

polar connections

Fall 2023



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the best wifi

How to improve the speed and
coverage of your network.



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White House Senior Advisor Will McIntee, Polar Director Jim Longtin, Polar Director Cindy Hejl, U.S. Senator Kevin Cramer, Polar CEO Karl Blake, Polar Director Brian Udby, and Polar Director Gordon Johnson at the press conference.



Fiber Broadband Expands to Eastern North Dakota

Companies Invest in State's Rural Communities

Rural broadband providers broke ground July 24, 2023, on a series of multimillion dollar projects that will deliver leading-edge fiber broadband technology to rural communities across Eastern North Dakota. A groundbreaking ceremony near Casselton was hosted by Halstad Telephone Company, MLGC, Polar Communications, Red River Communications, and BEK Communications Cooperative.

"The people living in this region have been waiting a long time for this to happen," says Tom Steinolfson, CEO/GM of Red River Communications. "Speaking on behalf of my broadband colleagues across the state, we are thrilled to be able to fulfill the promise to the residents of these underserved and unserved communities who have been waiting a long time to enjoy the same connectivity as some of their neighbors in more populated areas."

Our focus is to ensure that every resident in North Dakota has access to high-speed broadband, leveling the playing field between urban and rural communities.

Polar CEO Karl Blake

In total, these rural broadband providers are building more than \$119 million worth of fiber broadband, funded by four separate state and federal funding sources, including the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

"Our focus is to ensure that every resident in North Dakota has access to high-speed broadband, leveling the playing field between urban and rural communities," says Karl Blake, CEO of Polar Communications. "North Dakota has always been the most connected state in America. With these recent funds, we'll be that much closer to 100% connectivity."

The transformational technology upgrade will generate a surge of benefits including: igniting economic opportunities for local businesses and agricultural operations, enabling rural students to realize their educational aspirations with better access to online learning platforms, strengthening healthcare services through improved telehealth capabilities, and bolstering public safety by improving communications infrastructure.

“This is a game changer for us,” says Clay Erdmann, Regional Sales Manager for Mustang Seeds, a seed supply company located just three miles south of Casselton. “We’ll be able to run our business much more efficiently with a reliable, faster connection.”

“This is an unprecedented opportunity taking place in Eastern North Dakota,” says Steinolfson. “We want to take a moment to thank the Governor’s office, our state’s congressional delegation, local and state legislators, and county officials for helping to secure the funding needed to make these projects a reality. Also, we thank the residents and businesses of our rural communities for your resilience and patience throughout this process.”



COMPANY	COUNTIES	DOLLARS
BEK Communications Cooperative	Barnes, Cass, Ransom	\$21,017,520
Halstad Telephone Company	Cass, Grand Forks, Traill	\$12,275,934
MLGC	Cass, Richland, Steele	\$31,000,000
Polar Communications	Walsh, Grand Forks, Traill, Steele	\$49,626,551
Red River Communications	Richland	\$5,269,494



Participants cut a golden fiber optic cable as part of the ground-breaking ceremony.

Construction News

Earlier this year, Polar was awarded American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grants to bring broadband Internet service to underserved locations in parts of Walsh, Grand Forks, Traill and Steele counties. The grant amounts totaled \$12.1 million with a \$4 million match from Polar. This project is supported by the North Dakota Broadband Program, awarded by the state of North Dakota, and administered by North Dakota Information Technology.

Construction is currently underway in the Forest River area with plans to complete it this fall. Residents in this area should begin receiving Polar services late this year.

Construction is slated to begin in the rural areas of Minto, Manvel, Hatton, and Mayville in 2024. Including the towns of Arvilla, Ardoch, and Warsaw.

Polar plans to conduct informational meetings in Forest River soon and the rest of the areas in Spring 2024.

“With these grant funds, Polar Communications is excited to be able to provide fiber broadband technology to underserved residents in the Red River Valley of North Dakota, says Karl Blake, CEO, Polar Communications. “This leading-edge fiber broadband technology project will spark economic opportunities for businesses and agriculture operations, facilitate educational aspirations, enhance healthcare, and bolster public safety by delivering high-speed broadband capabilities to residents who otherwise would have lesser quality services or lack the ability to participate in real-time services such as E-Learning, video streaming, telehealth and telework.”

DIRECTORY LISTING UPDATES

Bachmeier Maxine.....	3441 6th Ave Ne Northwood	701-587-5255
Bittner Mike & Jennifer	Thompson	701-599-9076
Bondy Marilyn	810 Park St W Park River	701-284-7780
Haugen Clifford and Marie.....	2125 33rd St NE Arvilla	701-343-2602
Langton Nelda.....	608 4th Ave SW Lakota	701-247-2252
Marschke James H.....	610 Brian Blvd NE Thompson	701-599-2066
Nordby Janet W.....	202 Hill Ave N Park River	701-284-6262
Punton Lonnie	1076 Robin Rd NE Grand Forks	701-772-2107
Schanilec Farms Inc.....	5847 County Rd 8 Forest River	701-248-3355
Schumacher John.....	220 16th St NE Reynolds	701-847-2014
Slaamod Dustin J (Office)	208 W 2nd Ave S Cavalier	701-265-8446
The Bridgestone Bar.....	113 W Stutsman St Pembina	701-825-6582
Till House Saloon & Grill.....	118 Main St N Lakota	701-247-2301
Vaughn Craig & Kelly.....	104 Bedrock Ln Cavalier	701-265-4195

Polar has a new building going up North of Park River. This will give us the space to store equipment and supplies as we continue to grow...over 8,000 Internet customers and counting! And, with equipment being stored safe and warm, when winter weather hits we'll be ready for anything.





