

CONNECTIONS

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COLLABORATION, COMMITMENT, AND CONNECTIVITY

BAND
Broadband Association of North Dakota

HOW A “FLYOVER” STATE BECAME A NATIONAL LEADER IN BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY

These days, conventional wisdom would have you believe that anything west of the Appalachian Mountains and east of the Rockies is an Internet black hole—a vast expanse of land running on technology decades behind that of the Coasts.

But if you speak to a third-generation farmer in Langdon, a newspaper publisher in New Leipzig, or a performance horse breeder in Epping, you’ll soon learn that you don’t need to travel to Silicon Valley or New York City to find the best Internet speeds in America.

You can find them right here, in rural North Dakota.

According to recent data from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), more than three quarters of rural North Dakotans have access to fiber broadband, compared 2 to only 20 percent of rural residents

nationally. In fact, rural North Dakotans are more likely to have access to gigabit speeds than even urban Americans.

So, how has a “flyover” state like North Dakota emerged as a national leader in broadband connectivity?

Our unparalleled rural network can be traced back to 1953, when a group of North Dakota telephone cooperatives banded together to keep North Dakota connected. Today, almost 70 years later, this organization is known as the Broadband Association of North Dakota, or BAND.

The 15 member organizations that form BAND have laid over 40,000 miles of fiber across the state, changing the lives of folks across North Dakota. But if you ask the people doing the work, they’ll tell you that they’re just doing what North Dakotans have always done: working hard, supporting one another, and pioneering new solutions to meet the needs of their neighbors.

“The members of BAND have taken it very seriously to deploy fiber optic facilities throughout the state,” said Keith Larson, Chief Executive Officer of Dakota Central, a BAND member organization. *“Thanks to the collective efforts of the BAND members, we’ve been able to be one of the most connected states in the U.S.”*

Getting Farther, Together

It all started at Bismarck’s Patterson Hotel. In March 1953, directors from nine North Dakota telephone cooperatives gathered there with a goal to guard against unfavorable legislation, share information and resources, and ensure that high-quality telephone service remained available across North Dakota.

At the time of that fateful first meeting, a majority of rural North Dakota residents still relied on party-line service, in which wires were strung from pole to pole and long distance calls were prohibitively expensive. Today, rural areas of the state have access to some of the fastest and

most affordable broadband technology anywhere in the nation. And while the technology that these companies provide has evolved over the past six decades, their mission—to ensure the highest quality communication technology is accessible to all North Dakotans—has not wavered.

In 1996, this mission led 14 BAND member companies to form the Dakota Carrier Network (DCN), a high-speed, large-capacity fiber backbone that spans the entire state. In this symbiotic relationship, BAND serves as a representative body, providing advocacy and education for its member organizations, while DCN serves as the single point-of-contact for the North Dakota businesses and government networks—including all K-12 schools, colleges and universities—who rely on the over 40,000 miles of fiber optic cabling deployed across the state.

Collaboration between the providers that make up DCN and BAND has laid the groundwork for innovation in our state, including an unprecedented educational technology system. In July 2019, DCN successfully connected every K-12 school in the state to fiber-based one-gigabit Internet, becoming the first state in the nation to achieve this milestone. Now all North Dakota schools, regardless of size or location, have access to the same high-speed Internet.

Then, in March 2020, thousands of North Dakota students suddenly needed to complete their school year remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Rural broadband providers were able to connect 99.8% of North Dakota students to high-speed home Internet in just a matter of weeks—all because a group of telephone cooperatives realized, more than half a century ago, that they could get farther by working together.

Serving Our Neighbors

If this spirit of collaboration is what paved the way for a broadband revolution in North Dakota, then a commitment to the people they serve is what keeps rural broadband providers charging ahead.

The member companies that form BAND and DCN continue to bring state-of-the-art technology to their communities not because it is profitable, but because it's the right thing to do. Because unlike large national corporations, they are serving their neighbors, not just faceless customers.

