 to Braddock Fire Protection District to use towards the purchase of grass land fire suits.
- \$500 to Kidder County Angels to use towards gas cards for Kidder County individuals with chronic medical conditions.
- \$500 to Napoleon Park Board to use towards the purchase of playground equipment for their city parks.
- \$500 to Strasburg Park Expansion Board to use towards a new roof on the parks concession/garage building.
- \$200 to Wing Elementary School to use towards the purchase of books.
- \$200 to Zeeland Fire Protection District to use towards the purchase of protective gear.

Common Cents grants are awarded twice a year in January and July. For more information go to www.bektel.com/grants or call our office at 1-888-475-2361.

A Message from BEK Sports Network

The BEK Sports Network completed another banner year broadcasting 193 games in 197 days from 58 different cities across ND. However, a couple marquee events that were absent from our coverage this season were the State Volleyball and State Wrestling tournaments.

Why?

In August, the North Dakota High School Activities Association (NDHSAA) entered into a four year agreement with NFHS Network to offer webcasting coverage of a select number of post season games, including all of the state tournaments not under agreement with Forum Communications (State Basketball, State Football and State Hockey). Forum Communications is also known to you as KBMY- ABCTV.

Much to the disappointment of the BEK Sports Network, we were not allowed to cover these events along with the State Baseball tournament coming up in June.

We have heard from a number of members stating their displeasure with our inability to offer live television coverage of these state tournaments, something that we have done for five years.

Your Opinion Counts!

BEK Sports will continue to work with the NDHSAA to try and reacquire the rights for these events but we cannot do it alone. We ask that you voice your displeasure with your local school board and school administration to help in our battle to bring the rights back to the BEK Sports Network.

All high schools in North Dakota are members of the NDHSAA, and in order for the NDHSAA to hear the voice of the public it must come from their member schools.



Here to Serve You

In this newsletter we are introducing two new employees who are working at opposite ends of the spectrum, yet their joint efforts give our new and existing customers the best communications experience the industry has to offer.



MATTHEW OHLHAUSER

joined the BEK staff on January 7, 2014. He is a customer support technician who specializes in BEKTek. A customer service position is easy to figure out, but BEKTek? What is that? Matt understands that most people can learn the basics of the web without actually understanding the basics of a network or a computer or even

an Internet connection. He also knows, that those of us who are novices, need a little help once in awhile. That is where Matt comes in. As a BEKTek, he offers local IT support and helps customers with their computer problems or questions. And that's what he likes to do, so it's a win win!

When he is wearing his customer service hat, Matt is ready to help customers with their questions about any of the BEK services they may have or wish to purchase and he is ready to assist a customer in need who walks through the door.

Matt earned a degree in Business Administration from the University of Mary in Bismarck. He worked five plus years for Best Buy. He joined the BEK team because he heard it was a fun atmosphere and was excited to join a growing company with a huge potential of moving forward.

Matt and his wife Alicia live in Lincoln and they are expecting their first child in September. Matt has a great connection with kids which was demonstrated at the Agri International in February where Matt helped out at the BEK booth. The kids that walked by were like a magnet to him; he stopped them to say "Hi" and to give them a special BEK prize.

Matt enjoys basketball, softball, volleyball, fishing and spending time at the lake with family. He didn't mention anything about surfing; we're guessing he just does that on a computer!



STEVE WARD

was hired at BEK on January 7, 2014 to play a very important role in the Outside Plant department. Steve is the Outside Plant (OSP) Lead Technician for Valley City/Barnes County. On page 1 we talked about BEK's expansion into Barnes County. With that project, Steve's help is needed. Steve will manage all outside

plant related activities throughout the Valley City/Barnes County fiber-to-the-home network build process. After the initial build out, he will assemble and work with a team for the assignment of cable placement, managing service orders, fiber splicing, material inventory and management and then maintenance of the fiber network as needed.

Steve is excited to be a part of a fiber-to-the-home build from start to finish, including the design process. He has a 26 year history of outside fiber optic plant designs and most recently worked as Fiber Splicing Supervisor for Ripleys, Inc. BEK was fortunate in knowing Steve from previous projects. Steve has worked for BEK as a splicing contractor on and off since 2006. During that time he formed a very favorable impression of BEK, the outside plant design and the people he worked with. His job performance and experience landed him a job at BEK.

Steve was raised on a farm west of Wahpeton. He attended high school in Wahpeton and he earned his Associate Degree at North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton.

Steve and his wife Kari will be looking for a residence near Valley City. They have two grown children. Steve enjoys bowling, music, movies, computers and he "likes" Facebook social networking via his wife's pages.

