

CONNECTIONS

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LOCAL BUSINESS, GLOBAL IMPACT

Broadband makes
e-commerce possible

For many, the season's first snowfall and the sight of twinkling lights hanging from the trees bring back memories of gazing through shop windows like little Ralphie in *A Christmas Story*, scanning the glittering displays of toys until your eyes finally land on your dream gift.

But much like Ralphie's Red Ryder Carbine Action 200-Shot Range Model Air Rifle, those days of window shopping are a thing of the past, as more and more shoppers are turning online to find the perfect gifts.

The 2019 holiday season is projected to break online shopping records, with digital spending during November and December expected to reach \$143.7 billion—up 14.1% from last year. To keep up with the ever-increasing demand for toys, books, gadgets, and devices delivered right to consumers' doorsteps, businesses across the country, including right here in North Dakota, rely on the Internet.

Katie Skoog is the founder of Simple Life Pattern Company, an online shop specializing in PDF sewing patterns for women, girls, and babies. With support from high-speed Internet provided by Broadband Association of North Dakota (BAND) member Polar Communications, Katie is able to compete on an international scale—all from the comfort of her home in rural Edinburg, North Dakota.

"I never in a million years thought I would be doing this," Katie said. "I would have never expected to be able to make a very good living, support my family, and still be able to spend time with my kids, still make dinner, still go on camping trips in the summer. It's

pretty amazing to be able to do that from my home.”

FROM PASSION TO PROFIT

Simple Life Patterns began in 2015 with nothing but a computer, an idea, and a life-long passion for creating.

“I have always been crafty. I grew up wanting to create things,” Katie said. “I wanted a project that I could create and finish in one day, so I decided to make dresses. After that, I started creating my own patterns and posting them on social media. I loved connecting with other like-minded people who encouraged me to keep creating.”

As Katie continued to post her designs on her personal social media channels, she discovered an opportunity to turn her passion into a profit. Her followers loved her designs, and several reached out to her saying they wanted to try the patterns themselves.

Katie spent hours planning, teaching herself to draft using Adobe Illustrator, and researching online marketing tactics. As she anticipated the release of her first collection of children’s patterns, Katie launched a “fan” group on Facebook.

Within five minutes of its launch, the group had over 1,500 members.

“When I first started, I thought Simple Life Patterns would just be a side hustle for me, a little hobby to help support my sewing projects,” Katie said. “After the initial launch, I realized this could be my career.”

After that launch, Katie hit the ground running with Simple Life Patterns. Her pattern offerings have expanded from just children’s garments to include designs for babies and women, and she continues to release new patterns every month. In the four years since that initial launch, Katie has added two more designers and a social media team to help promote the business.

As Simple Life Patterns continues to grow, Katie is constantly developing new goals to expand and improve. And at the center of that growth has been the Internet she receives from Polar, her local broadband provider.

“I’m not selling my patterns in brick-and-mortar stores, it’s all digital PDF downloads,”

Katie said. “Broadband Internet is crucial to my business. Without it, I wouldn’t have a product to sell.”

Because her design team is spread across the country, Katie uses cloud-based programs to design her items, allowing them to share and collaborate on designs. All of Simple Life Patterns’ marketing is done online: posting video tutorials on YouTube, sending emails about upcoming promotions, sharing customer creations on Instagram.

If the Internet were to go down for even a minute, Katie’s business would come to a standstill.

“If my Internet goes down, I am losing money, and I can’t have that,” Katie said. “Having a local Internet provider like Polar

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Broadband Internet is crucial to my business. Without it, I wouldn’t have a product to sell.

means that I don’t have to sit on hold for hours and wait for technicians to come fix it. Every time I call Polar, they are always there. It is nice to have someone there on the other end of the line who can walk me through what to do, and it’s fixed nearly instantly.”

Most importantly, Katie relies on the Internet to communicate with her customers, whether they are down the street or across the globe. Simple Life Pattern Company currently sells PDF sewing patterns in countries including Germany, Australia, Norway, Singapore, and more.

“We’re not all in the same time zone, so having reliable Internet allows me to respond to them instantly and for them to feel a personal connection,” Katie said. “They can ask any questions and get all of the sewing support they need just by sending a message on Facebook or Instagram. You don’t get that kind of connection with traditional paper patterns.”

