



THE Connection

STAY SAFE IN 2025: PROTECT YOURSELF FROM SCAMMERS WITH THESE ESSENTIAL TIPS

As we welcome February 2025, how's your New Year's resolution holding up? Whether you're on track or already revisiting your goals, here's one that's worth adding to your list: staying vigilant against scams. With thousands of people falling victim to scammers every day, GBT is here to help you protect yourself and your loved ones.

10 Tips to Avoid Being Hacked or Scammed

1. Screen Unfamiliar Calls and Texts

- Avoid answering calls from unknown numbers, even if they appear local.
- Don't reply to texts from numbers outside your contact list.

2. Verify Contacts Independently

- If you need to return a call or check on a bill or appointment, do your own research. Look up official numbers or websites through trusted sources.

3. Be Cautious with Emails

- Scan emails carefully before opening them.
- Avoid replying to unexpected emails or clicking unknown links.
- For actions like bill payments or account updates, go directly to the official website or portal instead of using links in the email.

4. Secure Your Devices

- Lock all your devices with strong passwords, including your computer and smartphone.

5. Create Strong Passwords

- Use phrases with at least 18 characters, including a mix of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and special symbols. For example: Myf@voriteHolid@yw@sChristm@s2012.

6. Enable Two-Factor Authentication (2FA)

- Set up 2FA wherever possible. This adds a second layer of security by requiring a code sent to your phone, email, or authenticator app in addition to your password.

7. Beware of QR Codes and USB Drives

- Avoid scanning random QR codes or plugging in unknown USB drives, as they may contain malware or lead to phishing websites.

8. Limit Access to Your Devices

- Never let anyone access your computer, phone, or other devices unless you are certain they are trustworthy. Avoid granting remote access unless absolutely necessary.

9. Freeze Your Credit Reports

- Take 15 minutes to freeze your credit with the three major



bureaus: TransUnion, Experian, and Equifax. This prevents scammers from opening new credit accounts in your name.

- Temporarily unfreeze your credit if needed. Freezing your credit is free—ignore upsells for unnecessary subscriptions.

10. Avoid Suspicious Payment Methods

- Never send cash through the mail, pay unknown callers with gift cards, or wire money to strangers.
- If someone claims to represent a company, law

enforcement, or another organization, hang up and verify their claims by contacting the organization directly using a trusted phone number.

Stay Informed and Spread Awareness

Scammers are constantly looking for new ways to exploit people, but staying alert and informed can make a big difference. Share these tips with friends and family to help everyone stay safe in 2025. Let's make scam prevention a priority together!

PHISHING EMAILS: HOW TO IDENTIFYING THEM

Let's review this fake or phishing email that some GBT customers received to show what to check for whenever you receive an email from anyone.

1. WHO the EMAIL is FROM: You should always check where the email is from. This email looks like it came from an @gmail.com email, which is not the domain GBT uses to send out emails. You can also hover over the email address, and if it doesn't match the email listed, there's a good chance its a phishing email.

2. SENSE of URGENCY: Scammers know people tend to make bad decisions when they are in duress or have to make quick, fast decisions. Because of this, scammers make it seem like immediate action is needed so you don't take time verifying if the email is legit.

3. CLICKING ON A LINK OR BUTTON: Typically opening a phishing email will not infect your computer or give scammers access to your information. The bait and action scammers need is for you to click a button or link to either infect your machine or it redirects you to a website that requests personal information that scammers use for their own financial gain. Never click on a link or button within an email you do not trust.



4. MINIMAL CONTACT INFORMATION: At the bottom of email it is a very generic signature line with no contact information. If the email did contain contact information, you should never trust it is a verified and legit company. Do your own research, look the phone number up or search the web and find the official company website and verify the information they listed.

It's important to be diligent and review every email you receive. Its estimated that 3.4 billion emails a day are sent by cyber criminals.

FEBRUARY TECH DATES

DAYS TO REMEMBER

We remember house and car maintenance, even have a checklist or calendar for them. What about digital maintenance? Digital maintenance is needed as well. Here are some technology dates to help you to remember your digital maintenance.

