

CONNECTIONS

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Winter 2021

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KEEPING YOUR BUSINESS SAFE: THE KRINGSTADS' STORY

BY TRUSTING THEIR IT TO POLAR, OWNERS LIKE THE KRINGSTADS CAN PROTECT THE BUSINESSES THEY'VE WORKED SO HARD TO BUILD

A quick glance at the headlines may lead you to believe that cyberattacks are reserved for the world's most powerful profitable businesses. But the evidence shows that small businesses are hackers' real bread and butter: one in five small businesses fall victim to a cyberattack.

As technology evolves and our society grows ever-more dependent on the Internet, these attacks are becoming increasingly common. In 2020 alone, hacking incidents against small businesses increased by 424 percent. And they're not victimless crimes: of small businesses who experience a cyberattack, 60 percent go out of business in six months.

Chuck Aaker has witnessed his fair share of these attacks over more than four decades in the computer industry. Now, as an Information Technology Specialist at Polar, Chuck works with small businesses to prevent these devastating attacks and protect their data.

"With ransomware, malware, and phishing, it's not a matter of if; it's a matter of when you're going to get hit," Chuck said. "You have to be very vigilant and take an active role in preventing attacks. It can happen to anybody, at any time."

Polar Extreme IT takes a unique approach to managed IT services, tailoring offerings to each business's individual needs and budget rather than handing over a one-size-fits-all package.

"Each customer is unique, with unique needs. Accountants need one type, while manufacturing needs other solutions," Chuck said. "We can customize a solution to fit the business and the way people work."

The Lifeblood of a Business

Safe-T-Pull is a hydraulic hitch and towing system that makes assisting and pulling trucks, tractors, and other equipment through tough conditions easier and safer. Every day, owners Jacob and Rachel Kringstad work hand-in-hand with farmers to tailor-fit a solution for their enterprise. So when Safe-T-Pull was searching for a managed IT provider, Polar Extreme IT felt like a perfect fit.

"It was really important and meaningful that Polar was able to come onsite and get to know our business," Rachel said. "We feel like that was able to establish a lot of trust and they were able to customize it and tailor it to our needs, versus just selling us a package."

The first of Jacob and Rachel's needs was a new server. Safe-T-Pull began in the 1990s as a single product line under Kringstad Ironworks. As demand for the tool and its complementary products grew, the Kringstads decided it was time to branch off. Safe-T-Pull was established as its own company in 2014,

moving out of the Kringstad Ironworks facility and into its own assembly and distribution facility adjacent to the property.

Despite the move, their data remained on a single server in a closet at Kringstad Ironworks. While Safe-T-Pull was located just a few hundred yards away, having all of their sensitive information located on another business's server posed a liability for the company and their customers.

The Kringstads trusted Chuck and Polar Extreme IT to transfer Safe-T-Pull's data to their own server, located in their own building.

"It was important for us as we grew to have our own server, not just in the context of having enough data, but also to know that they are separate in the event that there was a catastrophic event," Rachel said. "So whether that's a fire or a tornado, it's great to know that they are separate. If one ship goes down, they both don't go down."

“With the local storage, you know it's here. It's safe.”

Chuck also equipped Safe-T-Pull with offsite backup. All of their data—from engineers' drawings to customers' payment information—is duplicated and stored in two local, secure offsite locations.

"Data is the lifeblood of the business. You don't want to lose years of aggregate data for no reason without having the backup," Chuck said.

Having data backed up in multiple locations is important for any business; for a family-owned business the size of Safe-T-Pull, it's essential. If lost to a cyberattack, their years of drawings, models, and scales would take months to recreate. If their customers' sensitive data was compromised, all of the trust they have worked so hard to build would be lost.

Safe-T-Pull has several patents in the works; losing their intellectual property could mean losing thousands of dollars and years of field research.

"We're big on technology and being on the leading edge of things," Jacob said. "If that information were to leak out or for some reason be compromised, that'd be pretty devastating to us."

By trusting their data to Polar Extreme IT rather than a larger national or international security company, Rachel and Jacob can rest assured that their valuable information is being stored just down the road and monitored by Polar.

"Since we have local storage, their backups and data are guaranteed to stay in the United States," Chuck said. "If you go with one of the large providers, it could end up overseas, in Ireland or some other European nation. So with the local storage, you know it's here. It's safe."

Keeping things local was one of the Kringstads' top priorities when selecting a managed IT provider. If they ever encounter a problem with their technology, they know that they can call Chuck or one of his teammates—someone who has taken the time to get to know them and their business—for support.