BROADBAND: MAKING HOLIDAY DREAMS COME TRUE

With the holidays fast approaching, Katie is in one of her busiest times of the year. Hundreds of sales are being placed every day by sewers hoping to design their own festive holiday outfits or create a customized gift for someone special in their life, and Katie needs to be able to access her website 24/7 to make sure orders are processed quickly.

Luckily, she can count on Polar to keep her Internet up and running when she needs it most.

“Getting in front of potential customers during the holidays is important,” Katie said. “The best part is seeing what everyone creates with our patterns. We have a fan



group of 28,000 members and to see their holiday creations is so inspiring. I am proud to be a part of that.”

E-commerce businesses like Simple Life Pattern Company are making holiday dreams come true around the world. And thanks to rural broadband providers like Polar, it doesn’t matter how large or small your hometown is—all it takes to build a thriving e-commerce business is passion, hard work, and a high-quality Internet connection.

“Running an e-commerce company is amazing, mainly because you can work on your own schedule, you make your own path, you can make as much money as you want if you put your mind to it,” Katie said. “Even in a small town, you can do it.”

Visit broadbandnd.com today to discover how broadband can empower your e-commerce business!

EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZED FOR YEARS OF SERVICE

Thirteen employees will be recognized for their years of service at the annual Christmas dinner in December. We would like to congratulate all of them and thank them for their years of loyal and dedicated service to the telecommunications industry.



Tony Hensel
35 years



Mike Otto
30 years



Dave Offerdahl
30 years



Curtis Simon
25 years



Julie Thompson
25 years



Lola Hagen
25 years



Karl Blake
25 years



Dennis Kubat
20 years



Shari Flanders
20 years



Chris Buttke
20 years



Owen Bakken
20 years



Julie Kohler
10 years



Caitlin Evenson
5 years



CASUAL CLOTHES FOR CHARITY

Employees Donate \$2200 to Library

Since 2008 Polar employees have donated almost \$25,000 to local groups, organizations and charities through their Casual Clothes for Charity Program. Every Friday participating employees pay \$1 to wear jeans to work for the day. At the end of the year, participating employees submit a charity of their choice for the funds to be given to. One charity is randomly drawn and this year's recipient is the Park River Public Library, nominated by Kyle Halvorson. They will receive \$2,200, the total funds collected this year. Pictured above is Park River Area School Superintendent Kirk Ham, Park River Area School Librarian Rochelle Kovarik and Polar employee, Kyle Halvorson.

Other charities submitted for the drawing included: Edinburg Quick Response, Walsh County Food Pantry (2), Park River Fire Dept. (2), Park River School Shoebox Project, Fordville Quick Response, Lakota Fire Dept., Walsh County Domestic Violence/Crisis Center, Fordville Fire Dept., Angel of Hope Memorial Park, Pregnancy Help Center, Park River Baseball Complex Project, BIO Girls – Park River and Edinburg Fire Department. Polar employees are happy to have this opportunity to give back to the communities in which they live and work!

New Hours

Beginning January 1, 2020, our business office will be open from 7:30AM - 5:30PM, Monday through Friday. Our help desk is available for assistance all hours, everyday, at 888-700-7652.

Holiday Hours:

Tuesday, December 24
Closing at 2:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 25
CLOSED - Christmas Day

Wednesday, January 1
CLOSED - New Years Day



In support of continuing education for rural youth, Polar Communications and its subsidiaries are pleased to offer high school and college students the opportunity to apply for the following scholarships:

Polar's John G. Walters Scholarship: Five \$1,000 scholarships will be issued to graduating high school seniors from our service area who plan to continue their education at an accredited 2-year or 4-year college/university or vocational-technical school. Parents or guardians must be Polar customers of voice or broadband Internet service.

Polar's Leadership Scholarship: Polar Communications offers the Polar Leadership Scholarship. This \$2,000 scholarship will be awarded to a student who is involved in their school, serves their community, achieves leadership roles in activities, functions or organizations, and strives to reach their highest potential. Other considerations include any work/internship experience outside of school. Applicants must be a senior in high school or freshman or sophomore in college and their parents or guardians must be Polar customers of voice or broadband Internet service.

