



## Sneak Peek of the NEW Directory Photo

George Donner's photo of the railroad crossing at sunset in Dodge Center was the winner of our Directory Photo Contest and will appear on the cover of the 2017 Phone Directory. Congratulations, George! Watch for the new directory coming in April.

## Business Office Closed

**Monday, May 29th**  
Memorial Day

## KMTelecom

18 Second Avenue NW  
Kasson, MN 55944-1491  
634-2511

Local call for KMTelecom customers in Kasson, Mantorville, Rock Dell and Dodge Center

### Office Hours

Monday-Friday 8:00am to 5:00pm  
For help with service problems during non-business hours, please call 634-2505.

### 24/7 Internet Help Desk

Kasson, Mantorville Area 634-2575  
Rock Dell Area 634-2575 (FREE call)  
Dodge Center Area 633-2575

### Exede & WildBlue

Sales/Inquiries 866-677-8677  
or 507-634-5692  
Technical Support 888-232-3796

Visit Us Online  
[www.kmtel.com](http://www.kmtel.com)

## KMTelecom Awarded Minnesota Broadband Grant

### A MESSAGE FROM MARY EHMKE, PRESIDENT

I am pleased to announce that KMTelecom was one of 42 applicants in Minnesota to receive a matching grant from the Minnesota Border to Border Broadband Grant Program. KMTelecom will receive a grant of \$764,663, which will be used to build out high speed internet (fiber network) to 205 customers in our rural Mantorville exchange. KMTelecom will be funding \$1.2 million toward this project. With this buildout, our rural Mantorville customers will now be able to receive the same advanced services that our customers in Kasson and Mantorville have. Broadband speeds up to 1 Gig—Whippet speeds—will be available. Television programming will also be available on this network.



Construction of the rural Mantorville buildout is set to begin this summer, and we are hoping to be able to connect customers by year end.

We are grateful to the Minnesota Office of Broadband Development for awarding us this grant. Without grant money, the low subscriber density makes the business case for a rural fiber network unfeasible. KMTelecom will continue to invest in our rural exchanges as funding allows. We remain committed to both our urban and rural customers and will keep building out fiber as we are able.



## LIKE Us on Facebook

[www.facebook.com/KMTelecom](http://www.facebook.com/KMTelecom)

Facebook is a great place for important messages from KMTelecom. Just LIKE



our page. If there's a promotion, sweepstakes, fun article or outage, you'll hear it from us first!

## World Backup Day is March 31

Don't be an April Fool. Back up all your important files—including family photos, home videos, and financial documents—on World Backup Day, March 31.

What is a backup? It's simply a second copy of your files that's kept in a safe place other than on your computer, tablet, or smartphone. That place could be an external hard drive or an online storage service.

It's imperative to do backups on a regular basis, not just on March 31, since losing personal files can be a devastating experience. If you think it won't happen to you, think again. Losing files is common and can be caused by things like theft, hardware failure, computer viruses, car accidents, fire, and flooding.

According to [www.worldbackupday.com](http://www.worldbackupday.com):

- 30 percent of people have never backed up their files.
- 113 smartphones are lost or stolen every minute.
- 1 in 10 computers are infected with viruses each month.

**KMTelecom cares about our customers and shares this backup reminder to help prevent technology disasters.**



## Don't Get Hooked by Phishing

**K**MTelecom wants you to be informed and aware as you go about your online activities. One potential scam to watch out for is phishing, where crooks try to get you to divulge personal information through the use of legitimate-looking emails and websites. For example, you may receive an email that looks like it's from your bank, saying your account information needs to be updated immediately for security purposes. **DON'T FALL FOR IT.** The scammers are trying to commit identity theft to gain access to your accounts.



**Awareness of phishing tactics is the best way to avoid becoming the latest victim of these online thieves. Here's how to protect yourself:**

- **No reply.** It sounds obvious but don't reply to unsolicited messages, especially those asking for personal information. Legitimate companies never solicit information this way.
- **Don't click links.** Links in phishing messages appear to go to a legitimate website but actually redirect you elsewhere. Instead of clicking, call the company using a phone number you know is legitimate. Or type the company's web address directly into the browser to learn how to contact the company.
- **Not by email.** Don't provide personal information by email — it's not secure. When providing information through a website, make sure it's secure by checking to see if <https://> is in the web address and a padlock icon appears on the browser's status bar.
- **Antivirus, all the time.** Make sure antivirus and firewall software is always running and updated. This helps to keep viruses, worms, spyware, and keystroke loggers off your computer.