WELCOME MATT & STEVE!

Safe Drivers Recognized

The BEK service area spans across six counties which means our employees drive a lot of miles. From new construction to installs and troubleshooting in eighteen exchanges and rural Bismarck, the miles add up. Safe driving is high priority despite the conditions – and it's not always blue skies and dry pavement.

BEK Communications Cooperative has been presented with a Safe Driving Certificate for 2013 from the Telecom Training and Safety Program. The certificate recognizes BEK employees for having driven 11,083,839 miles at work without a chargeable accident from January 1981 to December 2013.

Congratulations to the following BEK employees, recognized for safe driving career miles in 50,000 increments:



Ryan Zink
100,000 Miles



Shawn Puklich
100,000 Miles



Derek Braun
250,000 Miles



Rodney Stockert
300,000 Miles



Gene Zimmerman
400,000 Miles



Dean Weiss
450,000 Miles



Price Cuts on DVR Services!

Are you a DVR user? Did you know some people don't ever watch live TV? That's because once they started recording their special programs, series, movies, etc. to watch at another time, they were hooked! Why? Because DVR allows you to watch TV when it's convenient for you.

BEKTV customers get one DVR set top box upon installation which allows up to two recordings at a time. Some people want to record more, and they can, for additional fees. BEK is happy to announce that these fees have now been reduced. See below:

- With BEKTV you get up to 3 TV set top boxes, one with a DVR box and two non DVR boxes. If you have more than 3 TV's in your house, as most people do, the cost for **additional non-DVR boxes** is now \$5.00/month – a **\$1.00 reduction!**
- Get a **second DVR box** for just \$6.00/month – a **\$9.00 reduction!**
- If the standard two recordings is not enough, you can get an **additional two recordings** for just \$3.00/month – a **\$1.00 reduction!**

BEKTV Channel Lineup News

Discovery Communications is rebranding The Military Channel – BEKTV Channel 210 to the American Heroes Channel (AHC) effective March 3, 2014. The content on the channel will, as the programmer puts it, continue showcasing the popular programming about the military, military conflicts and air and ground battles.

NBC Universal has rebranded NBC Sports Network to NBCSN – BEKTV Channel 72 and HD Channel 1072. The content remains unchanged.

Oscar Nominated Movies for under \$5.00

Did you watch the Oscars? The Oscar winning Best Picture film "12 Years a Slave" can be purchased on **BEKTV VOD** for just \$4.99! And that's not all - the other seven films nominated for Best Picture are also available to rent or are coming soon:

- "Captain Phillips" – January 21st
- "Dakota Buyers Club" – February 4th
- "Gravity" – February 25th
- "Nebraska" – February 25th
- "American Hustle" – March 18th
- "The Wolf of Wall Street" – March 25th
- "Philomena" – April 15th

Best Animated Film:

- "Frozen" – March 18th

Listen to the Oscar winning 'Best Original Song' from the movie "Frozen" – "Let it Go" by Idina Menzel
www.youtube.com/watch?v=moSFlvxnbgk&feature=kp

Find all the new VOD releases on BEK's website at www.bektel.com/NewReleases. Pop some corn, grab a cold drink, get comfortable and order a movie.

BEKTV Tips n' Tricks

Are you sick of going through your whole guide to find your favorite channels? Create your own custom guide that displays all of your favorite BEKTV channels!

- Press the Menu button on your BEKTV remote
- Select Favorites
- A dialog box will pop up asking what you would like to do, select Create
- Create a name for your guide
- Then select the channels from your subscribed list that you would like in your custom made guide
- Press Update

The next time you push your guide button on your BEKTV remote, keep pushing guide until you see the name of your custom guide on the top left.

There you have it, your very own guide!



FREE PREVIEW

FRIDAY APRIL 4TH - MONDAY APRIL 7TH



Channels 401-431
HD's 1401-1431
www.bektel.com





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January/February Trivia Winners:

Bernie Stolz, Baldwin, N.D.

Lillian Schneider, Strasburg, N.D.

Diane Zimmerman, Sterling, N.D.

Darin Vogel, Driscoll, N.D.

Sally Johs, Napoleon, N.D.

BEACON Trivia Questions

1. A Binder Lift is a device with handles that attaches to a _____.
2. The BEK office will be closed on _____, April 18th.
3. BEK's _____ & _____ relating to all BEK products and services have recently been updated.

Entries must be received by May 8, 2014.

Name _____

Phone No. _____

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.

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