



THE Connection

REVOLUTIONIZING RURAL CONNECTIVITY

As the world deals with unforeseen challenges, the call for fast, reliable networks is here to stay. The call for accelerated deployment and expansion of fiber-optic technology has become imperative, emphasizing its role as a catalyst for innovation, connectivity, and overall well-being of rural communities. The GBT Board of Directors answered that call by upgrading all of our ILEC exchanges with state-of-the-art fiber broadband network. Our plan is to celebrate the completion of that network with a gathering of key stakeholders in early 2024. The Cooperative was also able to upgrade some adjacent networks and expand by being awarded a federal grant.

Our relentless pursuit of grants paid off with the Rural Pawnee County Award. These awards are very gratifying not only because of the hard work by our team to secure them, but also the fact that we are able to close the Digital Divide!

The GBT Team spends many hours formulating, adjusting, and adding to our plan. Like the business you work for or your personal plan, we are faced with many questions of where to spend, where to cut, where growth is happening, and what big ideas are falling short of expectations. Our team leans on each other and our members with every decision. As we navigate through the coming year, we'll stay committed to our Cooperative values!

It must be mentioned that GBT is very blessed to have such a dedicated, hard-working staff. Their commitment has shaped our success as they strive every day to deliver an unmatched customer experience. They truly care for every customer they touch and are passionate about the success of the Cooperative's area.

In the spirit of the New Year, all of us at GBT express our heartfelt gratitude to you, and look forward to serving you in 2024!

- Beau Rebel
GBT General Manager

What will 2024 have in store for GBT?

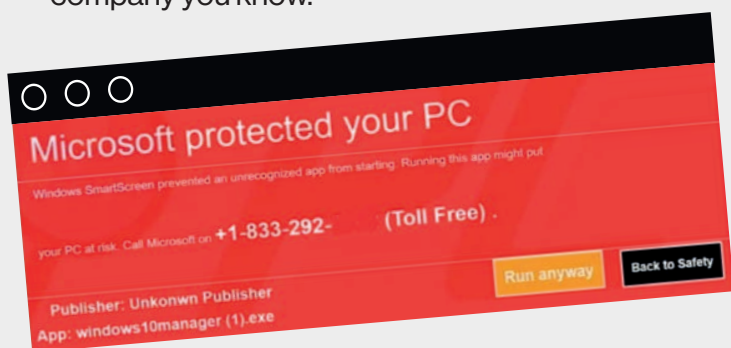
1. Continue to invest in and upgrade our network with Fiber;
2. Look for solutions to implement and deliver multi-gig service;
3. Participate and look to expand in neighboring communities through federal funding programs and capital investment;
4. Look to automate more of the services we provide and enhance the packages we offer to bring a better user experience to all.

QUIT FALLING FOR THIS SCAM

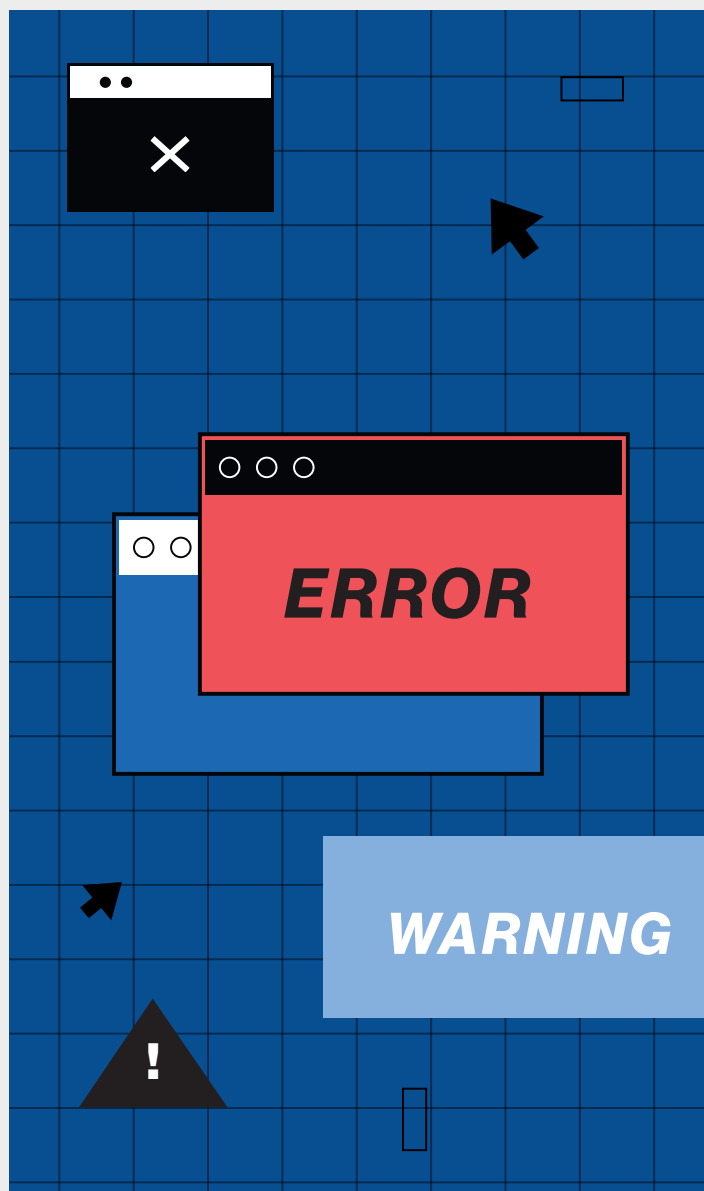
IT'S COSTING YOU MONEY!

