

# CONNECTIONS

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Spring 2022

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# BUILDING THE NATION'S BEST BROADBAND NETWORK *Together*

In 2021, Internet providers like Comcast and Sparklight have announced plans to expand their fiber networks and deliver gigabit speeds to rural communities across the country.

For the Americans who are just now receiving access to fiber Internet, this technology is life-changing—affording them faster-than-ever connectivity to family, friends, and the world. But for thousands of rural North Dakotans, it's old news.

While big, out-of-state broadband providers are making a big deal about starting to bring fiber to rural communities, the local members of the Broadband Association of North Dakota (BAND) have already done it.

Over the past 68 years, BAND members have invested millions of dollars, empowered one another, and embraced the tenacious work ethic that North Dakotans are known for. Together, we've built the most robust fiber network in America—and now, customers like you are reaping the benefits.

“A group of telephone cooperatives realized, more than half a century ago, that they could get farther by working together, ”

When you sign on for service with your local BAND member, you receive more than just Internet. You benefit from the shared resources, knowledge, and unparalleled infrastructure that have been built over nearly seven decades.

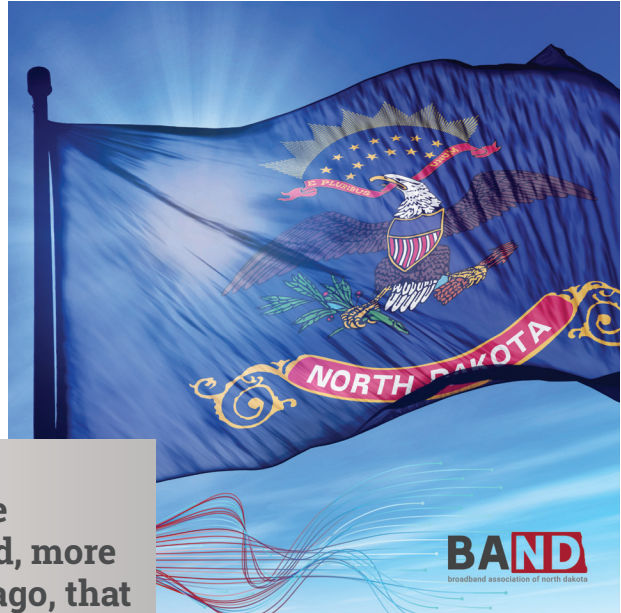
## Laying the Groundwork for Innovation

The work to bring fiber broadband to rural North Dakotans began in 1953, long before the directors of nine North Dakota telephone cooperatives could have imagined what the Internet would one day become.

Those original members joined forces to expand high-quality, low-cost telephone service across North Dakota. At the time, most 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. While the technology that we have used to communicate has evolved over the past six decades, our mission—to ensure the highest quality communication technology is accessible to all North Dakotans—has not wavered.

In 1996, this commitment led 14 BAND member companies to form the Dakota Carrier Network (DCN), a high-speed, large-capacity fiber backbone. Today, locally-owned providers serve 97 percent of North Dakota's geographic territory, offering Internet speeds of at least 1 Gig in over 300 rural communities. We have laid over 40,000 miles of fiber across the state, connecting businesses, residents, and schools with Internet speeds 100 times faster than the national average.

Collaboration between the member organizations that make up DCN and BAND has laid the groundwork for innovation in our state and served as inspiration for rural networks across the country. In 2021 alone, the member organizations that form BAND and DCN have made extraordinary strides to connect more North Dakotans to fiber.



In August, Polar Communications received \$4 million from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to continue expanding our broadband network in Walsh and Grand Forks counties.

This fall, DRN celebrated the grand opening of their Casselton office as part of their strategic plan to expand service in eastern North Dakota.

Each of these milestones has been made possible because a group of telephone cooperatives realized, more than half a century ago, that they could get farther by working together.

While some of the biggest names in broadband are just beginning to deploy fiber to rural communities, the 15 members of BAND are already working toward the future—accelerating speeds up to 5 Gig, 10 Gig, and beyond. Because when you work hard, and work together, the possibilities are endless.

