

NETWORK CONNECTIONS

DRN

Quarter 1 | 2025

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A letter from our
**General Manager/CEO
Kent Schimke**

75 YEARS OF SUCCESS

As we enter a new year, I am excited to share we are celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Dickey Rural Telephone Cooperative (DRTC) in 2025. DRTC and DRN ReadTech have made many developments and exciting strides over the 75 years. It's been a journey of innovation, collaboration, and a commitment to delivering top-notch services to you, our valued members.

Partnerships

DRN has invested in several businesses that have shown themselves to be profitable to the company over the years. Our investments in Dakota Carrier Network (DCN), Verizon Wireless and North Dakota Long Distance (NDLD) have all paid out dividends this past year. We continue to find ways to create profitable partnerships that benefit the cooperative overall to diversify our business.

Professional Growth

Our success through the years is a direct result of the hard work, dedication, and collaborative efforts of our outstanding team. At DRN ReadTech, we recognize that our employees are our greatest asset, and we are proud to have an environment that promotes innovation, creativity, and professional growth.

Our commitment to excellent service and community engagement will remain at the forefront of our goals.

Supporting Our Communities

Community is at the heart of everything we do.

The DRN Board of Directors approved over \$60,000 in donations to various non-profit organizations throughout the DRN service area in support of the communities we serve. DRN ReadTech employees volunteer many hours on various boards, committees, and participate in quarterly company sponsored service projects to raise funds to donate to organizations that may need assistance. Our customer appreciation picnics were a great success in Gwinner and Fullerton in 2024 and I hope you enjoy them as much as we do.

I want to express my gratitude for your continued trust and support. Together, we are shaping a connected, sustainable, and empowered future for our communities. Thank you for being an essential part of the DRN ReadTech story. Here's to a year of continued growth, innovation, and shared success. We hope to see all our members throughout the territory as we celebrate 75 years of broadband solutions, empowering lives and connecting members.

**CONNECTING MEMBERS. EMPOWERING LIVES.
BROADBAND SOLUTIONS.**



ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Arden Falk, Fort Ransom; Sid Meidinger, Fredonia; and Dan Girard, Ellendale were re-elected to the Dickey Rural Telephone Cooperative (DRTC) Board of Directors at its 74th Annual Meeting held on Oct. 17, 2024 at the Ellendale Public School.

DRN Board President Ralph Neu and Kent Schimke, DRN CEO/general manager updated approximately 235 registered members and guests who attended the meeting on the financial health of the cooperative. In honor of the cooperative difference and their guiding principles, this year's annual meeting theme was 'Providing a Better Connection' highlighting the continual work to make upgrades to improve the reliability of service provided to our members.

At the meeting, Schimke and Neu shared net margins for 2023 were over \$9 million. Schimke reported the cooperative returned over \$9.9 million in capital credits to members in 2023. "We have worked diligently to ensure the financial health of our cooperative, and as a result, we are able to distribute these credits back to you, our valued members," said Schimke



Members and guests received updates on the cooperative at DRN's 74th Annual Meeting held at the Ellendale Public School on October 17.

NEW PAY BY PHONE NUMBER

We recently made an update to our over-the-phone bill pay system and with that the number has changed. Please update the number to **855-941-3553**. Press 1 to make payment. Press 2 to check your account status. Be sure to have your account number ready, found at the top of your bill.

Other Ways to Pay:

E-Bill: With e-bill, paying your bill each month is made faster and simpler. Receive your bill by e-mail and pay whenever is convenient for you.

Online Bill Pay: Visit drn.coop and click on "Account" at the top of the page, then click "Pay My Bill". You will need your account number and the last name on the account.

Auto Pay: Automatically deduct your monthly payment from your checking or savings account—no more late or missed payments.

Check by Mail: DRN ReditTech, PO Box 69, Ellendale, ND 58436.

 **855-941-3553**

Smart Hub
TRY IT TODAY!



Gain account access at your fingertips and two-way communication with DRN online or on your device.

Simply go to drn.coop and click "Account" in the top right hand corner, then click SmartHub.