If you're using a computer or cell phone, it's not uncommon to encounter pop-up messages on your screen. Be aware most of these pop-ups are designed to deceive and scare you into taking unnecessary actions. If you ever come across a pop-up claiming your computer or cell phone is infected with a virus and urging you to call a specific number for immediate assistance, it's crucial to remain calm and **DO NOT DIAL THE NUMBER**. These pop-ups are often scams perpetrated by cybercriminals seeking to exploit your fears and gain unauthorized access to your system.

First, it's important to understand the legitimate antivirus programs or operating systems will never display urgent warnings via random pop-ups with phone numbers. Scammers use these fake alerts to trick unsuspecting users into calling, at which point they may attempt to extract sensitive information or sell unnecessary services. Instead of panicking and dialing the provided number, simply close the pop-up by using your device's "TASK MANAGER" to end the task, or shut down your machine to eliminate the pop-up. If you're unsure about the legitimacy of the warning, consult with a trusted tech-savvy friend or company you know.



This picture is a fake pop-up that many have seen on their computer with the scare tactic that Microsoft is protecting your PC and noticed an app that will damage your PC and to call the Toll-Free number.



Microsoft will never contact you; these pop-ups are scams with scammers waiting for you to call the number so they can try to extort data and payment information from you. **DO NOT CALL** these numbers!

Remember that scammers rely on fear and urgency to manipulate users. By educating yourself and others about these deceptive practices, you can help protect your personal information and keep your computer safe from potential threats. In conclusion, always exercise caution when encountering unexpected pop-ups, and never hesitate to seek guidance from reliable sources before taking any action.

\$100,000+ in FRS Scholarships and an All-Expense Paid Trip to Washington DC - Apply today!

GBT is excited to once again sponsor the Foundation for Rural Service Scholarship Program and Youth Tour to Washington, DC!

FRS Scholarship for High School Seniors

– Deadline to Apply: February 16, 2024!
Apply now for a \$2,500 General Scholarship to students from rural America to an accredited college, university, or vocational-technical school which GBT co-funds with the Foundation for Rural Services. This program seeks to encourage students to return to their rural communities upon completing their education. If your parents or legal guardians receive at least one GBT residential or business service then make sure you apply, as GBT has had several students receive this in the past. In addition, a \$5,000 James L. Bass Legal Scholarship and Named Scholarships are available for students entering their first year of law school. Go to www.gbta.net/scholarships for the link to apply!

FRS Youth Tour to Washington DC for 1 Lucky High School Student

– Do you have or know a high school student who is 16 or 17 and whose parents have at least one GBT service? If so, tell them to apply for the FRS Youth Tour which brings together 100 high school students to Washington DC for 5 days to learn about legislative and government processes and the importance of quality broadband connections. This is an all-expense paid trip which will take place from June 3-7, 2024. Deadline to Apply: March 1, 2024! Applications are available at www.gbta.net/scholarships.



