

NETWORK CONNECTIONS



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for DRN Scholarships**



A letter from our
General Manager/CEO
Kent Schimke

2023—A YEAR IN REVIEW

As we enter a new year, I am happy to share the latest developments and exciting strides our Cooperative made in 2023. It's been a journey of innovation, collaboration, and a commitment to delivering top-notch services to you, our valued members.

Net Promoter Score

In 2023, we initiated a customer satisfaction survey known as Net Promoter Score (NPS). The two-question survey asks customers to rank their experience with DRN on a scale of 1-10 and to provide comments. The NPS survey is emailed to customers after they connect to a new service or initiate a trouble report. The responses help DRN improve and sustain a viable Cooperative for you, our members. We have had over 200 responses with a NPS of 9.2. According to a web article, "Telecom NPS Benchmarks and CX Trends in 2023" by Cvetilena Gocheva, the median Net Promoter Score for telecommunications companies was 3.1.

Professional Growth

Our success in 2023 is undoubtedly the result of the hard work, dedication, and collaborative spirit of our incredible team. At DRN ReditTech, we understand that our employees are our greatest asset, and we have worked tirelessly to foster an environment that encourages innovation, creativity, and professional growth.

Through various training programs, mentorship opportunities, and team-building exercises, we have cultivated a workplace culture that values diversity, inclusivity, and collaboration. As we reflect on the achievements of 2023, it is with immense gratitude that I acknowledge the outstanding contributions of every member of the DRN ReditTech team.

Reliable Network

In response to the ever-evolving landscape of connectivity, we continue to invest significantly in upgrading our infrastructure. Our team has worked diligently to enhance the reliability and speed of our broadband services, ensuring that you experience seamless connectivity for work, education, entertainment, and beyond. We understand the vital role high-speed Internet plays in our daily lives, and we are dedicated to providing you with the best possible service. 2024 will bring yet another year of infrastructure upgrades and fiber placement.

Supporting Our Communities

Community is at the heart of everything we do. The DRN Board of Directors approved over \$80,000 in donations to various non-profit organizations throughout the DRN service area in support of the communities we serve. DRN ReditTech employees volunteer many hours on various boards, committees, and participate in quarterly company sponsored service projects to raise funds to donate to organizations that may need assistance. Our customer appreciation picnics were a great success in Forman and Forbes in 2023 and I hope you enjoy them as much as we do.

In closing, I want to express my gratitude for your continued trust and support. Together, we are shaping a connected, sustainable, and empowered future for our communities. Thank you for being an integral part of the DRN ReditTech story. Here's to a year of continued growth, innovation, and shared success.

ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Ralph Greer, Marion; Myron Yagow, Milnor and Dan Barton, Fullerton were re-elected to the Dickey Rural Telephone Cooperative (DRN) Board of Directors at its 73rd Annual Meeting held on Oct. 19 at Ellendale Public School.

DRN Board President Ralph Neu and Kent Schimke, DRN CEO/general manager updated approximately 330 members and guests who attended the meeting on the financial health of the cooperative. In honor of the cooperative difference and their guiding principles, this year's annual meeting theme was 'Your network, your connections, your community...your DRN.' highlighting the partnership between DRN as a cooperative and its support for all the communities it serves through donations, volunteer efforts and innovative telecommunications services.

At the meeting, Schimke and Neu shared net margins for 2022 were over \$9 million. Neu reported the cooperative returned over \$5 million in capital credits to members in 2022. "We are committed to our members and will continue to focus on furnishing high-quality communications at competitive prices to ensure long-term viability for the cooperative," said Neu.



DRN Board President Ralph Neu reports 2022 highlights to members during DRN's 73rd Annual Meeting held at the Ellendale Public School on October 19.

DRN INCREASES SECURITY MEASURES

Since January 2023, DRN has been verifying customers with new methods when calling DRN regarding their account. This procedure is referred to as multi-factor authentication to improve security when accessing your account.

What is Multi-Factor Authorization (MFA)?