**That's the power of connected collaboration.  
That's the power of BAND.**

# CAITLIN EVENSON IS 2021 POLAR EAGLE AWARD RECIPIENT



Caitlin Evenson has been named Polar Communications' Eagle Award recipient for 2021. She was nominated for this distinguished award and voted on by her 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.

Caitlin is an accountant and has been with the company since April of 2014. Her duties include payroll and employee benefits, bank reconciliations, monthly financials, and maintaining capital budget records.

Caitlin resides in Edinburg with her husband and three children.

*Congratulations, Caitlin!*

## WELCOME NEW EMPLOYEES

We are excited to announce the recent hiring of two new employees, Ashley Nordstrom and Tamara Cudmore.

Ashley Nordstrom began on December 6, 2021, as the Human Resources Manager. Ashley will be responsible for strategic leadership and initiatives that promote accountability to the organization's culture. She will develop, direct and coordinate human resources activities such as employment law, policy development, compensation, benefits, CWA contract, recruitment, training, and employee relations.

Ashley comes to Polar with over fourteen years' HR experience previously working for Motor Coach Industries, Altru Health System, and Target Corporation. She currently holds the College Relations Director position on the North Dakota State Human Resources Board and serves on the Pembina County Job Development Authority Board. Ashley and her family live in Cavalier, North Dakota.

Tamara Cudmore began on January 3, 2022, as a Customer Service Representative. She will be responsible for responding to all customer inquiries related to phone, TV, and broadband services. She will also assist with new services and billing questions.

Prior to coming to Polar, Tamara worked at DigiKey in Thief River Falls, Minnesota for over 20 years. She was most recently employed at Sunshine Kids Center in Park River. Tamara resides in Park River with her husband and three boys.



Ashley Nordstrom



Tamara Cudmore

*Welcome Ashley & Tamara!*

# TECHNOLOGY GRANT AWARDED TO DAKOTA PRAIRIE SCHOOL

Polar Communications recently awarded Dakota Prairie Public School in Petersburg, North Dakota a \$2,500 Technology Grant. They will use this grant to implement their project submission, "You Can Fly."

The Polar Technology Grant Program provides funding for PK-12 schools enabling them to purchase 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. All accredited PK-12 schools in Polar's service territory were eligible to apply. This is the 14th year Polar has provided this grant program to the schools we serve. Over \$65,000 has been given to enhance technology in the classroom. We are proud to invest in our schools and the community, providing value for the future!



*Jay Slade, Superintendent; Carolyn Berdahl, Technology Coordinator; Kip Hovdenes, Vocational Technology Instructor and Polar Board Member Lori Dahl.*

## 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 9, 2022. Positions to be filled are as follows:

**District 1** –Position currently held by Amber Meyer is up for re-election.

**District 2** –Position currently held by Jon McMillan is being vacated.

**District 3** –Position currently held by Cindy Hejl 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](http://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 25, 2022, 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](mailto: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.

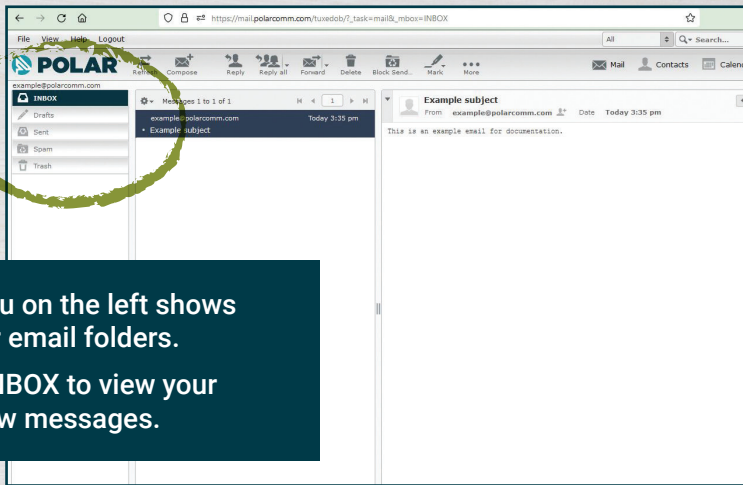
To find the service areas that make up each district, please refer to Article IV, Section 2 of the bylaws of Polar Communications found in your telephone directory.