They are serving people like Sean Feil, who farms barley, wheat, and soybeans 20 miles from Langdon. Before BAND member United Communications dug fiber out to Sean's farm, if he needed to look up equipment on the Internet, he had to drive all the way back into town.

Now, a point-to-point Internet connection allows Sean to keep up-to-date on markets, weather, and equipment right from the field. But

more importantly, broadband allows Sean to spend more time with his wife and their three young children.

"During the busy times, I can still stay in touch with my wife and ask how things are going back home," he said. "And every night before bed, I FaceTime my kids to say goodnight and tell them I love them."

They are serving people like Gene Vandenberg, owner of Sandhill Performance Quarter Horses near Epping, who uses services offered by Northwest Communications Cooperative (NCC) to take care of his horses. Before he had access to broadband that allowed him to check on his horses at night, Gene was often forced to get out of bed to go check on them.

"I was lucky if I'd get four or five hours of sleep a night, and checking on the horses took up to 45 minutes," he said.

"Now, I can look at the cameras to check on the horses, and I can be done in 10 minutes."

And they are serving people like Jill Friesz, the owner of a rural publishing house who is on a mission to save small-town newspapers from going extinct. When Jill took over the Grant County News 15 years ago, creating a newspaper by hand was a day-long process, not including the actual reporting, writing, and distribution.

But now, thanks to high-speed Internet from her local broadband provider, WRT, Jill can create and distribute a paper in a fraction of the time.

"Broadband has completely changed the newspaper industry," Jill said. "The sky's the limit for us. We can really do anything that anybody else can do, especially now that we're connected to the world."

For the 15 local broadband providers that make up BAND, people like Sean, Gene, and Jill are the reason North Dakota continues to provide the fastest, most reliable Internet in the nation.

Stories like theirs prove that you don't need to move to the Coasts to live a prosperous and fulfilling life; with the Internet at their fingertips, North Dakotans can continue to live in the rural communities they love while building their businesses, accessing the highest quality of education, and staying connected to the rest of the world.

Working together to serve our neighbors—it's how North Dakota emerged as a nationwide leader in broadband connectivity almost 70 years ago, and how we will continue to lead for many decades to come.



KRIS RAINSBERRY IS 2020 POLAR EAGLE AWARD RECIPIENT



Kris Rainsberry has been named Polar Communications' Eagle Award recipient for 2020. He was nominated for this distinguished award and voted on by his peers, based on the following qualifications: goes above and beyond normal job responsibilities, will do whatever it takes to get the job done, provides new and creative ideas, shows outstanding company dedication, demonstrates teamwork and accepts challenges, is involved in the community and/or volunteer work, demonstrates outstanding customer service and/or assistance, and promotes a positive attitude.

Kris is a Field Operations Technician and has been with the company since July of 2019. Prior to starting at Polar, he worked for North Dakota Telephone Company in Devils Lake for 13 years. His duties include installation, maintenance, and repair of voice, Internet, and video services; installing and maintaining customer premise equipment; and assisting in maintaining fiber facilities throughout Polar's network.

Kris and his family live in Lakota. Congratulations Kris!

APPLICATIONS BEING ACCEPTED FOR POLAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Applications for the Polar Communications Board of Directors will be accepted for the election to be held during Polar's Annual Members Meeting on June 10, 2021. Positions to be filled are as follows:

District 1 – Position currently held by Jim Longtin is up for re-election.

District 2 – Position currently held by Wes Welch is up for re-election.

District 3 – Position currently held by Brian Udby is up for re-election.

POLAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINATION PROCEDURE STEPS:

1. Any qualified member meeting the requirements of Section 3, Article IV of the company by-laws may request an application and petition from the cooperative headquarters. The forms can be picked up at Polar's front desk or can be found on Polar's website at polarcomm.com/careers.
2. Members shall submit a completed application and a petition containing a minimum of thirty (30) signatures of cooperative members from the district in which the applicant resides. Please note that a husband and wife constitute one membership. Either spouse may sign the petition as a member; however, the signature of a husband and wife on the petition may only be counted as one.
3. Completed applications and petitions should be submitted by March 26, 2021, at 4:00p.m. to Polar Communications, Attn: Shari Flanders, PO Box 270, Park River, ND, 58270. Please contact Shari at 701.284.4343 with questions or email sflanders@polartel.com.
4. All nominations by petition are subject to verification. Once verification is complete, the candidate will be notified, and their name will appear on the ballot at Polar's Annual Members Meeting.