Multi-Factor Authorization is an important security method used to identify and access your accounts. This process requires two forms of identification to access resources and data. DRN is adding security questions as an extra layer of security to your DRN account.

Please call DRN at 701-344-5000 to set up your security questions. Or, set up online on your smart device by downloading Smart Hub on the App Store or Google Play.

Smart Hub TRY IT TODAY!



Gain account access at your fingertips and two-way communication with DRN online or on your device.

Simply go to drtel.com and click "Pay My Bill" in the top right hand corner.



SmartHub:

- **Fast & Easy Bill Pay**
- **Safe & Secure**
- **Free Online or Mobile App on the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.**



Protect ALL your devices

ProtectIQ® Network Security

With the explosion of the Internet of Things, consumers have access to everything from smartphones to smart fridges. These interconnected devices may make life more convenient—but they may also leave users more vulnerable to security issues.

As new smart technologies enable data to move more freely across networks and devices, users must be equally smart about how they defend their data against hackers.

Many of these systems have simple or no built-in security considerations and a lot of IT professionals would tell you that you need to set up a separate home network for everything other than your PCs and smartphones. We say that these IT professionals need to go back to school. You don't need more than one network if you have DRN's GigaSpire router with ProtectIQ.

With ProtectIQ™, you will receive the internet security you need. It leverages a large cloud database of known virus and ransomware threats. By looking for the specific signatures of these threats in real-time, ProtectIQ can terminate the transfer of data before a malicious payload is delivered to any vulnerable devices in the network. As new threats are emerging daily, the threat database is continuously updated to offer protection against the latest threats. ProtectIQ is a network-level security application that works quietly in the background and proactively keeps malicious websites, viruses, and intrusion away from your home 24x7.

Ready to get protected? Contact DRN ReadITech today. 701-344-5000

DRN donates to area organizations

DRN has recently donated to several organizations within its territory. The donations are part of DRN's commitment to supporting community needs throughout its service area.

DRN donated \$2,000 to Forbes Rural Fire Department to help purchase the needed protection gear for a new volunteer firefighter. Ty Bertsch and Mike Henning accept the donation from Janell Hauck.

The Ellendale Opera House received a check for \$1,500 to be used towards the \$350,000 restoration project to correct a major deterioration of the foundation. Janell Hauck, DRN, presents the check to Justin Meidinger.

DRN donated \$1,500 to the Ashley Ambulance Service to purchase a Lucas chest compression device. **Picture on page 10*

The McIntosh County Heritage Center in Ashley received \$1,500 to help with repair expenses for the museum which needs new siding, windows, and doors. Marvel Gross receives donation from Kari Nishek, DRN.

DRN has also donated to Ashley Fire Protection District in Ashley, ND for the purchase of new Wild Land Fire Suits. Link Golz accepts the donation from Janell Hauck.

"We are proud to support these organizations and their efforts to keep the community safe and thriving," said DRN CEO, Kent Schimke. "We hope these donations will help them continue their important work."

DRN Read iTech prides itself on supporting community needs throughout its service area. As an investment in the future of the area citizens, this company has historically supported through its financial contributions those programs and projects that encourage youth, and build communities through partnerships, and in education.



CO-OP MONTH READING CHALLENGE

Students throughout DRN's cooperative territory spent the month of October reading and coloring to enter our Co-Op Month Challenge.

Participants received a DRN stocking cap and coupon for a sweet DQ treat. The names all went in a drawing for the overall prizes. Thank you to all who participated!



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2023 WINNERS!

- PIZZA COUPON – Anders Preus
- MOVIE TICKET VOUCHERS – Frederick Oelke
- DIGITAL BOOKMARK – Kenna Peterson
- V-TECH KIDIZOOM SMARTWATCH – Paisley Henning
- APPLE IPAD – Chloe Schmidt
- NINTENDO SWITCHLITE – Kingston Gilje
- KINDLE KIDS – Asher Johson

SAVOR YOUR *independence.*

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Belle® X is a small, easy to use mobile personal emergency response system that offers you confidence to live life on your terms.

Belle connects you to expert care specialists who can send loved ones or emergency services, depending on what you need.