"Having someone that's accessible was really important, so whenever we called we'd have someone available," Rachel said. "If it were ever the case, we could have someone here within minutes to help us."

Take Control of Your Tech

Small businesses are big targets for hackers. Despite their vulnerability to cyberattacks and the havoc they can wreak, only 28 percent of small businesses report having a plan in place to respond to an attack. While some do not understand the importance of defending themselves against cyber criminals, most simply do not have the resources to manage their own IT.

"As small business owners, we wear a lot of hats. We don't have time to be IT people, we don't have the knowledge to be IT people. We are not IT people," Rachel said. "It was really great that we were able to bring Polar in and have them completely manage all aspects of it for us."

By trusting their IT to Polar, owners like the Kringstads can take control of their technology and protect the businesses they've worked so hard to build.

"It's a family business. We put a lot of blood, sweat, and tears into it, and something as simple as a data breach could literally end all of that," Jacob said. "It's good to have peace of mind that Polar is taking care of it."

Eliminate the IT burden for your business. Call 701.284.7221 to speak with an Extreme IT specialist who will get to know your business, identify your needs, and develop a solution that works for you.

EMPLOYEES AND DIRECTORS RECOGNIZED FOR YEARS OF SERVICE

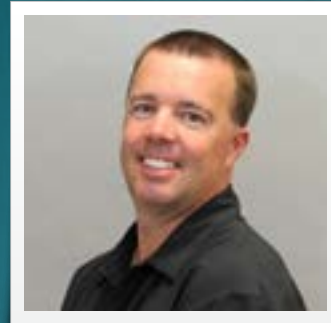
Ten employees and two directors are being recognized for their milestone years of service. We would like to congratulate all of them and thank them for their loyal and dedicated service to Polar Communications and the telecommunications industry.



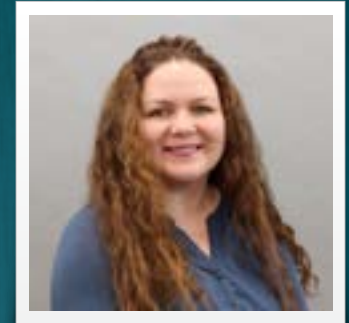
Roger Setness
35 years



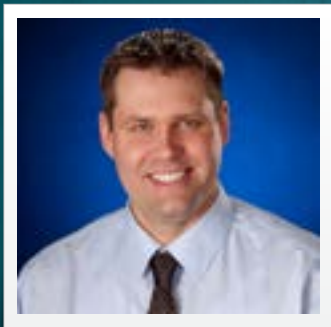
Kelly Houser
25 years



Justin Loftsgard
25 years



Kristi Gullickson
20 years



Kyle Halvorson
20 years



Kimberly Lundquist
15 years



Spencer Potts
15 years



Robyn Watkins
15 years



Wendy Machart
10 years

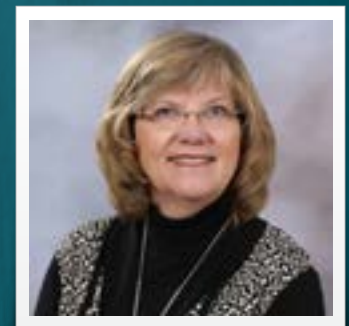


Jenny French
5 years

Directors



Amber Meyer
15 years



Cynthia Hejl
10 years

POLAR EMPLOYEES DONATE \$6,100 TO PARK RIVER FIRE DEPARTMENT



Since 2008 Polar employees have donated over \$27,000 to local groups, organizations and charities through their Casual Clothes for Charity Program. Each month participating employees pay \$5 for the opportunity to wear jeans to work on Fridays. At the end of the year, employees submit a charity of their choice for the funds to be given to. One charity is selected at random and this year's recipient is the Park River Fire Department, nominated by Polar employee Shelly Dub. The fire department will receive \$6,100, which includes Polar matching half the funds collected from employees!

Pictured above is Park River Fire Department Chief Matt Daley and nominating employee, Shelly Dub. Other charities submitted for the drawing included: Walsh County Food Pantry, Bio Girls, Michigan, ND Park Board, Edinburg Fire Department, Crystal Fire Department, Lil' Spuds Childcare, PRFL Aggie Academy, Fordville-Lankin School Playground Equipment Fundraiser and MayPort Youth Center,

Polar employees are happy to have the opportunity to give back to the communities in which they live and work!