SmartHub:

- **Fast & Easy Bill Pay**
- **Safe & Secure**
- **Free Online or Mobile App on the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.**



How Does 5G Home Internet Differ from Fiber Internet?

You may be hearing a lot these days about the 5G home Internet offered by cellular providers. But what exactly is it, and how does it differ from fiber Internet?

Before we compare these two Internet technologies, let's clear up a common misconception. The abbreviation 5G refers to the fifth generation of wireless technology for cellular networks, which was initially released in 2019. The "G" in 5G does NOT stand for gigabit and has nothing to do with Internet speeds.

FIBER INTERNET

How It Works

Fiber Internet uses fiber-optic cables consisting of bundled strands of glass, which are buried under the ground to provide a direct Internet connection. Fiber is the gold standard.

Speeds

A range of fiber Internet plans are typically offered, with speeds up to 10 Gigs (10,000 Mbps) and more. You may also be able to get symmetrical speeds, meaning your uploads are just as fast as your downloads.

Reliability

Fiber Internet has a much larger capacity to carry data and is less prone to technical malfunctions or slowdowns. This results in a connection you can count on, with a proven track record of 99.9% reliability.

5G HOME INTERNET

How It Works

5G home Internet uses the 5G network towers of a cellular company to provide a fixed wireless connection. Speeds will vary by location, depending on how far the customer is from a local tower or transmitter.

Speeds

Speeds offered by 5G home Internet average just 150 Mbps. What's more, several factors can adversely affect speeds, including network congestion and line-of-sight issues from obstacles such as buildings or terrain. Even inclement weather can slow things down.

Reliability

5G home Internet can get bogged down by high-traffic demands and technical issues stemming from poor cell service.

It's clear that despite the hype around 5G, fiber remains the go-to connection type for extremely fast and reliable Internet. Simply put, you can't do better than fiber Internet. It's the preferred connection — and the best overall value — for individuals, couples, large households with multiple users and devices, people who work from home, online gamers, and streaming enthusiasts.

To learn more about DRN ReadTech's fiber Internet plans, visit drn.coop.

North Dakota 911 technology connects caller in South Dakota to emergency services in right state

Next Generation 911 could be implemented to more parts of the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

Telephone technology in North Dakota is helping emergency dispatchers reroute 911 calls near the South Dakota border to the correct state, according to a group that oversees the program.

Next Generation 911 recently rerouted a call made to the DRN, formerly known as the Dickey Rural Telephone Co., to South Dakota emergency services, according to a release from the North Dakota Association of Counties. DRN is located in Ellendale, North Dakota, about 5 miles north of the South Dakota border, but the person who called was in South Dakota, according to the release.

The association, which oversees Next Generation 911, or NG911, called the achievement a “milestone.” The call routing technology will allow emergency crews to respond more quickly to calls for service, the release said.

“We have struggled considerably with finding cost-effective ways to handle out-of-state originating service providers (OSPs) which have a very small number of wireline subscribers in our state,” said Jason Horning, NG911 program manager in North Dakota. “This deployment demonstrated that it may not be necessary to directly connect out-of-state OSPs to our emergency services network, allowing them to leverage their existing connectivity to the state in which they primarily do business.”

North Dakota has been transitioning to NG911 for a decade, Horning told The Forum. The state enabled the feature to help reroute emergency calls to the correct state in October, he said.

Using geospatial call routing, NG911 can pinpoint a caller’s latitude and longitude location using the person’s cellphone, Horning said.

So far, the technology has only worked with the DRN, Horning said. He said the state has a “little way to go” as it works to further implement NG911 along the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

North Dakota is looking into the deployment of NG911 and documenting “the requirements necessary to make it a repeatable configuration,” the release said.

“There are details we are still working through, but clearly this is possible and may serve as a model for other out-of-state OSPs that we engage in an effort to make sure every North Dakota and South Dakota resident receives the proper PSAP (public safety answering point) on initial delivery,” Horning said in a statement.

DRN is proud to be one of the first in the state to successfully implement next-generation technology for routing 911 calls. This groundbreaking achievement reflects our commitment to innovation and excellence for our members.