To find the service areas that make up each district, please refer to Article IV, Section 2 of the bylaws of Polar Communications found in your telephone directory.

LEVEL UP

What Internet Speed Do You Need For Gaming?

Your Internet connection speed can mean the difference between life and death — at least when it comes to online games. Whether you're trying to win a game in NBA2K or fending off Creepers in Minecraft, a fast Internet connection makes a big difference.



What speed do you gaming needs

50MB
 \$47.95
 \$57.95 BBO*

100MB
 \$67.95
 \$77.95 BBO*

500MB
 \$137.95
 \$147.95 BBO*

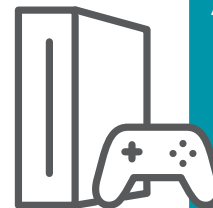
1GB
 \$249.95
 \$259.95 BBO*

GameOver

LOWER YOUR PING
STOP THE LAG



INCREASE YOUR SPEED!



INCREASE YOUR SPEED AND RECEIVE A \$100 BILL CREDIT.
CONTACT US TODAY FOR MORE SPEED!

284.7221 | 800.284.7222
customerservice@polartel.com
www.thinkpolar.com



*Broadband only, no landline required. Some restrictions apply, call for details. Offer ends February 26, 2021. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

WASHINGTON, DC YOUTH TOUR

2021

High School students ages 16 or 17, apply for the 2021 Foundation for Rural Service Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., June 5-9!

All Expenses
Paid Plus \$50
Spending Cash!



DEADLINE
MARCH 5, 2021

WHY SHOULD I APPLY?

- Educates students about the policy making process through meetings with Congressional and FCC staff members.
- Students gain insight into the challenges of providing quality broadband in their rural communities.
- An opportunity to visit famous historical sites including the Lincoln Memorial, the U.S. Capitol, Mount Vernon and Arlington National Cemetery.
- Allows students to meet youth from rural areas across the country, develop leadership skills and help point their communities toward the future.

QUESTIONS: 701.284.4361 or clahaise@polartel.com

DOWNLOAD AN APPLICATION AT
[POLARCOMM.COM/ABOUT-US/
#SCHOLARSHIPS](https://polarcomm.com/about-us/#scholarships)

Parents or guardians must be a voice or broadband Internet customer of Polar Communications or its subsidiaries. Students must be a high school student age 16 or 17 at the time of the Youth Tour. FRS will not accept any student age 18 or over.

Be sure to check our website for scholarship opportunities.
polarcomm.com/about-us/#scholarships

If you know a student, please encourage them to apply. Applications are due soon!

For questions on any of the scholarships, please contact
Carol LaHaise: 701-284-4361 or clahaise@polartel.com.

POLAR AWARDS \$4,050 IN GRANTS TO AREA SCHOOLS

Polar Communications recently awarded three schools in our service territory \$4,050 in Polar Technology Grants. These grants provide funding for PK-12 schools enabling the purchase of hardware, software, contracted services, and other technologies that target student achievement through technology integration. Applicants were required to submit their proposals, including an overview of their project abstract, goals, narrative, and budget information. Accredited PK-12 schools in Polar's service territory were eligible to apply. Polar Communications awards up to \$5,000 per year with each grant, not to exceed \$2,500. This is the 13th year that Polar has provided this grant to schools we serve, totaling almost \$60,000 given to enhance technology in the classroom. We are proud to invest in our schools and the community providing value for the future!