It Pays to be a Coop Member

Capital credits will be disbursed as a credit on the December 2021 billing statements. Members receiving \$401 or more and businesses with multiple accounts were mailed a check. Capital credits paid out this year are margins from the years 2003 & 2005. Polar Communications returned \$2 million to its co-op members this year.

Check us
out on



YouTube

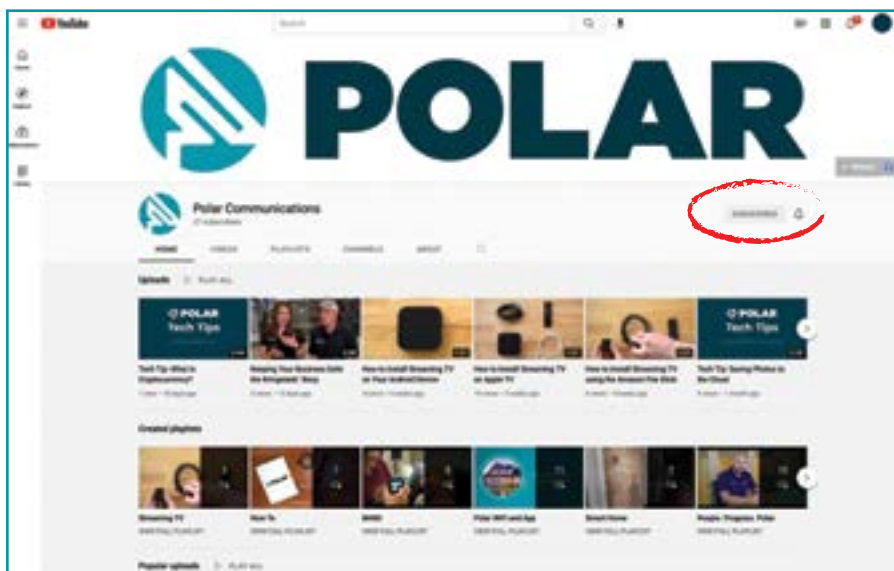
There are many ways to communicate in today's world. And one of the fastest growing tools to do this are videos.

You may have seen some of our videos featured on Facebook; highlighting member stories or sharing the latest tech tip. All of these videos and more are available on our Polar YouTube channel.

Our YouTube Channel is a valuable source of information about

our products and services and how to use them. See step-by-step instructions on installing your home broadband system and using the Polar WiFi app. View stories from our customers and how our services are impacting their lives, plus many more.

You can access the Polar YouTube channel via the link on our website or by going to youtube.com/c/PolarCommunicationsParkRiver

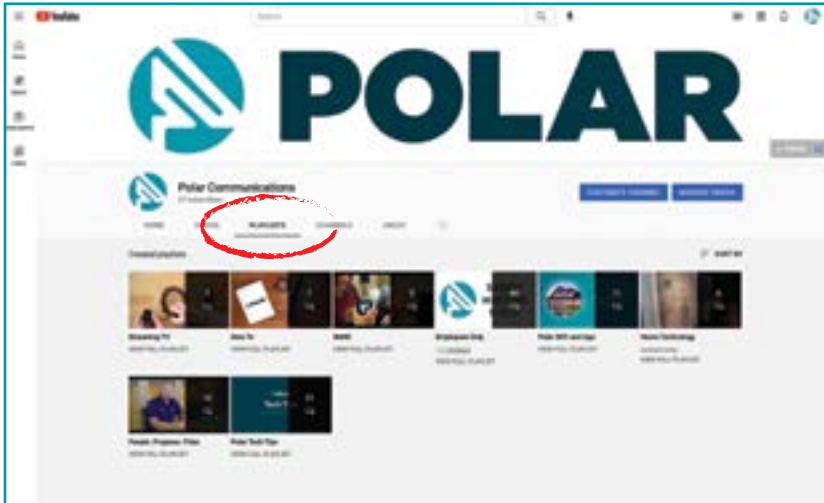


Subscribe to our channel so you are alerted when a new video is posted.



Watch as technician Kris Rainsberry walks you through installing your home network.