Employees volunteered to work at the state Babe Ruth Baseball Tournament.



Polar employees donated backpacks and school supplies to the Northwood school.



Our ring flyers were a hit at area parades this summer.



We served a tailgate meal to support the Park River Area Aggie boosters



How to get the fastest, farthest reaching and most reliable WiFi for your home.

From upgrading your old router to using a WiFi mesh extender, we've got you covered. Here are six tips on how to improve the speed and coverage of your WiFi network at home.

1 Upgrade your old router to the GigaSpire BLAST

This next generation system has the latest WiFi 6 standard (802.11ax), which provides faster speeds, better coverage, and improved reliability compared to older WiFi standards. By upgrading to a GigaSpire BLAST, you can enjoy better performance and support for more devices.

2 Position your router in a central location

To ensure optimal WiFi coverage throughout your home, it's best to position your router in a central location, away from walls and other obstructions. This will help to minimize signal interference and ensure that your devices can connect to the network with ease. Don't worry, our Ultimate WiFi service comes with whole-home optimization and installation. Our expert technicians will ensure your system is setup to deliver the best experience, so you don't have to.

3 Use wired connections for devices that require a stable connection

This one may seem counterintuitive, but if you have devices that require a stable and consistent Internet connection, such as gaming consoles or desktop computers, it's best to use a wired connection instead of WiFi. This will help to minimize latency and ensure a stable connection.

4 Remove old devices from your network

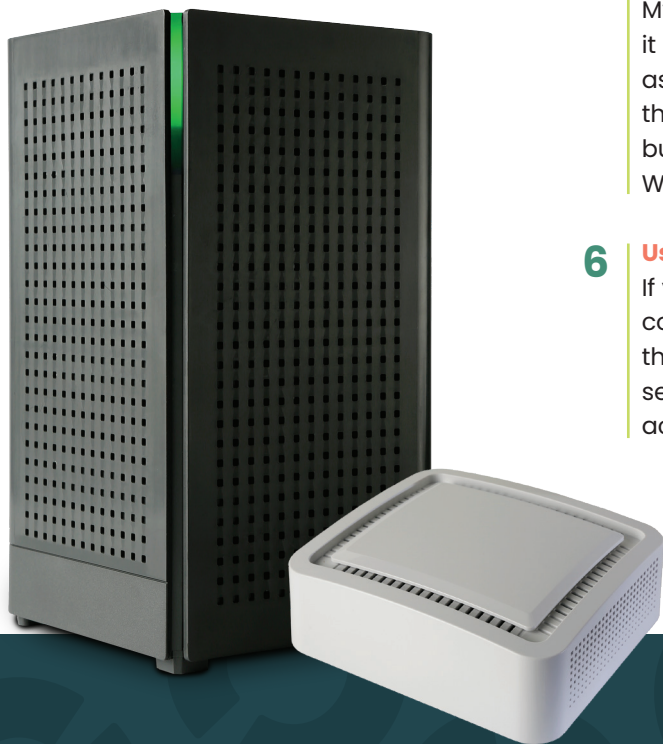
Older devices that are no longer in use or are rarely used can slow down your network. You can remove these devices from your network using the Polar WiFi app to free up bandwidth and improve WiFi performance for your other devices.

5 Enable MyPriorities in the Polar WiFi App

MyPriorities is an exclusive feature of ExperienceIQ in your app. With it enabled, you can prioritize certain types of Internet traffic, such as streaming video, online gaming, or work apps to ensure that they receive sufficient bandwidth and do not suffer from lag or buffering. Enabling MyPriorities on your router can help to improve WiFi performance for specific devices or applications.

6 Use a WiFi GigaSpire Mesh Extender

If you have a large home or areas where WiFi coverage is weak, consider using a GigaSpire u4m. A WiFi mesh extender can boost the signal of your existing router, while a mesh network can provide seamless coverage throughout your home by using multiple access points. This may sound complicated, but we assure you it's not. As part of the Polar Ultimate WiFi service, our technicians will assess where you need extended WiFi coverage and install a mesh extender for you. That's why we call it the ultimate experience; so you don't have to worry about the details. We got you.



Work with us!

Looking for a challenging position with one of the nation's leaders in rural telecommunications? Consider a career with Polar Communications. At Polar, we strive to make our company a great place to work and our communities a great place to live. Enjoy the benefits of working with tech-savvy, friendly, and hard working people! To boot, Polar offers an excellent benefits package that includes top of the line health and dental insurance, life insurance and 401k retirement plan with employer contributions. All this, in addition to paid time off and free or discounted voice and data services if you reside within our territory.

We are currently hiring for:

Customer Service Representative

As a Customer Service Representative, you'll provide professional and friendly guidance related to all service inquiries. This position has the potential for a remote work opportunity after the initial training period.

Network Operations Technician

As a Network Operations Technician you'll be involved in a wide range of exchange operations, including installation, maintenance, testing, and troubleshooting of all network operations center equipment and infrastructure.

For more information or to apply:

Ashley Nordstrom, HR Manager
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