Foundation for Rural Services (FRS) Scholarship: FRS, along with NTCA - The Rural Broadband Association, promote, educate and advocate to the public rural telecommunications issues. Polar is proud to be a member of NTCA and supports FRS in this worthy endeavor. If a graduating high school senior from our service area is selected for one of the FRS national scholarships (\$2,000 each), Polar will contribute an additional \$500, bringing the FRS award to \$2,500. Parents or guardians must be Polar customers of voice or broadband Internet service.

Applications deadline for all scholarships is March 6, 2020.

Youth Tour: The Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) annual Youth Tour is one of the most visible examples of the foundation's involvement with, and commitment to, rural youth. This year's Youth Tour will be held June 6-10, 2020. Each year, in collaboration with NTCA member companies, FRS brings rural students from across the United States to Washington, D.C., for a four-day tour of some of the most historical sites in the nation. While there, students also learn about the telecommunications industry, as well as the regulatory and legislative processes. Educational sessions on these topics are greatly enhanced by site visits to the U.S. Capitol and the FCC to meet with industry leaders and members of Congress. The students are also given ample time to explore the nation's capital and its many attractions.

To qualify, the student's parents must be voice or broadband subscribers of Polar, and the student must be age 16 or 17 years old at the time of the Youth Tour. Along with submitting an application, students are required to write an essay on modern technology. Applications can be obtained from your high school guidance counselor or online at polarcomm.com/about-us/#scholarships

Deadline for Youth Tour entries is March 2, 2020

Applications can be found online at polarcomm.com/about-us/#scholarships





SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

For High School &
College Students

HOLIDAY DEALS

Right this way!



Now is the time to sign up for the service you've been waiting for. When you contact us in December to add any new service be sure to say, "Can I get a deal on this?" and we'll say, "Yes!"

Contact us today and ask for your deal!

701.284.7221
sales@polarcomm.com
thinkpolar.com



POLAR

POWER BACK-UP

What You Need to Know to Be Prepared

Because your home phone service is provided with our state-of-the-art fiber optic network, it requires electric power to operate. To avoid a disruption of home voice service during a power outage – and to maintain the ability to connect to 911 emergency services – we at Polar Communications provide you with backup battery power.

WHERE TO OBTAIN YOUR BACKUP BATTERY

Polar Communications would like to ensure that our customers are provided reliable backup batteries that allow you to continue to use your home voice services during a power outage. That is why we provide an 8-hour backup battery with the Polar Communications demarcation equipment. A 24-hour standby backup battery is available for purchase from Polar Communications. This backup battery includes a 3-year warranty.

WHAT YOUR BACKUP BATTERY CAN – AND CAN'T – DO FOR YOU

The backup battery provided by Polar Communications is expected to last at least 8 hours on standby power. That means the backup battery should give you approximately 6 hours of talk time. The

backup battery does not provide power to any services other than voice. Home security systems, medical monitoring devices, routers and other equipment will not run on a home phone backup battery. The backup battery does not power your phone handsets that may separately require power. You must have a phone capable of being plugged into a jack and running off the backup battery should your home power fail.

PROPER CARE AND USE OF YOUR BATTERY

The ability of the backup battery to power your phone service can be affected by many factors, including the age of your battery, improper home wire groundings and unprotected power surges, manufacturer defect, improper storage conditions, or failure to keep the power pack plugged in. Environmental factors such as temperature can shorten your battery's useful life. We recommend that you store your battery above 41°F and below 104°F. These batteries are rechargeable. This backup battery performs a self-test and produces an audible alarm on fault detection. If this happens, after checking that the unit is plugged into a functioning power plug, contact our business office and

we will correct any fault condition. Polar Communications monitors the battery voltage and we will be alerted when it is low. You will not need to access the battery; however, if you experience any problems with your Polar fiber optic voice service during a power outage of less than 8 hours, please promptly notify us. Polar will provide and install, at no cost to you, a replacement standard 8-hour backup battery.

Terms of Service information can be found on our website at: polarcomm.com/resources/service-terms-agreements/

**It Pays to be a
Coop Member**

As a cooperative, Polar Communications pays out capital credits earned by patrons as the co-op makes a profit and generates earnings. If you had active service with Polar in 2000 and/or 2001 and earned capital credits you will see a credit on your December bill titled "Capital Credit". If your capital credit reimbursement totaled over \$200, a check will be mailed to you.