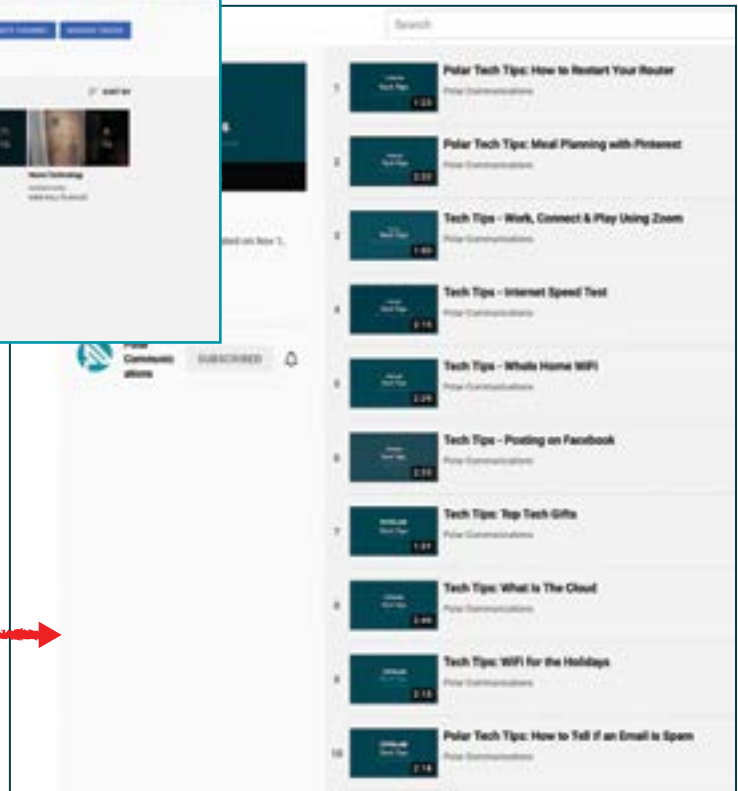




Select Playlists to see organized categories of videos.

Playlists include:

- Streaming TV
- How-To
- BAND
- Polar WiFi and App
- Home Technology
- People.Progress.Polar.
- Polar Tech Tips



See how the Watsons' made an easy transition to Polar Streaming TV



Access the Polar YouTube channel via the link on our website, by going to youtube.com/c/PolarCommunicationsParkRiver or by scanning the QR code.



scan me!

- 1- Open your camera and point your device at the QR code.
- 2- Wait for the camera to recognize and scan the code.
- 3- Click the website link when it appears on your screen.



SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

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:

Ten \$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. Application deadline is March 4, 2022.

POLAR'S LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP:

Polar Communications offers the Polar Leadership Scholarship. This \$2,500 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. Two scholarships will be awarded. 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. Application deadline is March 4, 2022.

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. Application deadline is February 25, 2022.

APPLICATIONS
CAN BE FOUND ONLINE:
**POLARCOMM.COM/
ABOUT-US/
#SCHOLARSHIPS**

POWER BACKUP NOTICE

If 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 recommend you purchase backup battery power.

Where to Obtain Your Backup Battery

Polar Communications would like to ensure that our customers are offered reliable backup batteries that allow you to continue to use your home voice services during a power outage. We sell an 8-hour and 24-hour backup battery to power your Polar Communications demarcation equipment in the event of a power outage. All the backup batteries we sell include a manufacturer's warranty.

What Your Backup Battery Can – and Can't – Do for You

The 8-hour backup battery sold by Polar Communications is expected to last at up to 8 hours on standby power which equates to approximately 6 hours of talk time. Our 24-hour battery is expected to provide 24 hours of standby power and approximately 18-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. Our batteries are rechargeable and provide both an audible alarm and LED lights to indicate bad battery, low battery, and utility line power failure. Batteries that continue to indicate a malfunctioning alarm despite the battery being plugged into a working power outlet may indicate that the battery has failed and needs to be replaced. Testing of your battery may be conducted by unplugging the unit to confirm that it is functioning as intended.



PLAY OUR FREE COLLEGE FOOTBALL CONTEST

It's college football season and we are hosting a Pick-It Bowl Challenge contest! All customers are invited to participate in this fun, free online contest that follows the college football postseason.

Simply visit polar.pickitchallenge.com to sign up, make your picks, and watch your name climb the Leaderboard as games progress. Super fan or not, it's easy to play and a great time for everyone!

Game matchups will be announced Sunday, December 5 and the first bowl game starts on December 17. Sign up soon for your chance to play and win.

We hope to catch you on the Leaderboard: POLAR.PICKITCHALLENGE.COM
Good luck and get ready for some football fun!

TECH TIPS

Time For A Tech Upgrade?

Every time Apple unveils a new iPhone, it can be tempting to ditch your device and upgrade to the latest model with all the bells and whistles. But a new device is a big investment, so before you decide to drop a few hundred dollars, it's important to ask yourself: do I really need this?

