

2020 has been quite a year!

Dear members,

As I look back over 2020, I will try to leave the topic of Covid-19 alone, except to say, I hope you stayed and continue to be safe and healthy. I know I have heard all I want to hear about Covid-19 so I will focus on Kingdom and 2020 happenings.

We have had a strong construction year. With five main line crews working in the regulated area, we will be done with planned fiber upgrades by second quarter 2021. The entire town of Auxvasse is now fiber and we have enjoyed gaining new customers from Charter. Phynx construction has been extraordinary as well. Moberly is growing much faster than Mexico did at the same point of construction. Both towns have many sign ups on a daily basis, many of which are in neighborhoods already constructed, so all we have to do is put in the drop to the home and install the service. In the last 9 months there has been a lot of demand for new Internet services as well as increased pipe size to the home to allow more devices on the Wi-Fi as parents and students have had to work from home. Related to that, Kingdom signed on to a national campaign to make sure no student is left behind when it comes to access to the Internet. The program asks providers to create low cost packages for lower income homes with K-12 students who currently do not have Internet access. The package is intended only for the school devices which insures all students can work from home if necessary. Kingdom can provide internet access to any student who lives within our regulated territory, so offering this K-12 package is important to the company and our students. If you have students in your home without Internet access and would like more information, please contact our office.



Last quarter I told you about two opportunities with grant monies. First, Kingdom's application for a USDA Re-Connect Grant that if awarded would pay for 75% of the cost to bring much-needed fiber Internet to an area north of Auxvasse and around Mexico. Because there was another applicant in part of the area we applied for, the final decision has been delayed. In a conversation with our Missouri USDA representative in October, I was told it would likely be the end of the year or possibly next year before we know anything. The delay is because the other applicant filed for a 100% loan to build the area instead of a grant. When there is an overlap in the territory with a loan vs. a grant applicant, the loan applicant gets priority because USDA will benefit from loaning the money. Once they decide if the loan applicant is worthy of a loan, they will then have to decide if they will award the grant to the remaining area in our application that did not overlap.

The other opportunity is called the "Rural Digital Opportunity Fund" or RDOF. The FCC allocated a total of \$20.4 billion in the effort to connect rural America with badly needed broadband, but only \$16 billion was in the first auction. Our application filed in July was approved, allowing us to bid. The auction started in late October. Remember I told you this was a reverse auction, where instead of the highest bidder winning, the lowest bidder wins the money for the areas they bid. An update on the results of the auction will be in the next newsletter.

The last topic that I want to detail will be one that you hear about often which is the change to electronic voting beginning with the March 2021 Annual Meeting. Paper ballots and proxies are no more. Each member will receive a unique Internet login to cast their vote. We understand that not all members have Internet, so they will have the ability to vote at our Auxvasse office during the three weeks prior to the meeting or at the meeting location for a couple of hours before the meeting begins. This will allow so many more members to have a vote in electing directors than ever before. Last year we had less than 5% of members present. If there had not been some members with proxies, we would not have had a quorum. I know I said earlier I didn't want to talk about Covid-19, but depending on progress with the vaccination, members need to be prepared for the possibility of a virtual meeting. We will not risk the health of our members just to have a face to face gathering. Our next meeting whether virtual or not, will be Saturday, March 13, 2021. More details will be outlined in the Annual Report that you will receive in February.

I will close here and wish you a good rest of the year and holiday season. I hope you and your families stay safe and healthy!

# Board Selects Nominating Committee

Kingdom Telephone members elect three directors each year at the Annual Meeting, and the first step in this process is the selection of a committee to nominate the candidates who will run. This year, the nominating committee for the Board of Directors was appointed at a meeting of the board held on November 12, 2020.

- . Beth A Stieferman, Mokane, 676-5636
- . Charles Eckert, Williamsburg, 826-0781
- . Kevin L Horstman, Mokane, 676-5062
- . John R Smart, Mokane, 676-5420
- . Cheryl Anderson, Williamsburg, 254-3645
- . John Farley, Mokane, 676-5460

Our bylaws describe two methods of nomination:

1. Selection by the nominating committee. If you are interested in becoming a candidate for Board membership, contact a member of the nominating committee at your earliest convenience. The committee will meet on January 5 at 6:00 p.m. at the business office.
2. Nomination by petition. Petitions must be signed by fifteen or more shareholders and delivered to the business office by 5:00 p.m., February 1, 2021.

# Kingdom Telephone Scholarship

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS: APPLY NOW FOR A \$1,000 KINGDOM SCHOLARSHIP

Kingdom Telephone Company will be offering a college scholarship to help further higher education among our rural youth. The scholarship is available to students for their first year of college, university or vocational-technical school.

Kingdom will award two \$1,000 scholarships to qualified applicants.

Application information will be sent to schools in our serving territory in early December. If you need additional information, email us at [scholarships@kingdomtelco.com](mailto:scholarships@kingdomtelco.com).

# Relay Missouri

RELAY MISSOURI PROVIDES FREE PHONE ACCESS FOR HEARING AND SPEECH IMPAIRED

Relay Missouri is a service that provides full telephone accessibility to people who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind and speech-disabled. It can be used to make telephone calls to family, friends, businesses or anyone who has a phone.

The service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year. It is accurate and transparent. The operator voices everything you type and types everything you say.

All Relay Missouri calls are strictly private. No records of any conversations are maintained.

Relay services are available at no charge. Equipment itself is available upon request to eligible parties. The services are funded by the State.

To learn more, visit [relaymissouri.com](http://relaymissouri.com) or [kingdomtelco.com/relay-missouri](http://kingdomtelco.com/relay-missouri). To use the service, dial 7-1-1 or call the Relay Customer Service Hotline at 800-676-3777 to reach the type of relay needed.