Now includes an optional Caregiver Mobile App. Includes device tracking, step tracking, first motion, app alerts for low battery, button press, fall detection, power off, and more.

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FEATURES

- 24/7 Access to Help
- GPS, Wi-Fi, & Cell triangulation location services
- Water Resistant
- Fall Detection
- Caregiver App

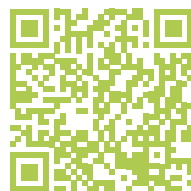
ANNUAL *Scholarship Program*

Attention students—earn money for college!

DRN will continue its Scholarship Program in 2024 and will again participate in the Foundation for Rural Services (FRS) Scholarship. Students will need to complete both online applications separately.

DRN will also award a scholarship to a student attending the Southeast Regional Career & Technology Center and to a student majoring in business administration at Trinity Bible College (TBC).

DRN Scholarship Deadline is Feb. 29, 2024.
Visit drn.coop/scholarship to apply online.



TEN-DIGIT DIALING

In July 2022, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) established "988" as a new nationwide three-digit phone number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. This change offers an easy-to-remember, easy-to-dial phone number to reach suicide prevention and mental health counselors.



DID YOU KNOW?

Dialing the 10-digit number in our area improves call quality? Based on SIP, an application layer protocol & foundation of modern interactive communications used across the Internet.

To support this change, everyone with a telephone number in select states, including South Dakota with area code 605, are required to use 10-digit dialing to complete local calls. While dialing the area code to complete a local call in North Dakota is not required, DRN recommends customers dial all ten digits for improved call completion.

WHAT IS 10-DIGIT DIALING?

A 10-digit call requires entering both the three-digit area code plus the seven-digit telephone number to complete the local call. For example: 605-XXX-XXXX is considered 10-digit dialing. XXX-XXXX is considered seven-digit dialing. In DRN area, technicians have set up the system to work with or without dialing 1 before the area code.

Beginning in the early 1990s, to accommodate the growing need for more new phone numbers, some areas began to add a second area code. Dialing both the area code and the seven-digit number was necessary to ensure the call reached the intended recipient. As more areas run out of seven-digit numbers to assign, a second local area code may be added, requiring that area to transition to 10-digit dialing. To learn more about area codes requiring 10-digit dialing visit: fcc.gov.

TV SERVICE PRICE CHANGE NOTIFICATION

As a video (TV) provider, DRN is subject to annual programming fee increases from programmers and network channel owners. Because of these programming fee increases, we must adjust our rates. Effective March 1, 2024 the Ultimate Family Pak will increase \$10 per month and Valu TV will increase \$6 per month.

If you have any questions concerning this notice, please contact our customer care department at 701-344-5000 Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

LET US HELP FIND THE PACKAGE FOR YOU AND SAVE ON YOUR TV SERVICE!

Traditional TV: WatchTV Everywhere is included with your traditional DRN video subscription to watch your shows on most devices anywhere with Internet.

Try Streaming: Check out which streaming service is best for you. Visit: mybundle.tv/drtel/start

Call DRN to review and make changes to your account at 701-344-5000.

WATCH YOUR FAVORITE SPORTS ON BEK TV!



SPORTS | www.bek.tv

For a full schedule visit

Catch local sports action on BEK Sports Channel 104,
BEK Sports 3 Channel 195 and BEK Sports 2 Channel 196