For 75 years, our team has been at the forefront of technology, ensuring that help is just a call away.

Thank you for trusting us to help keep our communities safe!

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SAVOR YOUR *independence.*

Have confidence and peace of mind with help at the press of a button.

The Belle® X and Belle®W are small, easy to use mobile personal emergency response systems that offers you confidence to live life on your terms.

Belle connects you to expert care specialists who can send loved ones or emergency services, depending on what you need.

Now includes an optional Caregiver Mobile App. Includes device tracking, step tracking, first motion, app alerts for low battery, button press, fall detection, power off, and more.

CALL 701.344.5000 to learn more!



FEATURES

- 24/7 Access to Help
- GPS, Wi-Fi, & Cell triangulation location services
- Water Resistant
- Fall Detection
- Caregiver App

ANNUAL *Scholarship Program*

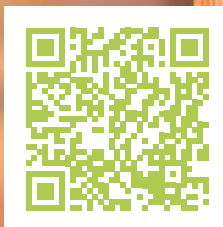
Attention students—earn money for college!

DRN will continue its Scholarship Program in 2025 and will again participate in the Foundation for Rural Services (FRS) Scholarship. Students will need to complete both online applications separately.

DRN will also award a scholarship to a student attending the Southeast Regional Career & Technology Center and to a student majoring in business administration at Trinity Bible College (TBC).

**EARN
\$750!**

**DRN Scholarship Deadline is Feb. 28, 2025.
Visit drn.coop/scholarship to apply online.**



TV SERVICE PRICE CHANGE NOTIFICATION

As a video (TV) provider, DRN is subject to annual programming fee increases from programmers and network channel owners. Because of these programming fee increases, we must adjust our rates. Effective March 1, 2025 the Ultimate Family Pak will increase \$10 per month and Valu TV will increase \$6 per month.

If you have any questions concerning this notice, please contact our customer care department at (701) 344-5000 Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

LET US HELP FIND THE PACKAGE FOR YOU AND SAVE ON YOUR TV SERVICE!

Traditional TV: WatchTV Everywhere is included with your traditional DRN video subscription to watch your shows on most devices anywhere with Internet.

Try Streaming: Check out which streaming service is best for you. Visit: mybundle.tv/drtel/start

Call DRN to review and make changes to your account at (701) 344-5000.

COMING THIS SPRING!

We are excited to announce our team is working on launching DRN ReadiTech Stream, a streaming TV solution. Watch our social media platforms and next newsletter for more information!



\$3 Million in Capital Credits Paid

We are pleased to announce the distribution of \$3,000,000 in capital credits to our members was paid out in December 2024. 10,295 members benefited from this distribution, with an average check amounting to over \$285.

Out of the total recipients, 5,946 members received a check, while 4,349 members saw the credit applied directly to their December 2024 bill. This initiative underscores DRN ReadiTech's commitment to returning value to its members and supporting the community.

As a member of the DRN cooperative, you are the recipient of patronage capital credits on your DRN account. Capital credits are the amount allocated to each member from the cooperative's profits from telephone and Internet. The amount of your capital credit allocation is determined by the amount of business you do with DRN each year and DRN's profit for that year.

For more information about DRN ReadiTech and our capital credits program, please visit our website at drn.coop or contact us at (701) 344-5000.

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SPORTS | www.bek.tv

For a full schedule visit

Catch local sports action on BEK Sports Channel 104,
BEK Sports 3 Channel 195 and BEK Sports 2 Channel 196

