

Photo by Brook Blom

# RINGER

FEBRUARY 2022

 **NCC**

## 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, such as NCC 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. When you sign on for service with NCC, 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.

NCC announced in the Fall of 2020 the completion of our 3,540 mile fiber optic broadband network to 16 exchanges serving approximately 5,500 members within the counties of Burke, Mountrail, Williams and Divide counties in northwest North Dakota. The project consisted of a \$50 million investment to upgrade NCC's network to all fiber. The work is never complete as we continue to invest in our routes outside of the NCC service area, build redundancy within our network and upgrade equipment in the customer home and business. We continually look for new ways to serve our members.

There are numerous other examples of BAND members improving and expanding their networks. 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.

**BAND**  
broadband association of north dakota

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

# 2022 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 applicant, or the applicants parent(s)/legal guardian(s) 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. The scholarship applications are also available on our website at [www.nccray.com](http://www.nccray.com).

**Arthur S. Johnson Scholarship:** For the 37th 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 2022. These scholarships are available to graduating high school seniors and students in post-secondary institutions. **Application deadline is March 16, 2022.**

**Kenneth Lund, Jr. Scholarship:** For the 20th year, NCC is pleased to sponsor a technology scholarship. This scholarship was established in honor of previous General Manager Kenneth Lund, Jr., who worked for NCC from 1969 to 2003. NCC will be awarding two (2) \$1,000 technology scholarships in 2022. These scholarships are available to graduating high school seniors and undergraduate students. Preference will be given to students enrolled in a curriculum studying the telecommunications, information technology and/or computer technology field at an accredited technical school or a two or four-year college/university. However, all high school seniors and undergraduate students are encouraged to apply. **Application deadline is March 16, 2022.**

**The Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) Scholarship:** For the 18th 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 2022, 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 February 25, 2022, using this link: [www.frs.org/programs/youth-programs/scholarships](http://www.frs.org/programs/youth-programs/scholarships).

**The FRS Staurulakis Family Scholarship:** The FRS is proud to announce the eleventh 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 2022, 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 JSI 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 February 25, 2022, at this link: [www.frs.org/programs/youth-programs/scholarships](http://www.frs.org/programs/youth-programs/scholarships).

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## TV Updates from NCC:

- ✓ **NBC Sports Network** was discontinued on December 31, 2021, by NBCU, a Cable TV Network.
- ✓ **DIY** was rebranded to **Magnolia TV**.
- ✓ **WGN** was rebranded to **NewsNation**.
- ✓ **ESPN Classic** was discontinued by the ESPN Network on December 31, 2021. The ACC network was put in its channel space and was a required add by the network.
- ✓ **GAC** has changed to **GAC Family**.
- ✓ **FSN** has changed to **Bally Sports** and FSN + to **Bally Sports +**.
- ✓ **Fox College Sports** has changed to **Stadium College Sports**.
- ✓ **Hallmark Channel** is moved to channel 385.
- ✓ **Hallmark Movies & Mysteries** is moved to the Basic package on channel 386
- ✓ **Hallmark Drama** moved to the Basic package on channel 387.
- ✓ **We are in negotiations with Newsmax** through our association with the National Cable Television Cooperative (NCTC). The contract expires January 21, 2022 and all indications show that it is unlikely that they will come to an agreement before it expires. Unless an agreement is reached, this channel will go dark after that date.
- ✓ **Rate increases for 2022** were approved as follows and will be effective beginning on your February bill: *(Note: all rates include the Local Broadcast Fee which is a direct pass through from the Network of \$24.09/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 the Local Broadcast Fee)

- Economy.... \$56.04/mo.
- Basic.... \$108.54/mo.
- Expanded Basic.... \$134.54/mo.

- **Premium Packages**

- HBO.... \$17.00/mo.
- Starz/Encore.... \$11.00/mo.
- Showtime.... \$10.99/mo.
- Cinemax.... \$13.00/mo.

If you question why the costs are so high, we encourage you to check out this website which explains where the cost for TV comes from: [tvonmyside.com/ncc](http://tvonmyside.com/ncc). You can find an updated channel line-up on our website at [www.nccray.com](http://www.nccray.com).

## Watch on NCC Video!

# THE WINTER OLYMPICS

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## Backup Power!

### Home Phone Service during Power Outages:

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 corded land line phones to work during a power outage and to maintain the ability 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 will need to contact NCC if you would like this option. If more backup power is desired, additional backup batteries are available directly from NCC for purchase. Customer will be responsible for costs to install and replace any additional batteries.

Please call our office if you have any questions at 701-568-3331 or visit: [nccray.com/terms-conditions](http://nccray.com/terms-conditions) for more information.

## Teaching Internet Safety:

Kids these days are spending more time than ever on the Internet. It can be a wonderful resource, opening them up to a world of knowledge and allowing them to communicate with teachers and other kids. But it also comes with risks. Visit [nccray.com/category/tech-tips](http://nccray.com/category/tech-tips) where we share a few tips for teaching kids about online safety!

## Notes!

- **Daylight Savings Time begins** on Sunday, March 13th at 2:00 a.m. Remember to turn your clocks ahead one hour.
- **Returning Snowbirds:** Call in at least seven business days before you'd like your services are to be restored. This will allow our service technicians plenty of time to put it on their schedule.
- **Moving soon?** Even if you plan to move outside of the NCC service area and will no longer have service with NCC, please keep your address current with us. You don't want to miss any future capital credit disbursements.
- **NCC After-Hours Support:** Call our office at 568-3331. Employees will be on call for any emergency outages.
- **Happy St. Patrick's Day** on Thursday, March 17th!
- **NCC Advanced TV and NCC Video rates and the local broadcast fee** will go up beginning February 2022 based on the annual programming fee increases from the Cable TV networks and the local networks retransmission agreements. Visit [www.tvonmyside.com/ncc](http://www.tvonmyside.com/ncc) for an explanation of programming costs.

## 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-Line Residential	\$1.64
Single-Line Business	\$2.39
Multi-Line Business	\$3.07
ISDN	\$5.92
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](mailto:ncc@nccray.com)  
**Ph:** 701-568-3331 or 800-245-5884  
**Directory Assistance: 411**  
**Call Before You Dig: 811**  
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**Business Hours:** M-F 8am to 5pm.  
NCC Message Center will take calls outside of these hours.

Make a payment anytime by using Secure Pay 1-888-816-8068 or SmartHub [www.nccray.com](http://www.nccray.com) or download the app

*Happy Valentine's Day!*  
Monday, February 14th