SCHOOLS WINNING THE 2020-21 POLAR TECHNOLOGY GRANTS WERE THE FOLLOWING:



LAKOTA PUBLIC SCHOOL
Coding: The More You Know Project
\$1,250

Pictured L-R: Secondary Principal Beau Snyder, Polar Board Member Lori Dahl, and Lakota Instructor Brandie Ulland.

**FORDVILLE-LANKIN
PUBLIC SCHOOL**
Windy Acres Energy Project
\$1,000

Fordville Students and Polar Board Member Jon McMillan (center).



PARK RIVER AREA SCHOOL
High School STEAM Aviation
Unit Project
\$1,800

Pictured L-R: Polar Board Member Wes Welch and PRAS Instructor Brent Arendt.



TECH TIPS



Tech Tips

HOW TO RESTART YOUR ROUTER

Is your Internet taking longer than usual to load? Are you wondering how to use the latest video conferencing software? Whatever your tech needs, Tech Tips from Polar is here to help. We provide the knowledge and tools you need to make your technology work for you, all in a series of short, entertaining how-to videos.

VISIT POLARCOMM.COM/RESOURCES TO START GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR TECHNOLOGY.

SETTING UP EMAIL ON YOUR MOBILE PHONE

Gone are the days when communicating via email required a desktop computer and a dial-up connection. Today, we can read and respond to emails from virtually anywhere, at any time—all it takes is a mobile app.

But while mobile email has accelerated our communication and simplified our lives, the process of setting up email on a mobile phone can be quite complicated. In fact, it's one of the most frequently asked questions we receive. That's why today, we are going to walk you through setting up email on both Apple and Android devices.

If you are more of a visual learner, watch our latest Tech Tip video to follow along with tech expert Riley. You can find these videos and more on our website at polarcomm.com/resources.



Your Friendly Neighbor Tech Expert, Riley

ADDING AN EMAIL ACCOUNT TO YOUR ANDROID



Gmail is to Android as Mail is to Apple. Let's get started by adding a new Gmail account:

1. Open the Gmail app and navigate to the "Settings" section.
2. Select "Add Account".
3. Select "Personal (IMAP/POP)" and then "Next".
4. Enter your email address and tap "Next".
5. Choose the type of email account you will be using (IMAP is best in most cases.)

6. Enter the password for your email address and tap "Next".

Next, you will have to adjust the Incoming Server Settings.

1. Username: Enter your email address.
2. Password: Enter the password for your email account.
3. Server: This is your domain name preceded by "mail" (like mail.example.com).
4. Port and Security Type: If you're using IMAP, choose either
 1. "Secure" - Port: 993 and Security Type: SSL/TLS (Accept all certificates)
 2. "Insecure" - Port: 143 and Security Type: None (Accept all certificates)
5. When all fields are completed, select "Next."

You will also be asked to adjust the External Server Settings. All information required for this section will be the same as above. Finally, you can complete your setup by configuring these Account Options.

1. Email Checking Frequency: Set how often you would like your device to check for new emails.
2. Notify me when email arrives: Uncheck this if you would not like to be notified of new emails; otherwise, leave it selected.
3. Sync email from this account: Leave this selected if you want email to be checked automatically.
4. Tap "Next."

ADDING AN EMAIL ACCOUNT TO YOUR IPHONE



There are two ways to set up a Mail account on your Apple device. If you already use an email provider like Outlook or Yahoo, Mail can use your email address and password to automatically set up your email account.

1. Go to "Settings" on your Apple device and select "Passwords & Accounts."
2. Select "Add Account," then choose your existing email provider.

3. Enter your email address and password.
4. Select "Next" and wait for Mail to verify your account.
5. Choose information from your email account, like Contacts or Calendars.
6. Select "Save".

Easy enough, right? But if your existing email provider is not included in the list of options, you may need to set up your Mail account manually. Before you get started, make sure that you know the settings for your existing account.

1. Go to "Settings" and select "Passwords & Accounts."
2. Select "Add Account," tap "Other," and then tap "Add Mail Account".
3. Enter your name, email address, password, and a brief description of your account.
4. Select "Next". Mail will find your email settings and finish your account setup.
5. Select "Done".