**If you should fall prey to a phishing scheme, take these steps immediately:**

- **Contact your financial institution.** Let bank officials know what happened and they can block access to your accounts and often reimburse you for fraudulent charges.
- **Contact credit reporting agencies.** Protect your credit by letting these organizations know about the incident. The three main U.S. credit reporting agencies are TransUnion ([www.transunion.com](http://www.transunion.com)), Equifax ([www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com)), and Experian ([www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com)).
- **Contact the FTC.** The Federal Trade Commission investigates and prosecutes consumer fraud. You can file a complaint at [www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft](http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft) as well as learn more about identity theft and how it works.

**Phishers may try to lure you in, but you don't have to bite. Be careful!**

# Universal Service Fund FAQs

## What is the Universal Service Fund (USF)?

The USF is a government-administered fund (not a government-paid fund) to support the provision of telecommunications services in rural and high-cost areas, to low-income consumers, and to schools, libraries, and healthcare facilities nationwide. All telecommunications customers contribute to the USF on an equal basis. Congress authorized the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to implement the USF.

## How does it work for KMTelecom?

The Universal Service High-Cost Program is designed to ensure that consumers in rural and high-cost areas have access to telecommunications services at rates that are affordable and reasonably comparable to those in urban areas. The program fulfills this universal service goal by allowing eligible carriers, including KMTelecom, who serve these areas to recover some of their operating costs from the USF. The fund reimbursement is based only on local phone service subscriptions.

## Will I continue to be required to subscribe to local phone service to receive broadband internet and cable TV services?

Yes. Since the FCC continues to base USF reimbursement on local phone line subscriptions, we must keep this requirement in place. If we did not require a phone line subscription, KMTelecom would not receive USF funding, and the rates for broadband internet and cable TV service would have to go up. We do anticipate changes to this requirement in the future, but it will need to remain in place as long as USF is based only on local phone networks. We do have internet and TV rates available without a phone line. However, you receive a much more economical rate by bundling your services with a phone line.

## What is KMTelecom doing with the USF funding it receives?

We're continuing to upgrade our network so that all customers, no matter how rural, can receive broadband internet services.

## How can I voice my concerns about USF?

You can contact the FCC as well as your U.S. Senators or Congressman. Please encourage them to seek USF reform that is less burdensome to rural Americans and rural communication service providers.



## Spring Equinox May Affect Your TV Picture

If your TV picture momentarily turns snowy or blurry between February 28th and March 5th—the period of the spring equinox—it's probably from a sun outage. This is a natural phenomenon which occurs twice a year (in the spring and fall), when the sun appears to pass directly behind the satellite, as seen from the receive antenna.

During these brief “eclipse” periods, the receive antenna on earth, the satellite, and the sun are in direct alignment. Reception becomes degraded and eventually impossible for a brief period of time, usually less than 15 minutes. All communications providers using satellites experience this effect.

There is nothing that can be done from a technical standpoint to prevent the sun outage effects. Fortunately, however, sun outages are a short-term problem.

**\$25**

**Win a \$25  
Credit on Your  
KMTelecom Bill**

Fill out this form, clip it, and return it with your next bill by March 31st for a chance to win a **\$25 credit** to your account. One winner per newsletter will be selected.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

**Congratulations to our December  
2016 winner, Karl Malisheske,  
Kasson, MN!**

# Are You Having Trouble Using the Telephone Due to a Hearing or Speech Disability?

Minnesota Relay is a free telephone service that uses specially trained communications assistants (CAs) to facilitate telephone calls between people with hearing and speech disabilities and other individuals. Calls can be made to anywhere in the world (long distance charges apply), 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. All calls are completely confidential. To make a relay call dial 7-1-1. Once connected to the relay service, tell the CA the type of relay call you wish to make. Or, you may dial the specific toll-free number for the type of relay service.