Your IT Anti-Virus Software Is Changing!



In order to provide you with the best service and protection, Polar is switching our anti-virus software to VIPRE®. You will need to replace the current SecureIT Plus software on your computer with VIPRE®. Switching your anti-virus software to VIPRE® will keep your system safe. VIPRE® is a great anti-virus that doesn't slow your computer down.

**YOU MUST SWITCH TO VIPRE® BEFORE DECEMBER 15
TO KEEP YOUR SYSTEM PROTECTED!**

Polar is switching our entire anti-virus system to VIPRE®. We encourage you to switch from SecureIT Plus to VIPRE® as soon as you receive the upcoming email. If you forget to change your software to VIPRE® you will receive additional notifications. We do not want your computer to be left unprotected!

All changes must be made by December 15, 2019!

If you are unsure of the process or need assistance with your activation, contact us or the VIPRE help desk directly at 1-866-389-1569.





Polar Extreme IT can lift a technology burden for your company. We deliver a turn-key managed offering that includes professional design, installation, and ongoing 24/7 care support by phone, email and online chat.

We provide proactive IT managed services using a remote monitoring and management platform to continually monitor the health and performance of your IT infrastructure without any kind of disruption to you or your employees' activities.

Contact us to set up a free on-site review to discuss the option(s) that best fit your environment. We will provide a full analysis of what should be done to implement the designed solution.

701.284.7221 | 800.284.7222
sales@polarcomm.com

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



Clip this page and keep it with your Polar directory

DIRECTORY UPDATES

Bynum Chad D. 115 Park Ave Neche.....	701-886-7475	Olson Timothy D 305 S 5 St Drayton.....	701-454-3501
Dale James 110 Prospect Ave Gilby.....	701-869-2360	Parsonage Sundahl 303 Searns Ave Aneta.....	701-326-4326
F K Seed LLC 601 Inez Ave N Michigan.....	701-259-2280	Pearson Becki 303 2nd Ave Northwood.....	701-581-9119
Hefty Seed Company 6902 142 Ave NE Grafton.....	701-922-2022	Prairie Centre Architecture 214 Briggs Ave S Park River....	701-284-6008
Hilde Christopher 12646 77 St NE Edinburg.....	701-993-8454	Raknerud Gary & Jennifer 503 S Adam St Northwood.....	701-587-6169
Huseth James 15705 County Road 2 Walcott.....	701-469-2080	Siewert Donna 509 Almeron Ave Drayton.....	701-454-6489
Jenson Ashley M. res Neche.....	701-886-7569	Skorheim Trevor & Tamera PO Box 32 Adams.....	701-944-2212
Kiner Steven & Brenda res Neche.....	701-886-7892	Stevenson Jason 13948 Highway 5 Cavalier.....	701-265-4715
Klein Christopher & Jackie res Cavalier.....	701-265-4714	Storie Norma J res Cavalier.....	701-265-4069
Kram Yvette res Cavalier.....	701-265-4711	Symington Calvin 709 7 St Neche.....	701-886-7646
Kunz Wes & Marlys 116 Lincoln St N Northwood.....	701-587-5583	Terrazas Larry 316 State Ave N Michigan.....	701-259-2175
LaRoche M & E PO Box 163 Neche.....	701-886-7660	The Learning Path Child Care Center 670 Main St Arthur..	701-967-8323
Melland Lois E 4th Ave Edmore.....	701-644-2255	Thielke Aaron 215 2nd Ave Northwood.....	701-581-9161
Midgarden Chris & Jenna 13577 Highway 17 Park River...	701-284-6670	Thomasson Patricia Cavalier.....	701-265-4220
Moore Jacqueline M 315 2 St S Pembina.....	701-825-6709	Thorsgard Judy 212 5th Ave Northwood.....	701-587-5241
Nelson Elaine 411 S Raymond St Northwood.....	701-587-5544	Val's Country Kitchen 402 Main St Adams.....	701-944-2282
Nielsen Joyce res Gilby.....	701-869-2488	Woodward Bambi 212 N Berg St Northwood.....	701-587-6183



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CONNECTIONS

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Holiday OPEN HOUSE

DECEMBER 9-13, 2019

9:00AM - 3:00PM

PARK RIVER OFFICE

*Stop in and enjoy sweet treats,
cider and coffee!*