Today, we will share some tell-tale signs that your technology is ready for an upgrade. If you are more of a visual learner, watch our latest Tech Tip video to follow along with tech expert Katie.

1. You're Draining Your Battery

Like anything that is used frequently, your cell phone's battery will wear out over time. If a full charge lasts only a fraction of the time it used to and your phone constantly needs to be plugged in, it's time to make the switch.

2. You Can't Upgrade to the Latest Operating System

Running on an outdated operating system can slow down your phone and leave you vulnerable to security threats. Search for the latest operating system for your device and check in your phone's settings to make sure you are up-to-date. If you can't download the latest update, it's time to upgrade.

3. Your Audio is Cutting Out

"Can you hear me now?" As your phone ages, you may find yourself asking that question more and more. As time passes, your phone's microphone can get worn out. Although we use it for so much more, a phone is a phone, and it needs to be able to send and receive calls—so if your microphone is wearing out, it's time to say goodbye.

 **POLAR**
Tech Tips

VISIT [POLARCOMM.COM/RESOURCES](https://www.polarcomm.com/resources) TO START GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR TECHNOLOGY.

4. Your Apps are Crashing

You may also notice certain apps crashing on your device, but not on your friends'. That's probably because the problem is your device, and not the app. There are two different kinds of memory on devices. One is for storing your files, and the other, called RAM, is for running your operating system and apps. Within RAM, there is a memory threshold for running each individual app. As you reach that threshold, your apps may begin crashing more frequently—a hint that it's time to head to the store.

5. Your Device is Obsolete

Finally, if your phone is old enough, you may not be able to get technical support or replacement parts anymore. Check your manufacturer's website to see if your device is considered obsolete. Then, if it does start glitching out, you really have no choice but to get a new phone.

So no, you do not need to give in every time Apple or Samsung drops a new smartphone. But if you found yourself checking "yes" next to any of these warning signs, it's probably time to upgrade.

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




Katie, Your Friendly Neighbor Tech Expert



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 to learn more!

scan me!

- 1 - Open your camera and point your device at the QR code.
- 2 - Wait for the camera to recognize and scan the code.
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 Clip this page and keep it with your Polar directory

DIRECTORY UPDATES

American Crystal Sugar Co - Drayton 16078 81st St NE Drayton.....	701-454-6100	Hoppman Ella M 804 Main St W Cavalier.....	701-265-4003
Anderson Gerald D. 301 Hill Ave N Park River.....	701-284-6096	Kerian Machines 1709 Highway 81 S Grafton.....	701-352-0481
Beardemphl Casey 109 County Road 12a Pisek.....	701-284-6038	Kotlyaroff Roxanne L 603 Code Ave S Park River	701-284-6003
Brocket Equity Elevator 213 S Railroad Ave Brocket.....	701-655-3500	Kovarik Mary 138 Heritage St St Thomas.....	701-257-6420
Bromfield farm Drayton.....	701-454-3454	Lolmaugh Heidi 611 N Madison St Edmore	701-644-2306
Cooperstown Medical Center - Lakota Clinic 117 2nd St W Lakota.....	701-247-2227	Mapel Crystal 15960 93rd St NE Drayton	701-454-3350
Dalzell S. Res Cavalier.....	701-265-3772	Moore Sarah res Adams.....	701-944-2246
Fering Casey 104 W Melbourn Ave Drayton	701-454-6110	Oliver Randolph 1061 34 St NE Northwood.....	701-343-3026
Folkers Lois (Rodney) 3802 16 Ave NE Larimore.....	701-343-6233	Peihl Bernice A 133 3rd Ave E Hunter.....	701-874-2463
Grafton Water Plant 630 Np Av Grafton.....	701-352-0118	Steiger Craig 9777 County 2 Cavalier	701-265-8546
Gravdahl Ramona Northwood.....	701-581-3003	Sundeen Della 608 4th Ave SW Lakota.....	701-247-2110
Gray Melissa 314 Railroad Ave E Park River.....	701-284-6087	Tate Connie 15832 10 St SE Hunter.....	701-874-2292
		Winkler Jennifer res Pembina	701-825-6464



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This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Holiday OPEN HOUSE

Tuesday, December 21

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Park River Office - 110 4th St. E

Stop in and enjoy sweet treats, cider and coffee!

**Holiday
Hours**

CLOSED - Friday, December 24

CLOSED - Friday, December 31