Kickstart the new year

with an Internet upgrade 



Existing customers can upgrade their Internet speeds for **3 months, completely free!**



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: MEET KYLE, OUR CUSTOMER & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Tell us about your background? I am from Otis and have an amazing wife and we have 3 boys ages 7, 4, and 1 that keep us busy and always entertained. When I was going to college, I ended up doing 2 years of summer internships which were not in my field of study (Business), where I helped mostly convert the towns of Ransom and Ness City to Fiber from the DSL copper. I loved working for GBT those two summers and always kept in touch with some of the staff. 8 years after my last GBT internship, a job in the marketing and sales department came open and I've been here ever since, which will be 9 years in May!

What are you most excited about in your day-to-day? I really enjoy working with people daily to make the lives around us better. Some days that means working with my internal peers at GBT, and some days that means working with external customers!

Can you share more about what you do with the business services and hosted phones side of your job? I really enjoy working with businesses and finding ways where we can help make their jobs easier on the communication side. At every business I've been around, the employees must wear many hats, so it's exciting to know we can at least alleviate the communication piece from these businesses. This often comes in the form of helping them upgrade their phone systems to

a Hosted voice system that allows businesses to flexibility with calls and being more mobile as well as discussions about securing their information with proper backups, firewalls, business email solutions and more.

What role do you believe customer service plays in the success of GBT? Ultimately customer service is one of the most important parts of what we do and the reason why we've been able to thrive for 70 years. I think the thing about providing great customer service is it shows we have a level of respect and understanding for our customers. This also works the same way with our internal customer service. The fact that the departments at GBT provide Great customer service to each other hopefully shows we all have a high level of respect and trust for each other!

What are your work highlights of the past year? The amount of homes and businesses we've been able to connect to fiber in 2023 has been awesome! I know a lot of customers don't believe us, but when were able to upgrade their services and get them as fast of Internet as they want or need, it makes all of us employees at GBT probably happier and more excited then they are. We may not get to impact people by being teachers or doctors, but we feel like being able to connect people to a robust broadband connection is like giving them the keys and ability to do anything they want.

What leadership style do you believe is most effective and how do you implement it? I think its important to lead by example but also have an open mind when making decisions. No matter the situation, I like to look at something from multiple viewpoints, identify the positives and negatives of each viewpoint, and then ultimately pick the one that is going to have the best impact.

Recipe of the Month:

Easy Biscuit Pizza Bake

Turn pizza night on its head with this easy dinner bake! Using just four ingredients—biscuits, pizza sauce, shredded mozzarella cheese and pepperoni—and 10 minutes of prep time, you'll have a fun, bubble-up-bake-style pizza to serve the whole family perfect for easy January dinners!



Ingredients

- 1 can (16.3 oz) refrigerated Biscuits (8 Count)
- 1 can (8 oz) pizza sauce
- 2 cups finely shredded mozzarella cheese (8 oz)
- 16 slices pepperoni (1 1/2 inch)

Instructions

1. Heat oven to 375°F. Spray 13x9-inch (3-quart) baking dish with cooking spray.
 2. Separate dough into 8 biscuits. Cut each biscuit into 8 pieces. In large bowl, toss biscuit pieces, pizza sauce and 1 cup of the cheese.
 3. Spread mixture evenly in prepared baking dish. Top with pepperoni and remaining 1 cup cheese.
 4. Bake 20 to 23 minutes or until biscuits are golden brown.
- Tip 1: Make this recipe your own! Swap some of the pepperoni for cooked sausage, or add sliced black olives or mushrooms, chopped peppers or onions, or your favorite cheeses. Tip 2: Serve with a green salad as a fresh side dish to this hearty meal. Tip 3: Serve squares of this bake with extra pizza sauce.*



785-372-4236
www.gbta.net

Ellis
101 W 9th | Open: Mon., Wed., Fri.
8 am - 12:30 pm; 1:30 pm - 5 pm

Ness City
114 W. Main | Open: Mon.-Fri.
8 am - 5 pm

St. John
602 N US Hwy 281 | Open: Mon.-Fri.
8 am - 1pm; 2pm - 5pm

Larned
122 W. 5th | Open: Mon.-Fri.
8 am - 11:30 am; 12:30 pm - 5 pm

Rush Center
103 Lincoln St. | Open: Mon.-Fri.
8 am - 5 pm



The Connection

If you have questions or comments about this newsletter or any of our services, please email us at marketing@gbtlive.com

Kyle Bahr, Editor | Kara Jecha, Editor | Addie Flax, Graphic Design