Date	Description	Time	Channel
Mon. Jan. 6	H.S. Girls Basketball Sargent County vs Lisbon	7:30 p.m.	195/196
Thu. Jan. 9	H.S. Girls Wrestling South Border vs Lisbon	7 p.m.	195/196
Thu. Jan. 9	H.S. Boys Wrestling South Border vs Lisbon	9 p.m.	195/196
Thu. Jan. 16	H.S. Girls Basketball South Border vs Napoleon-GS	7:30 p.m.	195/196
Thu. Jan. 18	H.S. Girls Basketball Edgeley-Kulm-Montpelier vs Sargent County	12:30 p.m.	195/196
Thu. Jan. 18	H.S. Boys Basketball Edgeley-Kulm-Montpelier vs Sargent County	2:00 p.m.	195/196
Mon. Jan. 20	H.S. Girls Basketball LaMoure-LM vs Kidder County	7:30 p.m.	195/196
Sat. Jan. 28	H.S. Boys Basketball Edgeley-Kulm-Montpelier vs LaMoure-LM	7:30 p.m.	195/196
Thu. Feb. 6	H.S. Girls Basketball Valley City vs Lisbon	6:00 p.m.	195/196
Thu. Feb. 6	H.S. Boys Basketball Carrington vs Lisbon	7:30 p.m.	195/196
Thu. Feb. 13	H.S. Boys Basketball South Border vs Kidder County	7:00 p.m.	195/196
Feb. 15 & 17	H.S. Girls Basketball District 2 Tournament	TBD	
Feb. 24-25, 27	H.S. Girls Basketball Regional Tournament	TBD	
Feb. 28 & Mar. 3-4	H.S. Boys Basketball District 2 Tournament	TBD	
Mar. 10-11, 13	H.S. Boys Basketball Regional Tournament	TBD	

BEK TV brings back *Legislature Today* with the start of the 69th ND Legislative Session

BEK TV announces the return of the highly anticipated special report *Legislature Today* as the 69th North Dakota Legislative Session kicks off in the new year. This in-depth program will provide North Dakotans with exclusive coverage of the daily happenings in the state legislature, delivered as part of the widely watched weekday program Open Range with Gary Emineth,

which airs weekdays at 9 pm CT. Viewers can watch on BEK TV, DRN channel 104 or by streaming live and on-demand through the BEK TV+ app, at no cost.

In addition to legislative updates, *Legislature Today* introduces viewers to lawmakers, legislative experts, and staffers, offering a closer look at the people behind



the policies. Emineth and his guests will break down complex topics and foster informed conversations that empower citizens to engage with their elected representatives.

For a full schedule, visit bek.tv.

ANNUAL NOTIFICATIONS



Do Not Call Residential Notification

To address consumer concerns about unwelcome telemarketing calls, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) established a national Do-Not-Call Registry. The registry applies to all telemarketers (with the exception of certain non-profit and political organizations) and covers both interstate and intrastate telemarketing calls. Commercial telemarketers are not allowed to call you if your number is listed on the registry.

Consumers may register their residential phone number, and wireless numbers, on the national Do-Not-Call Registry for free. To register by phone, call 1-888-382-1222. For TTY call 1-866-290-4236. You must call from the phone number you wish to register. Or, register online at donotcall.gov. Telemarketers have up to 31 days to get your phone number and remove it from their call lists.

Battery Backup Notification

DRN reminds customers your telecommunications services are powered by electricity. If your main power source goes out, all fiber customers have a backup power supply box provided by DRN in your home, apartment complex, or office building.

The battery backup powers telephone service for approximately eight hours. This means the backup will provide eight hours of in use time or talk time. If the power is out for an extended period of time, telephone service will continue to work as long as the battery backup has not been depleted of its eight hours of in use time. During a power outage, Internet and television service disconnects immediately.

In order to keep you and your family connected during an extended power outage, DRN recommends connecting your home or business to a backup generator or emergency backup battery. DRN offers a 24-hour extended battery for purchase. For details on buying an extended battery or any other questions regarding the battery backup, contact a customer care specialist at (701) 344-5000.

Federal Lifeline Assistance

For those who can't afford communication services—Lifeline, a federal program, can help eligible people pay part of their phone or broadband bill.

Lifeline can save you up to \$9.25 on your monthly phone bill for basic local telephone service or broadband. Lifeline assistance applies only to service in the home where you live.

Who is eligible?* An individual is eligible if he or she participates in one of the following programs:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Medicaid
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- Veterans Pension or Survivors Pension

In addition, a consumer may be eligible if his or her household income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines.

