

Summer Fun!

Dear Members,

Summer is coming to an end and we are already back to school. Hopefully this year our kids can stay in seat and life can be some sort of normal. But, as I write this article, there is already talk of mask mandates again.

Whether at school or at home, our students need reliable internet to get the work done. Kingdom actually gave more speed away this summer for the same money. We increased our lowest fiber service from 200 mbps to 600 mbps. This speed will ensure families have a big enough pipe to do homework, work from home, and stream all the entertainment a normal family has time to enjoy.

As a reminder, we have several hotspots around our territory:

1. Kingdom Telephone 211 S. Main, Auxvasse
2. Auxvasse Elementary
3. North Callaway High School
4. Pleasant Grove Church in Hatton
5. Kingdom's Mokane Central Office - 304 Fulton Ave., Mokane
6. Corner Restaurant in Rhineland
7. Tebbetts Community Center inside and outside the building



Renee' Reeter
General Manager
Kingdom Telephone Company

A couple of exciting events this summer were the Callaway County Youth Expo Livestock Auction and the Montgomery County Junior Livestock Auction. At the Callaway Auction, we bought a reserve champion steer from Adrian Brown, a lamb from Jenna Slater, chickens from Cooper Safranski, a hog from Addison Fansler, and bacon from Emma Wilson. At the Montgomery Auction, we bought a hog from Annie Robinson. These events are always fun and supporting the kids is very important to Kingdom. Other upcoming events we hope to see you at are the Mokane World's Fair and the Tebbetts Picnic.

Last quarter I shared that Phynx Fiber started building internet in Montgomery City in the ongoing effort to replace expiring federal Universal Service Funds (USF). I am happy to say that once we got past the spring rainy season, progress began moving right along. It takes time to build a fiber network in a new area, but we should be connecting our first customers by the time you receive this newsletter. At the end of July we were at about 75% of the way toward replacing the 2001-2019 average USF annual revenues. Bringing Montgomery City online will help make that number climb even faster. Phynx Fiber connected its first customer in late May 2017 and since that time we have grown dramatically. Within the next year, I anticipate our company will double our pre-Phynx internet subscriber base.

Broadband internet has become the primary service we offer and it is as important as electricity or water to our members and all citizens in our country. Since Covid, broadband has become one of the top subjects with our politicians. New monies in forms of grants and auctions are coming faster than supplies can support. As an example, Kingdom ordered fiber for future projects in June and we hope to have it delivered by the end of 2022. We have standing orders on the equipment in the home, just so we don't run out. We are even having trouble getting the plastic nid that is placed on the outside of the home because there is a shortage of resin.

With some of the new grant monies, the rules state that we can't use inventory and they want the projects completed within a year in one case. During a recent virtual event with "Women in Telcom", I spoke with legal counsel for an FCC chairperson about the inventory rule after she was commenting on the supply chain issues. To her credit, she didn't realize the rule was there and asked our NTCA industry group manager, Shirley Bloomfield, to look into it. Just last week, Shirley let me know that she had spoken with the NTIA grant administrator and he agreed philosophically that the rules should be changed and would be speaking to legal to get the appropriate language drafted.

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Getting broadband to every American is vital to our administration but this is just an example of how the policy makers don't understand the struggle it is to get it done. When these orders come out every broadband providers wants to take advantage of the free money concept because it is impossible to build broadband in rural areas without some kind of support. Most orders are hundreds of pages long and are hard to interpret. We have consultants and attorneys in the industry that offer their insights, but each company like Kingdom has to digest all that information just to determine if it is possible to seek the funds. This most recent one from NTIA was one that had so many restrictions and very short timelines and honestly not a lot of money. We determined it was not worth the cost of the application for the NTIA grant as the odds of getting anything worthwhile were extremely small. When you consider there is only \$288 million for the entire nation, Missouri hopes to get somewhere between \$5 and \$30 million to be allocated to various providers. Fiber mainline costs between \$25,000 and \$35,000 per mile to build depending on terrain, so \$5 to \$30 million shared around the state is just a drop in the bucket. In addition, the application timeline overlaps with an upcoming RUS Grant. We are interested in the RUS grant because we think we have a better chance of getting a larger budget number to help expand broadband. No matter where the funds come from, it takes a long time to work through all the paperwork to even get to the day you begin construction. This is something our policy leaders need to work on because Americans don't want to wait ten years to get reliable internet. Our members are lucky, as Kingdom has been doing internet since its dawning and our members have better services than some bigger urban areas.

One last note before I go, as I write this article we have our "Selfie Scavenger Hunt" going whereby members are taking selfies in front of new signs Kingdom has placed out in our territory. It is off to a good start and the winner will receive a 50" TV for their trouble. I want to thank everyone who took the time to submit their photo. We will have announced the winner on Facebook prior to your receiving this – so if you didn't see the post – please go check out everyone who participated.

Until next time: enjoy the remainder of your summer and keep your families safe and healthy!

Privacy Control/Do Not Disturb

Did you know you can take control of the calls coming into your home? Kingdom offers a service where you can do just that through your home phone or by a web portal.

The Privacy Control service selectively intercepts telemarketers, unknown callers and callers who have their number blocked from displaying on Caller ID. The Do Not Disturb service is great if you work late hours and want to avoid calls while you are trying to sleep. It will let you designate quiet times where callers will be blocked unless they have a 4 digit PIN to override.

More information can be found at kingdomtelco.com/telephone-features/

Capital Credits to be Issued This Month

For the twenty-ninth consecutive year, Kingdom Telephone will distribute capital credits to its member/owners. The payout formula for this year is 9.13% of the outstanding capital credits for 1987 and 3.87% of 2020. Starting this year, 2021, active members will see a bill credit if the amount is \$65 or less, otherwise members will receive a check.

Patronage is accumulated when you purchase our telephone, internet, and other telecommunication services. Based on the cooperative's year end profits, the patronage is used to determine a member's share of capital credits for that calendar year.