# CHANGES COMING TO WEBMAIL

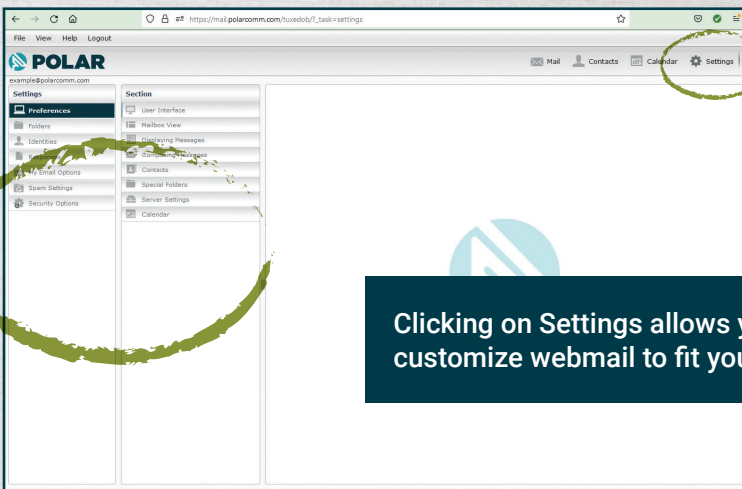
Polar Webmail users will notice a change to the user interface when logging in on March 1, 2022. This new look will be more user friendly and intuitive, similar to traditional email platforms.



New Login Screen



The menu on the left shows your email folders. Click INBOX to view your new messages.



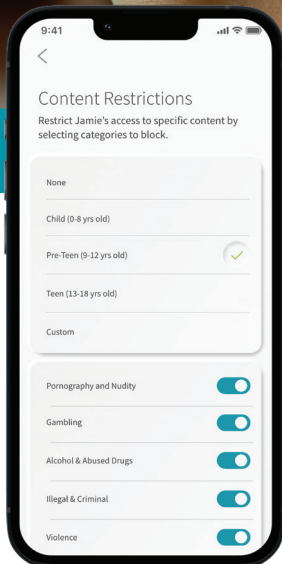
Clicking on Settings allows you to customize webmail to fit your needs.





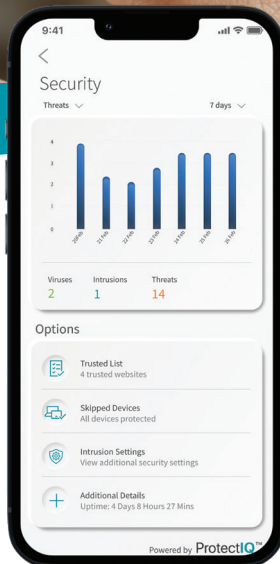
# Imagine

Simple, easy to control and worry free WiFi



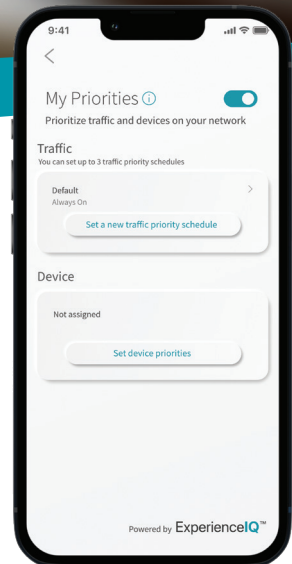
## Usage, Insights and Control

Proactively identifies and alerts you on ways to enhance device connectivity. Now from a single profile you can monitor usage, pause the Internet, add time limits and content restrictions and check signal strength.



## Safe, Secure, Peace of Mind

The security dashboard powered by ProtectIQ™ shows you total threats, intrusions, and viruses blocked over time. You can even see protected devices and total protection uptime.

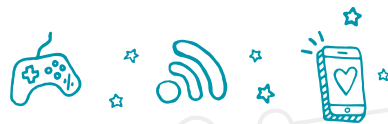


## Device and Activity Priority

My Priorities powered by ExperienceIQ™ gives you the power to set which devices should be prioritized over others. Plus you can prioritize by activity, such as work, to make sure your quality of service is maintained for things like Zoom or Teams calls.