Date	Description	Time	Channel
Tue. Jan. 2	H.S. Boys Basketball Oakes vs South Border	7:30 p.m.	196
Thu. Jan. 4	H.S. Girls Wrestling South Border vs Lisbon	6 p.m.	196
Thu. Jan. 4	H.S. Boys Wrestling South Border vs Lisbon	7 p.m.	196
Fri. Jan. 5	H.S. Boys Basketball Sargent County vs Lisbon	7:30 p.m.	196
Thu. Jan. 11	H.S. Girls Basketball Napoleon-GS vs South Border	7:30 p.m.	195
Thu. Jan. 12	H.S. Boys Basketball Linton-HMB vs South Border	7:30 p.m.	196
Thu. Jan. 15	H.S. Girls Basketball Ellendale vs Napoleon-GS	7:30 p.m.	195
Thu. Jan. 15	H.S. Girls Basketball Kidder County vs LaMoure-LM	7:30 p.m.	195
Thu. Jan. 25	H.S. Wrestling LaMoure-LM vs Napoleon-GS	5:00 p.m.	196
Thu. Jan. 25	H.S. Wrestling LaMoure-LM vs South Border	6:00 p.m.	196
Thu. Jan. 25	H.S. Wrestling South Border vs Napoleon-GS	7:00 p.m.	196
Thu. Jan. 25	H.S. Girls Basketball South Border vs LaMoure-LM	7:30 p.m.	195
Sat. Jan. 27	H.S. Girls Basketball Linton-HMB vs Edgeley-Kulm-Montpelier	5:30 p.m.	196
Tue. Jan. 30	H.S. Boys Basketball Edgeley-Kulm-Montpelier vs Ellendale	7:30 p.m.	196

HOW ARE WE DOING?

We hope you'd give us a **five-star** review!



Leave reviews for DRN
ReadiTech on our Facebook
page or Google to be entered
into our monthly drawing for
a \$24 bill credit!

Tell us!

GET \$24 FOR LEAVING US A REVIEW IN 2024!



ANNUAL NOTIFICATIONS



Do Not Call Residential Notification

To address consumer concerns about unwelcome telemarketing calls, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) established a national Do-Not-Call Registry. The registry applies to all telemarketers (with the exception of certain non-profit and political organizations) and covers both interstate and intrastate telemarketing calls. Commercial telemarketers are not allowed to call you if your number is listed on the registry.

Consumers may register their residential phone number, and wireless numbers, on the national Do-Not-Call Registry for free. To register by phone, call 1-888-382-1222. For TTY call 1-866-290-4236. You must call from the phone number you wish to register. Or, register online at donotcall.gov. Telemarketers have up to 31 days to get your phone number and remove it from their call lists.

Battery Backup Notification

DRN reminds customers your telecommunications services are powered by electricity. If your main power source goes out, all fiber customers have a backup power supply box provided by DRN in your home, apartment complex, or office building.

The battery backup powers telephone service for approximately eight hours. This means the backup will provide eight hours of in use time or talk time. If the power is out for an extended period of time, telephone service will continue to work as long as the battery backup has not been depleted of its eight hours of in use time. During a power outage, Internet and television service disconnects immediately.

In order to keep you and your family connected during an extended power outage, DRN recommends connecting your home or business to a backup generator or emergency backup battery. DRN offers a 24-hour extended battery for purchase. For details on buying an extended battery or any other questions regarding the battery backup, contact a customer care specialist at 701-344-5000.

Federal Lifeline Assistance

For those who can't afford communication services—Lifeline, a federal program, can help eligible people pay part of their phone or broadband bill.

Lifeline can save you up to \$9.25 on your monthly phone bill for basic local telephone service or broadband. Lifeline assistance applies only to service in the home where you live.

Who is eligible?* An individual is eligible if he or she participates in one of the following programs:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Medicaid
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- Veterans Pension or Survivors Pension

In addition, a consumer may be eligible if his or her household income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines.

* Only eligible persons may apply. Only one discount is available per household. Lifeline is non-transferable.

How to obtain assistance: Offices that administer a program under which you are eligible for Lifeline may automatically send you an Assistance Certificate in the mail. Anyone wishing to participate in Lifeline is required to sign a form indicating, under oath, that they qualify to participate because they meet at least one of the program eligibility requirements. This must be signed and returned with a copy of your income or program eligibility.

What if my benefits stop? If you no longer qualify for any economic program, you no longer qualify for Lifeline.

For more information: Call DRN at 701-344-5000. Consumers must apply for Lifeline through their telecommunications company.

RDFC & DRN award \$3,000 to area non-profits

DRN is a member of the Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC). As a result, communities in our service area are eligible to apply for a grant of up to \$3,000 for community-based projects. RDFC is making these funds available in order that more people become aware of their larger loan program that funds community-based projects and non-profit entities with low interest loans.

