



RINGER

MARCH 2021



**CHANGING LIVES.
MAKING CONNECTIONS.**

Committed to our Communities!

How NCC goes beyond broadband to better the places we live.

What does “community” mean to you?

Maybe it’s helping your neighbor mow their lawn or push their car out of the snow. Maybe it’s volunteering with your local school or fire department, or advocating for local initiatives that you believe in. Maybe it’s all of these things and more, which together make your home a better place to live. As a local cooperative with small-town roots, we at NCC understand the importance of community. Our cooperative was founded when a group of local leaders decided in 1951 that their rural community deserved access to a telephone system just as much as larger cities. And while the technology we use to communicate has changed in the seven decades since, one thing has remained the same: our commitment to our communities and the people who live here.

People are the heart of a cooperative. That’s why we don’t just offer top-of-the-line internet, telephone, video and security services. We grant scholarships for local students, sponsor fishing derbies and runs, and serve hot meals to those who are hungry.

We attend graduation parties, ball games, and Grand March, and we encourage our employees to find opportunities to volunteer in their own time. We partner with other local businesses, like Burke-Divide Electric Cooperative, who share our values—and together, we are able to have an even greater impact on the communities that we call home.

Committed to Service:

Because NCC is a cooperative, the individuals and businesses who rely on our services aren’t just our customers; they are our neighbors, our friends, and our owners. And sometimes, we are theirs, too. Burke-Divide Electric Cooperative is a consumer-owned electric cooperative serving Burke, Divide, Mountrail, Ward, and Renville counties. Since 1945, it has been their mission to provide reliable, high quality electricity to homes and businesses—including NCC—in northwest North Dakota. “They’re good teammates of ours,” said Jeremy Becker, General Manager and CEO of NCC. “We both serve by and large the same membership, and we couldn’t do what we do without Burke-Divide Electric. And I’d like to think they couldn’t do a lot of what they do without NCC.”

Check out the full story and a video on our blog at <https://nccray.com/blog>

The 2021 NCC Director Election Nominations are open for these seats:

- District #1 – Marmon, Round Prairie and Grenora
- District #2 – Ray and Epping;
- District #3 – Wildrose, McGregor, Noonan and Alamo
- District #4 – Flaxton, Lignite and Bowbells and
- District #7 – Crosby

District #3 and District #7 were previously up for election in 2020, but the election was canceled due to COVID so these seats will be 2-year terms. All other Districts are open for a 3-year term. If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a Director for one of the previously listed districts, please refer to the NCC Bylaws located in the printed NCC telephone directory or on the NCC website (nccray.com). Completed petition forms must be returned to NCC by Friday, April 30th.

2021 NCC Scholarship Programs

In support of continuing education for rural youth, Northwest Communications Cooperative (NCC) is proud to sponsor three scholarship programs. To qualify, the applicants' parents or legal guardians must be members of NCC.

Applications for the following scholarships are sent to area schools and colleges/universities. Additional applications may be obtained by contacting NCC at 701-568-3331 or 800-245-5884. The scholarship applications are also available on our website at www.nccray.com.

Arthur S. Johnson Scholarship:

For the 35th year, NCC is sponsoring this scholarship which was established in honor of previous manager, Art Johnson, who worked for NCC from 1951 to 1985. NCC will be awarding four (4) \$1,000 scholarships in 2021. These scholarships are available to graduating high school seniors and students in post secondary institutions. Application deadline is March 16, 2021.

Kenneth Lund, Jr. Scholarship:

For the 18th year, NCC is pleased to sponsor a technology scholarship. This scholarship was established in honor of previous General Mgr. Kenneth Lund, Jr., who worked for NCC from 1969 to 2003. NCC will be awarding two (2) \$1,000 technology scholarships in 2021. These scholarships are available to graduating high school seniors and undergraduate students enrolled in a curriculum studying the telecommunications and/or computer technology field at an accredited technical school or a two or four-year college/university. Application deadline is March 16, 2021.

The Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) Scholarship:

For the 16th year, NCC is excited to offer students in our local school districts the opportunity to apply for this national scholarship program sponsored by our national affiliate,

NTCA — The Rural Broadband Association. In 2021, FRS will award thirty (30) \$2,500 scholarships to rural high school seniors. This scholarship is not available to students in post secondary institutions. Local students in our service area will be competing with other rural students in our NTCA region, which includes ND, SD, MN, and WI. Should a student from our service area be selected to receive one of the 30 scholarships, FRS will fund \$2,000 and NCC will fund \$500. The FRS scholarship is not a scholarship based on grade point average. Rather, it is geared toward seniors who are good, solid students, but may not qualify for scholarship programs based solely upon GPA. Some preference may be given to individuals expressing an interest to return to work in a rural area following graduation. Applications must be submitted online to FRS by March 16, 2021.