## Download Polar WiFi App

Attractive and intuitive, the Polar WiFi App makes it easier to create a tailored WiFi experience that gives you complete control over every aspect of your connected home. Download on the App Store or Google Play by searching Polar Wi-Fi.



# POLAR WIFI EXPERIENCE

## Everything you want in WiFi is everything we offer.

Say goodbye to what you thought you knew about connectivity. Say goodbye to interference, dead spots, and low bandwidth, too. With our GigaSpire BLAST system, your experience is sensational, everywhere in the house. It's the newest technology and the best performance.

### Powerful Wi-Fi in every corner of your home.

Polar Ultimate WiFi starts with 100% free installation. We will deliver your system, optimize your WiFi coverage, and connect your devices. Your entire home will have coverage with fast, reliable WiFi.

### Control your life with applications and services.

Enable a guest WiFi network, manage network access, with parental controls, and enjoy secure protection from malware and viruses. All from the intuitive Polar CommandIQ® App.

### It's Peace of Mind Delivered.

Enjoy a stress-free, worry-free experience with WiFi installed, supported, and managed by Polar. Updates. Assistance. Support. That's reliability you can count on.

### WiFi 6

It's the most advanced WiFi standard that's faster and optimized for performance in today's busy smart home environments.

### Dual Band Support

Take advantage of all the capabilities of WiFi 6 (802.11ax) by using both the 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz bands. With 8x8 at 5 GHz and 4x4 at 2.4 GHz, Polar GigaSpire BLAST is the most powerful dual band Wi-Fi system in the industry.

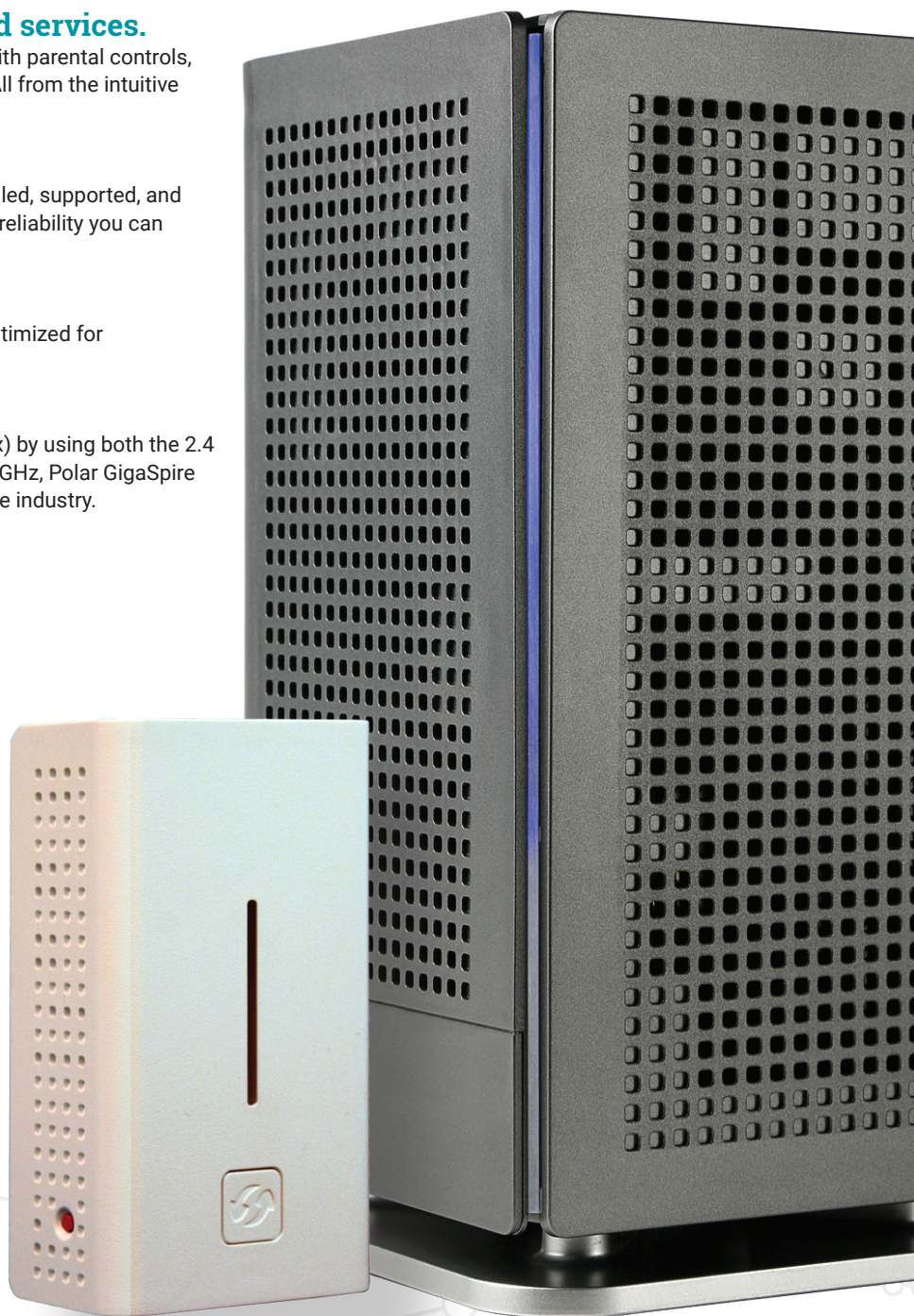
### ULTIMATE WIFI - \$12.95/mo.