“We are proud of our communities and are committed to supporting efforts that keep our area vibrant and healthy for generations,” said DRN GM/CEO Kent Schimke.

Eligible projects for the RDFC grant are community-owned businesses, community facilities or other community-based projects, such as school or youth projects that benefit rural areas and lead to community improvements. For more information visit: drn.coop/rdfc/



1. Ellendale Community Food Pantry, Phase 3 of Building Expansion

DRN's Kari Nishek presents the donation to Dee Haugen and Lu Gruenich.

2. Ashley Ambulance Service, Purchase Lucas Chest Compression Machine

Kari Nishek, DRN, presents the donation to Laurie Heupel.



3. Kulm Public School, New Concession Stand

Kari Nishek presents the donation to Adam Schlepp and Tami Kramlich.

4. Litchville-Marion Public School, New Playground

DRN's Kari Nishek presents to Jarvis Knudson.



5. Ransom County Fair, New Goat, Sheep & Pig Barn

April Weight, DRN, presents the donation to Paulette Laudert.

6. The Hayloft, Roof Repairs

Scott Schlepp receive the donation from Kari Nishek, DRN.

For more information about rural community grants and RDFC visit: drn.coop/rdfc/



Rural Development Finance Corporation
GROWING COMMUNITIES

CONGRATULATIONS CALENDAR WINNERS

DRN subscribers submitted their photos of living, working and playing in our beautiful state of North Dakota for the 2024 calendar photo contest.

Winners were selected and customers received their calendars in December. Additional 2024 calendars are available for your shop, lake cabin or office. E-mail marketing@drtel.com to request additional calendars with your name and mailing address.

Thank you to all who submitted photos for this year's calendar contest!

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2024 WINNERS!

Roxanne Baumgartner	Doreen Olstad
Julie Bellin	Christine Peterson
Daniel Brantl	Katherine Plessner
Ashley Brown	JB Ragan
Michelle Carpenter	Abbie Smith
Julie Duckworth	Marie Vogel
Eva Jefferson	Bette Wagner
Jody Ketterling	Tammy Wahl
Maxine Kosel	Angie Waletzko
Sandee Lunneborg	



NEW LISTINGS

Edgeley 493

Frances Priebe493-2342
Raymond Krueger493-3059

Ellendale 349

America Homeland Revival Ribs.....
.....349-7427

Forman 724

De De Cookson.....724-3628
Charles Bjugstad724-3645
Delores Wittich 724-6315

Fort Ransom 973

Dry Hollow Saloon & Grill...973-2150

Gwinner 678

Old Purple Cow Diner678-2726

Kulm 647

Loren Krueger647-2534

LaMoure 883

Donald Carlson.....883-5240
Ryan Love883-5487

Lisbon 683

Donald L Olson.....683-3298
Don Pattis683-4788
M. Dagman683-5891

Oakes 742

Marilyn Larson742-7591

Watch for Summer Internship Opportunities at DRN!

Those interested in learning more about DRN summer intern positions, watch for details posted on our website by late January.

For job descriptions and to apply, visit: drn.coop/careers.

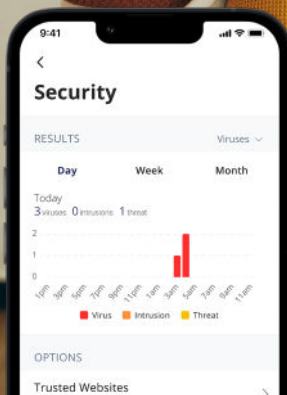
This institution is an equal-opportunity provider and employer.

DRN

READI TECH

PO Box 69
Ellendale, ND 58436

PROTECTING YOUR 2024



Enjoy online peace of
mind while we keep
the intruders out.

ProtectIQ puts a shield between your devices and bad actors, stopping threats before they ever make it to your devices. [Learn more online at drn.coop/protectiq.](https://drn.coop/protectiq)