Apply Soon!

The FRS Staurulakis Family Scholarship:

The FRS is proud to announce the 9th year of four scholarships funded by Manny and Leo Staurulakis, of John Staurulakis, Inc. (JSI) in honor of their parents, John and Chresanthe Staurulakis and to celebrate 50 years of service to the rural telephone industry. In 2021, JSI will award four (4) \$5,000 scholarships to rural high school seniors. This scholarship is not available to students in post secondary institutions. The application used for the above FRS Scholarship will be used for this scholarship. Students with a focus in the science, math, medicine, or engineering will be automatically considered for these Staurulakis Family Scholarships. With the generous addition of the Staurulakis Family Scholarships, the Foundation will offer nearly \$100,000 annually to help rural students attain a higher education. As stated above, applications must be submitted online to FRS by March 16, 2021.

NEW NCC Tech Tips!

Edition #1:

How to Spot a Spam Email

These days, hackers are finding sneakier ways to target people for their personal and financial information. Knowing how to tell the difference between a genuine email and a fake one is key to protecting yourself, your computer, and your money.

You can find NCC Tech Tips here:
<https://nccray.com/category/tech-tips/>

MEET NORTHWEST THERAPY SERVICES



*In our community inspired
video series at: nccray.com/NDROOTS*



NCC Battery Backup Notice!

• Backup Power for Home Phone Service:

A backup power supply (battery) is required for your digital voice service to be in service in the event of a power outage. A backup battery will allow regular landline phones to work during a power outage and to connect to 911 emergency services.

• Purchase and Replacement Options:

NCC provides (1) battery back up at no extra charge, which should provide up to 8 hours of emergency service. You were provided the battery back up if you subscribed to landline telephone from NCC. If more backup power is desired, additional backup battery are available directly from NCC for purchase. Customer will be responsible for costs to install and replace any additional batteries.

• What Your Battery Can and Can't Do for You:

Our backup battery allows you to continue to use your home voice service during a power outage. Without a backup battery, you will not be able to make any calls, including emergency calls to 911. Our backup battery does not provide power to any service other than voice. Home security systems, medical monitoring devices and other equipment will not run on a home phone backup battery. When a power outage occurs, you should ensure that you have one corded single-line touchtone phone connected directly to the telephone ports or your in-home wiring (wall jack) and the gateway connected directly to the Battery Backup Unit. If you connect a cordless phone, it will not function without a separate battery backup, and not all cordless phones are so equipped.

• Expected Backup Power Duration:

The battery backup is expected to last up to eight hours in the event of a power outage depending upon battery age, usage, and environment. The estimated life expectancy for the battery is 2 to 4 years depending on power outage frequency and environment.

• Proper Care and Use of Your Battery:

Batteries should be stored in locations under normal room temperatures. You should periodically remove and test your battery to verify both operation of the backup battery and its condition. The battery backup unit can be tested by unplugging it from the power outlet. If it is working correctly, the Optical Network Terminal will remain powered and regular corded land line phones will still work in the house. Make sure to plug the unit back in at the end of testing. Battery backup units will display a battery light when the battery needs replaced. Please contact NCC to obtain an instruction manual for the battery backup unit which includes details on the warning indicator lights and the battery replacement procedure. NCC does not supply any warranty on the battery backup unit.

Please call us with any questions at 701-568-3331.

TV Updates

- **Newsmax** has been added to both the Advanced TV and NCC Video services from NCC on Channel 381.
- **Motor Trend** has moved to the Basic package and is on Channel 323 on both Advanced TV and NCC Video.
- **Heros & Icons/BEK Prime** has changed its programming to Cozi/BEK Prime. You can find it on Channel 79 on Advanced TV and on Channel 22 on NCC Video.
- **Justice Network** has changed its name to True Crime Network. You can find it on Channel 82 on Advanced TV and on Channel 26 on NCC Video.
- **DIY** has changed its name to Magnolia TV on Channel 52 on Advanced TV and on Channel 352 on NCC Video.
- **The Weather Channel (TWC)** will now feature more local weather. You can find it on Channel 16 on both Advanced TV and NCC Video.

• Rate increases for 2021 were approved as follows:

Note: all rates include the Local Broadcast Fee which is a direct pass through from the Network of \$21.54/mo. that is assessed to all TV Video customers by the local broadcast stations including ABC, CBS, NBC and FOX.

