

Dear Members,

Fall is here and winter is just around the corner. Kingdom and Phynx have had another successful year. Although Kingdom completed all planned construction early in the year, we were able to get to a lot of routine maintenance work caught up. Our outside guys removed old copper pedestals in areas that were upgraded with fiber. They also removed all of the equipment that had been attached to power poles in upgraded copper areas. That project equates to a savings to the company as we pay the power company for those attachments each year.

Phynx has continued to expand and grow. During all the Kingdom construction our installers and splicers were so busy in Kingdom that Phynx had to supplement the work load with contracted help. Although we still have access to contractors, we are very happy to have our Kingdom employees working in the Phynx areas.

As mentioned in earlier newsletters, Phynx has been building fiber Internet in Montgomery City. It takes time to build a new network, but I am happy to say that our first customer was brought online October 19. Several residents have signed up for service and are anxiously awaiting fiber internet. The access to a quality service has been lacking in Montgomery City, so the community is very excited and we are thrilled to get the service to them. I know from past experience as soon as we get the service active, word of mouth will have us very busy. In both Mexico and Moberly, the majority of service requests came after we built the neighborhood. Proving Missouri really is the show me state: after they see it, then they believe it. The difference in the building methods of Mexico and Moberly vs. Montgomery City are that in the first two, we build one fiberhood at a time. Montgomery City is being built completely, so once we get the network up, we think we will have a major surge of service requests.

In addition to Montgomery City, we have gone back to Mexico and are building four more fiberhoods. Mexico and Moberly both have several new sign ups each week, which keeps us growing. The great part of those signups, most are in the fiberhoods where we have already built so all we have to do is get a drop from the street to the house and service is ready to be installed.

In other news, before Covid hit in March of 2020, Kingdom/Phynx Fiber applied for a broadband grant for an area north of Kingdom in Audrain County, covering the area west, south, and east of Mexico. Covid delayed the grant process but in March of 2021 we were notified that we were successful. We had to keep this news a secret, even from our employees, until the time USDA publicly announced the award. That announcement didn't come until August 11. It was torture not sharing the news! This grant will pay for 75% of the cost to build the area and will bring much needed internet to those families. We had hoped to begin building sometime this summer or fall, but that is a moving target based on various government approvals that we will have to receive. I sincerely hope we start as early in the spring as weather permits. Once construction begins, weather and crew availability permitting we hope to be finished in about twelve to eighteen months. The cost of materials and delays of getting them have increased since our application, but we have planned ahead and have materials on order which should keep us from supply chain delays. Costs of materials have certainly increased just like we see everywhere, so any costs above the 75% of the awarded amount will be our obligation, but we think that number will be more than manageable.

This grant area brings another 723 homes passed to us. With it, our existing towns, and Montgomery City, our goal of replacing the expiring USF should be accomplished based on our take rate expectations. I thank the Board of Directors for having the foresight back in 2016 to realize we had to get busy working to replace USF and having the risk tolerance to achieve it. As I said earlier, it takes time to build a new network. We began our first fiberhood build in Mexico in December 2016 and connected our first customer right before Memorial Day in 2017. Basing the builds on the fiberhood model was our way of minimizing the risk. But nearly four years later, we are seeing the rewards of those builds. In 2022, I anticipate our total internet customer base will have doubled over the 2016 count.

Believe it or not, we are already thinking about the 2022 Annual Meeting. Last year due to Covid and our desire to protect our members from possible exposure, we did a virtual meeting via YouTube. Members could tune in during live event or watch it after. We will be doing the same virtual meeting in 2022 because Covid is still a concern. Planning starts in December, so we can't risk the possibility of the school location shutting down at the last hour and we can't risk the health of our members. Just like last year, members will be able to email or call questions in prior to the meeting that will be addressed during the live streaming if the question is pertinent to other members. Many times we get specific individual questions at our meeting which will be communicated directly with the member asking. More details will be in the Annual Report that will be mailed to members in February. Also like last year, we will do the electronic voting process. We had a much larger member participation with electronic and it protects us from a concern of not having a quorum.



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Electronic voting is here to stay and is made easier if you have a valid email on file with us. If you are not sure, please call our office at 386-2241 to verify or update it online at <https://kingdomtelco.com/contact-update/>.

2021 was a year for retirements. We had three employees retire: Steve Alton was just shy of 40 years of service and retired in March, Kathy Brown retired in September with 12 years of service, and Lynne Smith retired in October with 38 years of service. Our current employees' years of service range from 2 – 39 years. Accumulated, that comes to 306 years of experience. This is really something to be proud of as it gives our members the best customer support available in the area. Our employees work hard every day to provide you the excellence you deserve!

Until next time: enjoy your holidays and keep your families 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 members for the Board of Directors appointed are:

John Wm. Noltensmeyer, Rhineland, 236-4555  
Terry Eckley, Hatton, 387-4492  
Carlos Cope, At-Large Northern, 999-2958

Jerome Schaefer, Rhineland, 236-4366  
Dennis Taylor, Hatton, 387-4498  
Randy Smith, At-Large Northern, 387-4888

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 4 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., January 31, 2022.

## 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).

Children and grandchildren of employees, board members, former employees, and former board members are not eligible to participate.

## 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.