- » WiFi 6 GigaSpire Blast Router
- » Optimized equipment placement
- » Polar WiFi App: network control
- » ProtectIQ: network threat protection
- » ExperiencIQ: manage content, devices, applications, screen time, usage, and more
- » Worry-free remote technical support

### PREMIUM WIFI - \$9.95/mo.

- » WiFi 6 GigaSpire Blast Router
- » Optimized equipment placement
- » Polar WiFi App: network control
- » ProtectIQ: network threat protection
- » Worry-free remote technical support

Extend your coverage with the GigaMesh, a high performance compliment to extend your WiFi from any outlet. \$4.95/mo.



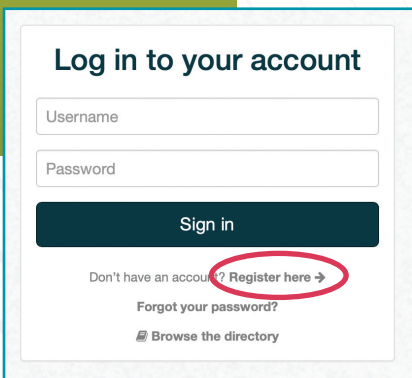
# New! POLAR E-BILL APP

Polar's eBill Mobile App provides a wide range of options for managing your Polar account. Pay your bill safely and securely, view your billing statements, check your usage, look up information from our online directory, and more! Find it in the App Store or Google Play by searching for Polar eBill.

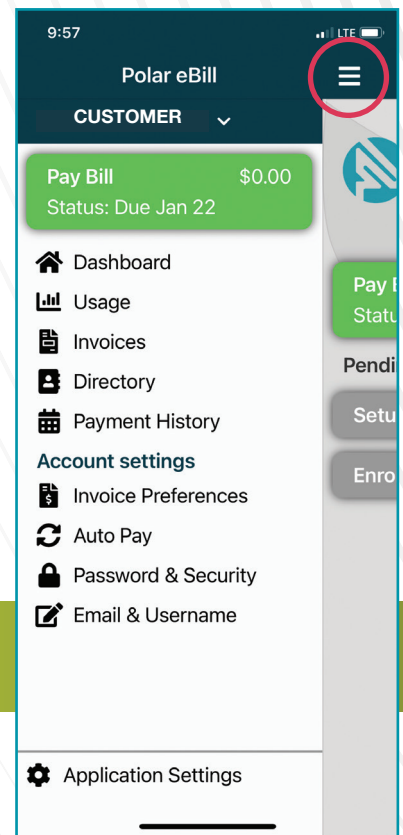


If you already have a Polar E-Statement account set up, you can log in using your existing username and password.