It may seem like a long list of complicated instructions, but once they've been completed, you will be able to enjoy the convenience of mobile email. If you have any questions, or if you'd like one of our qualified techs to walk with you through the process, please give us a call at 888-700-7652.

That's it for this edition of Tech Tips! Check out polarcomm.com/resources for more tips to make your technology work for you.



POLAR STREAMING

THE NEXT GENERATION OF TV

Polar Streaming TV is the new full-featured TV service delivered to your devices including TVs, laptops, smartphones, and tablets. Don't miss a thing, replay, rewind, and record your favorite shows from your favorite devices - the ultimate TV viewing experience.

- > Top channels of live sports, entertainment, news and more
- > Watch on your TV and devices
- > No cable boxes or contracts
- > 2 Streams and Cloud DVR Included
- > Record at home, watch anywhere

Visit our website for package options, pricing, channel listings and more.

[www.polarcomm.com/
residential/streaming-tv](http://www.polarcomm.com/residential/streaming-tv)



Start streaming with us today!

DIRECTORY AD SALES

Sales executives from Pinnacle Marketing Group will soon begin selling advertising for the official 2021–22 Polar directory. This year executives will be contacting you by phone, email or appointment. When you advertise in the Polar directory your ad will automatically be featured in our online directory at no additional charge. All website and email addresses are linked for easy access to your business. Both the printed and online directories are great tools to connect with your customers and increase visibility.

Get the most out of your advertising investment by placing an ad in the Polar Yellow Pages and online directory. For more information regarding advertising, contact Pinnacle Marketing Group at 800.343.8086 or visit www.pinnaclempg.com.



Rod Wentzel



Gregory Meyer



Kelly Gordon

PLAY OUR FREE COLLEGE BASKETBALL CONTEST

Fill out your bracket and enjoy friendly competition with others in your community. It's easy to enter and fun to play. Plus, all participants have an opportunity to win one of our awesome prizes!

ENTER BEFORE MARCH 19.

POLAR

Sign up to play between February 12 and March 18 at: polar.picketchallenge.com



Clip this page and keep it with your Polar directory

DIRECTORY UPDATES

Adams Jr. Joseph A. 320 N Raymond St Northwood.....	701-587-5677	Jorgensen Ron res Northwood	701-587-1624
Baxter Russell W 201 Auburn Dr Grafton.....	701-352-3893	Kassian Dan PO Box 437 Lakota.....	701-247-2504
Blixt Roland farm Gardner	701-967-8575	Koda Insurance Agency 307 Main St W Cavalier	701-265-8593
Buchholz Lois res Arthur	701-967-8531	Newell Donna C. res Cavalier	701-265-4200
Case Henry 504 Great Northern Northwood	701-587-3573	Nygaard S 810 Park St W Park River.....	701-284-6999
Draxton Delphine res Aneta	701-326-4224	Summers H res Park River.....	701-284-7191
Einarson Kathy A. 301 Bjornson Dr Cavalier.....	701-265-3773	The Farmhouse 9561 County 12 Cavalier.....	701-265-4004
Fricke Donald farm Grafton	701-352-3334	Tibert Bill & Jody 6060 147 Ave NE Minto.....	701-248-3891
Fricke John 14316 County Road 9 Grafton.....	701-352-0018	Wark Matthew farm Grafton.....	701-922-1129
Fricke Mark 7169 145 Ave NE Grafton.....	701-352-0028	Weinlaeder Scott 6879 158 Ave NE Grafton.....	701-352-4030
Hartz Delma 61 Borg Dr Mountain.....	701-993-8648	Young Holly 217 Pennsylvania Ave Neche	701-886-7482



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CONNECTIONS

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Chris Nelson, Edinburg
James Longtin, Neche
Wes Welch, Park River
Gordon Johnson, Cavalier

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Karl Blake



This institution is an equal opportunity provider
and employer.

SAVE THE DATE

POLAR COMMUNICATIONS
ANNUAL MEETING
JUNE 10, 2021