* Only eligible persons may apply. Only one discount is available per household. Lifeline is non-transferable.

How to obtain assistance: Offices that administer a program under which you are eligible for Lifeline may automatically send you an Assistance Certificate in the mail. Anyone wishing to participate in Lifeline is required to sign a form indicating, under oath, that they qualify to participate because they meet at least one of the program eligibility requirements. This must be signed and returned with a copy of your income or program eligibility.

What if my benefits stop? If you no longer qualify for any economic program, you no longer qualify for Lifeline.

For more information: Call DRN at (701) 344-5000. Consumers must apply for Lifeline through their telecommunications company.

RDFC & DRN award \$3,000 to area non-profits

DRN is a member of the Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC). As a result, communities in our service area are eligible to apply for a grant of up to \$3,000 for community-based projects. RDFC is making these funds available in order that more people become aware of their larger loan program that funds community-based projects and non-profit entities with low interest loans.

“We are proud of our communities and are committed to supporting efforts that keep our area vibrant and healthy for generations,” said DRN GM/CEO Kent Schimke.



1. Fort Ransom Community Center, Community Hall Addition

DRN’s Kari Nishek presents the donation to members of the Fort Ransom Community Club.

2. Kulm Community Development, Replace Coolers at Kulm Grocery Store

Kari Nishek, DRN, presents the donation to Andrew McDermid.

3. Lisbon Opera House Foundation, New Awning

Janell Hauck, DRN, presents the donation to Dave Olson.

4. Lisbon Bissell Golf Course, Repair Rough Mower, New Cups & Cup Cutters

For more information about rural community grants and RDFC visit: drn.coop/rdfc/



Share Your Story With Us!

Each of our cooperative members have an unique experience and stories that have helped shape our last 75 years. Whether it’s a moment of triumph, a new technology learned, or a funny experience with DRN, we would like to hear it. We each have a story to tell and they all make our cooperative so special.

Ready to share? Send us a message at marketing@drtel.com or call (701) 344-5000.



CONGRATULATIONS CALENDAR WINNERS

DRN subscribers submitted their photos of living, working and playing in our beautiful state of North Dakota for the 2025 calendar photo contest.

Winners were selected and customers received their calendars in December. Additional 2025 calendars are available for your shop, lake cabin or office. E-mail marketing@drtel.com to request additional calendars with your name and mailing address.

Thank you to all who submitted photos for this year's calendar contest!

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2025 WINNERS!

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Amber Kingzett | Lana Norton |
| Angela Carter | Lauri Uecker |
| Angie Waletzko | Lori Pritchard |
| Ashley Brown | Matt Herman |
| Ava Brokaw | Monte Wahl |
| Christine Peterson | Nicole Fuss |
| Dorreen Olstad | Roxanne Baumgartner |
| Eva Jefferson | Sandee Lunneborg |
| Heidi Schauer | Susan Kusler |
| Julie Bellin | Samantha McHarry |
| Katherine Plessner | Tyler Kinzer |
| Kathy Brantl | Wendy Bichler |
| Kristine Harris | |



NEW LISTINGS

- Ashley 288**
Virginia Schnabel.....288-3812
Ethel Puhmann.....288-3817
- Edgeley 493**
Edgeley Kids, Inc.....493-2410
- Ellendale 349**
Brenda Olinger349-3458
- Lisbon 683**
Buzy Beez Childcare683-2899
Blooming Rose Accounting
.....683-4790
Kyle Bleecker683-5367
Kenneth & Loretta Ussatis
.....683-5817
- Oakes 742**
Marie & Darvin Engel742-2024
Vesta Olderness.....742-2278



**we're
hiring**

View openings & full details at drn.coop/careers

This institution is an equal-opportunity provider and employer.

DRIN

READi TECH

PO Box 69
Ellendale, ND 58436

**CELEBRATING
SUCCESS IN
2025**



Join us all year as we
celebrate the cooperative's
75TH ANNIVERSARY!
watch for a fun event near you

Connecting Members.
Empowering Lives.
Broadband Solutions.