If you do not have an account set up, we can help you! Use your most recent invoice to register for a new Polar E-Statement account by going to [polarcomm.com/login](http://polarcomm.com/login) and clicking on E-Statement/Bill Pay and then Register here.



Click on the menu bar to see additional options.



Please contact us if you have any questions or need help setting up your Polar E-Statement account. We are open Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. and can be reached at 701-284-7221 or [customerservice@polarcel.com](mailto:customerservice@polarcel.com).





# FOCUS ON YOUR BUSINESS *not* YOUR TECHNOLOGY



## Services we offer:

- » Managed Firewalls
- » Managed Data Backup
- » VPN Connections
- » Network Configuration
- » Network Security
- » Network Performance
- » Installation & Maintenance of Switching Networks
- » Hardware Purchasing
- » Software Licensing Management
- » Technical Assistance Support
- » Bandwidth Management
- » Anti-virus Software
- » Managed WiFi
- » Patch Management
- » Network Management
- » Remote Access
- » Desktop/Server Management

As a technology solutions provider, our expertise and state-of-the-art network can provide scale and skill to elevate your business. We help organizations plan for, design, implement, operate, and manage the right technologies to improve the way you do business and help you focus on what you do best.

Extreme IT does managed services differently, tailoring offerings to each business's individual needs and budget rather than handing over a one-size-fits-all package. Let our team of professionals show how we can help with your IT needs.



**Eliminate the IT burden for your business.**  
Call 284-7221 or email [extremeit@polartel.com](mailto:extremeit@polartel.com) and an Extreme IT specialist will help identify your needs and develop a plan that works for you.

701-284-7221  
[polarcomm.com/extremeIT](http://polarcomm.com/extremeIT)  
[extremeIT@polartel.com](mailto:extremeIT@polartel.com)

# EXTREME IT

powered by  **POLAR** 9



# TECH TIP

## Say Goodbye to Scam Calls

How many times have you picked up your phone, seen that the call is coming from a familiar area code, and answered, only to hear an automated voice on the other end warning you that your car's extended warranty is about to expire?

Year after year, unwanted calls, including spoofed robocalls, are the number one consumer complaint made to the FCC. And these fake calls aren't just intrusive and annoying; in many cases, they are actually illegal.

Today, we are sharing a few strategies to stop unwanted calls. If you are more of a visual learner, watch our latest Tech Tip video to follow along with tech expert Riley.

### 1. JOIN THE DO-NOT-CALL REGISTRY

One of the first steps to avoiding spam calls is adding your number to the national Do-Not-Call Registry, which prohibits telemarketers from calling your registered numbers. To do this, simply visit [DoNotCall.gov](https://www.donotcall.gov) to register your home or mobile number for free.

### 2. IGNORE UNKNOWN CALLERS

Another simple tip is to avoid answering calls from blocked or unknown numbers. Both iPhone and Android devices have features to help you ignore these unknown calls. With iOS 13 or higher installed on your iPhone, enable the Silence Unknown Callers feature in your Settings. Each suspicious call will be sent to voicemail and appear on your Recents lists so you can see and return the call if it's legitimate. While the process will vary among Android devices, you can typically open the Phone app and enter the settings menu. Find the option for blocking numbers and activate the feature.

There are also plenty of third-party apps available to help you identify and block unwanted calls. A few popular options are Hiya, Nomorobo, and Truecaller.

### 3. WHEN IN DOUBT, HANG UP

Next, if you do answer a call from an unknown number and hear a recording such as, "Hello, can you hear me?" just hang up. The same goes when you're asked to press a number before being connected to a representative. When you answer a suspicious call and interact with the prompts, it lets spammers know that your number is real and you may be vulnerable to a scam. They can then sell your number to another bad actor or begin targeting you more frequently.

### 4. REPORT SCAM CALLS

Finally, join the fight to stop robocalls and sleazy telemarketers in their tracks by reporting any scam calls you receive to the FTC. Report online at [Report Fraud.FTC.Gov](https://www.ftc.gov/report-fraud) or call the FTC at 1-877-FTC-HELP.

That's it for this edition of Tech Tips! Check out [polarcomm.com/category/tech-tips](https://polarcomm.com/category/tech-tips) for more tips to make your technology work for you.