Advanced TV & NCC Video:
(includes Local Broadcast Fee)

Economy - \$53.49/mo.

Basic - \$102.49/mo.

Expanded Basic - \$128.49/mo.

Premium Packages:

HBO - \$17/mo.

Starz/Encore - \$11/mo.

Showtime - \$10.99/mo.

Cinemax - \$13/mo.

You can find an updated channel line-up brochures on our website at www.nccray.com.

Lifeline Assistance

Community based telecom providers, such as NCC, believe that every person in America should have access to quality, affordable telecommunications service. Lifeline assistance provides a discount on Telephone or Internet service for those who qualify.

Qualifying for Lifeline assistance is open to individuals whose income is 135% or less than the federal poverty guidelines or by participating in one or more of the following programs:

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)
- Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit Program
- Tribal eligibility programs

Individuals who might be eligible would need to fill out an application form and provide documentation of eligibility of one of the above programs or income level. One Lifeline discount per household is available.

- **Daylight Savings Time begins** on Sunday, March 14th at 2:00 a.m. Remember to turn your clocks ahead one hour.
- **NCC will be closed** on Good Friday on Friday, April 2nd. Our after hours support can be reached by calling our office at 568-3331. Employees will be on call for any emergency outages. Happy Easter!
- **Outages:** With Spring right around the corner, we need to anticipate outages associated with Solar Fade Interference. This occurs when the Sun is directly in line with the Satellite dish bringing in the video signals and the Satellite orbiting above the Earth. The predicted outage range is February 28th through March 6th, starting around 12-noon running through 5pm. Please remember that this is only a prediction and subject to change.
- **Happy St. Patrick's Day** on Wednesday, March 17th!



- **Call Before You Dig!**
If you plan to begin any project that involves digging (patios, fences, trees) remember to first call 811. Every digging job requires a call to 811 to have underground utility lines marked. In some cases, lines are buried close to the surface and could easily be damaged by even shallow digging, resulting in service interruptions to your neighborhood. When you call, simply tell the operator where you're planning to dig and what type of work you'll be doing. The affected local utilities will send a locator to your property, free of charge. As one of your local service providers, NCC thanks you in advance for your cooperation!

Under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, "universal service" means basic telephone service that is available to all consumers.

Universal service is voice grade access to the telecommunications network, including local usage, touch-tone calling, single-party service, access to emergency 911 service, access to operator service, and discounted services to qualifying low-income consumers. All of these services are available from Northwest Communications Cooperative in these areas: Alamo, Bowbells, Columbus, Crosby, Epping, Flaxton, Grenora, Lignite, Marmon, McGregor, Noonan, Powers Lake, Ray, Round Prairie, Tioga, and Wildrose.

Monthly charges for these universal services are:

Basic local resident service:	\$22.46 - \$24.50
<small>(Charges vary depending on extended area service (EAS) to designated service areas)</small>	
Touch-tone Service	No additional charge
Single Party Service	No additional charge
Access to emergency service:	No additional charge
<small>(Local government assesses a tax to pay for special equipment)</small>	
Access to operator services:	No additional charge
<small>(Charges for services vary and are determined by the long distance carrier you have chosen that provides your operator service.)</small>	
Access to directory assistance:	No additional charge
<small>(Charges for services provided by Directory Assistance vary and are determined by the long distance carrier that provides the service.)</small>	

Low-income Programs:

Lifeline (low-income) monthly discount	
Telephone Only Subscriber	\$5.25/mo. discount
Telephone/Internet or Internet Only	\$9.25/mo. discount
<small>(Toll blocking to prevent long distance calls from your phone, available at no charge to qualifying low-income consumers)</small>	

Fixed Federal, State and Local Prescribed Charges:

Federal Subscriber Line Charge:	
Residential & Single-Line Business	\$6.50
Multi Line Business	\$9.20
Federal Universal Service Charge:	
Single User Residential	\$1.38
Single User Business	\$2.01
Multi Line Business	\$2.59
ISDN	\$4.98
Access Recovery Charge:	
Single Line Business	\$1.50
Multi Line Business	\$3.00
Telecommunications Relay Service	\$0.04
911-Emergency Services	\$1.50 - \$2.00

If you have Universal Services questions, please call NCC 568-3331.

Report Trouble: 611
Email: ncc@nccray.com
Ph: 701-568-3331 or 800-245-5884
Directory Assistance: 411
Call Before You Dig: 811
Newsletter Editor: [Angela Schepp](mailto:Angela.Schepp)
Design: lori@leutzgraphics.com

Business Hours: M-F 8am to 5pm.
NCC Message Center will take calls outside of these hours.
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