**For More Information on Minnesota Relay Services:**  
[www.mnrelay.org](http://www.mnrelay.org)  
1-800-657-3775

## Emergency Assistance

TTY callers should dial 9-1-1 directly in an emergency. All 9-1-1 centers are equipped to handle TTY calls. Minnesota Relay can process emergency calls, but this may delay the response to your call.

## Billing Options for Long Distance Relay Calls

- Direct
- Collect
- Third-Party Billing
- Carrier Calling Card
- Pre-Paid Calling Card

**To File a Complaint Regarding Minnesota Relay**  
1-800-657-3775

Email: [mn.relay@state.mn.us](mailto:mn.relay@state.mn.us)

You will need to provide the date and time of the relay call, the CA's identification number, and the nature of your complaint.

**You may also file a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission:**

[www.fcc.gov/complaints](http://www.fcc.gov/complaints)

Voice: 1-888-225-5322

TTY: 1-888-835-5322

ASL via VP: 1-844-432-2275

## Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program

The TED Program provides free specialized telecommunications equipment to income eligible Minnesotans who are having trouble using the telephone due to a hearing, speech or physical disability.

[mn.gov/dhs/ted-program](http://mn.gov/dhs/ted-program)

Voice: 1-800-657-3663

ASL via VP: 1-866-635-0082

## Captioned Telephone Service (CTS)

CTS uses a special telephone with a text display screen so that a person who is hard of hearing can listen to and read captions of everything the other person on the call says. You speak directly to the other person on the call, and a relay communications Assistant (CA) transcribes everything the other person says into captions, which appear on the display screen of your CTS phone.

## Internet Protocol Captioned Telephone Service (IP CTS)

Internet-based forms of CTS are available for those who would like to use CTS on a computer, tablet, or select smartphones. Go to: [www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/internet-protocol-ip-captioned-telephone-service](http://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/internet-protocol-ip-captioned-telephone-service).

## Computer (ASCII): 1-800-627-3529

Computer users can access Minnesota Relay. Set your communications software to the following protocols: speeds ranging from 300 to 2400; 8 Bits; No Parity; 1 Stop Bit; Full Duplex. When calling at a rate of 300 or below, follow the above using Half Duplex.

## Hearing Carry Over (HCO): 1-800-627-3529

HCO allows a person who can hear clearly but who has very limited or no speech capability to make and receive phone calls. Using a special text telephone, you type your conversation for the relay CA to read to the other person, and listen directly to the other person's response.

## Hearing User: 1-800-627-3529

A hearing person may use a standard telephone or mobile phone to place a relay call and speak with a person who is deaf, hard of hearing, or speech disabled.

## Internet Protocol (IP) Relay

IP Relay combines text-based relay service with the ease of the Internet – no need for a TTY. You are able to make your relay call using a computer, laptop, tablet, or select smartphones. Go to: [www.sprintrelay.com](http://www.sprintrelay.com).

## Spanish Relay: 1-877-627-5448

Spanish speaking persons with a hearing or speech disability are able to make relay calls. This is not a translation service – both parties must speak Spanish, and at least one party must have a hearing or speech disability.

## Speech-to-Speech (STS): 1-877-627-3848

STS allows a person who has difficulty speaking or being understood on the phone to communicate using his or her own voice or voice synthesizer. The CA revoices your words so that the other person on the call can understand them, and the other person speaks directly to you.

## Text Telephone (TTY): 1-800-627-3529

This service allows a person who is deaf, deaf-blind, or speech disabled to use a TTY to communicate with the other person on the call.

## Video Relay Service (VRS)

VRS allows a person who uses American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate over the phone. The VRS user connects to the CA via an Internet-enabled device with a video camera. The CA relays the conversation back and forth between the parties – in ASL with the VRS user and by voice with the called party. Go to: [www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/video-relay-services](http://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/video-relay-services).

## Voice Carry Over (VCO): 1-877-627-3024

VCO allows a person with a hearing disability, but who wants to use his or her own voice, to speak directly to the other party. The CA then types the other party's response, which is displayed on the VCO user's text telephone.