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 blogs and videos. Scan the QR code using your cell phone camera app to learn more!

*Learn More!*



*Congrats!*  
**PICK-IT BOWL  
 CHALLENGE  
 WINNERS**



Congratulations to the winners of our Pick-It Bowl Challenge college football contest! Out of 61 participants in the community, Philip Landis of Orr earned the most points in the contest and won a 6 months free one-camera video surveillance package with installation plus 6 months broadband Internet speed increase. Randy Christinson of St. Thomas came in second place and won a \$100 gift card and Rachel Ramsay of Cavalier and Julie Thompson of Park River were randomly selected among all participants and each won a \$50 gift card. Thanks to all who participated! Be sure to sign up for our March Mania basketball contests beginning in March.




PLAY OUR FREE  
**COLLEGE  
 BASKETBALL  
 CONTESTS**

Fill out your brackets 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!

**Men's games start Thursday, March 17**  
**Women's games start Friday, March 18**



Sign up and play at: [polar.pickitchallenge.com](http://polar.pickitchallenge.com)

 Clip this page and keep it with your Polar directory

## DIRECTORY UPDATES

|                                      |                                 |              |                                       |                                  |              |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Austfjord Kayla                      | 9170 132nd Ave NE Cavalier..... | 701-265-3190 | Meyer L R                             | Res Neche .....                  | 701-886-7484 |
| Baer Katho L.                        | Res Edmore .....                | 701-644-2306 | Nist Leo and Kathie                   | 2254 38th St NE Larimore.....    | 701-343-3106 |
| Bravera Bank                         | 220 S Main St Northwood.....    | 701-581-9125 | Pinke Eldon & Carol                   | 105 Deaconess Ct Northwood ..... | 701-581-3088 |
| Bravera Bank                         | 220 S Main St Northwood.....    | 701-587-5921 | Sweeney Farms                         | 1997 20th Ave NE Larimore .....  | 701-343-3206 |
| Cook John W                          | res Park River .....            | 701-284-6831 | Taco John's (Love's Travel Stop)      | 7988 160th Ave NE Drayton .....  | 701-454-3075 |
| Fjeld Jana                           | res Park River .....            | 701-284-6328 | The Bridgestone Bar & Grill, Inc.     | 113 W Stutsman St Pembina .....  | 701-825-6581 |
| Flom Dale                            | 608 4th Ave SW Lakota.....      | 701-247-2303 | Veum Raymond                          | 810 Park St W Park River.....    | 701-284-6084 |
| Givand Karen                         | res Cavalier.....               | 701-265-4405 | Wild Prairie Pork - Nelson County Sow | 4450 111th Ave NE Lakota .....   | 701-247-2150 |
| Johnson Mina                         | 221 2nd St E Lakota .....       | 701-247-2122 |                                       |                                  |              |
| Knudson David W                      | 2312 35th St NE Larimore.....   | 701-343-3407 |                                       |                                  |              |
| Love's Travel Stops & Country Stores | 7988 160th Ave NE Drayton ..... | 701-454-3070 |                                       |                                  |              |



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Park River, ND 58270

## CONNECTIONS

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### Business Office:

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800.284.7222  
[customerservice@polartel.com](mailto:customerservice@polartel.com)

### Board of Directors:

Amber Meyer, St. Thomas  
Jon McMillan, Fordville  
Lori Dahl, Lakota  
Cynthia Hejl, Arthur  
Brian Udby, Lankin  
Chris Nelson, Edinburg  
James Longtin, Neche  
Wes Welch, Park River  
Gordon Johnson, Cavalier

### Chief Executive Officer:

Karl Blake



**GIG-CAPABLE  
PROVIDER**

This institution is an equal opportunity provider  
and employer.

## ATTENTION STUDENTS!

Scholarship applications are due soon!

Check our website for scholarship opportunities -  
[polarcomm.com/about-us/#scholarships](http://polarcomm.com/about-us/#scholarships).

For questions, please contact  
Carol LaHaise: 701-284-4361 or  
[clahaise@polartel.com](mailto:clahaise@polartel.com).