FEBRUARY 1ST: CHANGE YOUR PASSWORD DAY

Remember to change your passwords every few months for maximum security. Choose passwords that are lengthy (at least 8 characters), strong and difficult for others to guess, but easy for you to remember. Use a mix of upper and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols while avoiding names and birth dates.

FEBRUARY 10TH: CLEAN OUT YOUR COMPUTER DAY

A reminder to clean old files etc. to ensure your computer runs smoothly.

- Back up files.
- Remove unwanted and large files
- Use disk cleanup to help remove junk files
- Uninstall preloaded and unused apps.
- Reduce startup programs for better speed.
- Remove browser extensions and history.
- Don't Forget to empty the recycle bin!

FEBRUARY 11TH: SAFER INTERNET DAY

Safer Internet Day is an awareness campaign that aims to not only create a safer internet but also a better internet, where everyone is empowered to use technology responsibly, respectfully, critically and creatively. Aimed to help children, youth, teens, parents, educators and more to create a better internet. Providing plans and programs to teach us healthy online practices.

FRS Youth Tour

Deadline to Apply: March 1, 2025!

High school students apply now for an all-expense paid trip to Washington D.C.

"I am grateful to have been chosen. I had the opportunity to see some special landmarks and sites on this trip. This was an opportunity and an experience I will never forget."

- Ethan Petersilie



GBT General Education Scholarship

Deadline to Apply: March 16, 2025!

High School Seniors win a scholarship worth \$700, to help further your higher education!

Each year GBT provides thousands of dollars in scholarships available to area youth. We are excited to again be able to award 10 scholarships, each worth \$700, for our youth in the GBT Service Area!

Parent/Guardian must have had 1 of GBT's services since January 2025.



Applications are available at:
www.gbta.net/scholarships



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: MEET PHILLIP

Central Office Technician

Tell us about yourself.

I'm from Larned, a town that I've basically spent my entire life in. Last May I graduated from FHSU with a degree in Computer Networking & Telecommunications and I plan to sometime in the future get my CCNA certification through Cisco. I plan on staying in the Larned community.

What do you do at GBT?

At GBT I work in the CO (Central Office) department with the main focus of maintaining our network infrastructure including switches, routers, etc. Right now, my main focus has been on installing our new multi-gig equipment and helping with the transition process as we migrate customers over.

What is the best part of your job?

The best part of my job is working with equipment that I'm passionate about. I've always had a knack for networking and can remember working on my home network back in middle school. Since starting at GBT I've had access to advanced equipment allowing me to learn more advanced protocols and routing processes.

What are your work and non-work highlights this year?

One of my biggest work highlights this year was the fiber buildout that took place in La Crosse. This was one of the first tasks that I was given, and it turned out to be quite a large undertaking. Despite the work, the end result made it such a memorable highlight. As far as non-work highlights, this year was my family's trip to Egypt which was something that I've had on my bucket list for some time. Other than the temperatures, the trip was absolutely amazing, and it's still mind boggling just how many monuments that have yet to be discovered.

Most exciting project you've worked on at GBT?

The most exciting project that I've worked on while at GBT would probably be the installation of our new 10 gig switches. This is a large project is going to provide our customers with the ability to go beyond 1 gig internet. This project has provided me the opportunity to build new network routes from the ground up to serve these switches.

What are you most excited about for the upcoming year?

Here at GBT we are working on upgrading equipment, is the project that I'm most excited about. It is a project that is going to take the next several months to do with most of our access gear being torn out and replaced. Once the project is completed, every one of our fiber customers will have access to even faster speeds.

Recipe of the Month:



Cherry Dream Pie

Crust:

- 3 C. graham cracker crumbs
- 1 1/2 sticks (6oz) butter, melted
- 1 tsp. salt

Filling:

- 2 C. powdered sugar
- 2qty, 8oz packages of cream cheese
- 2 env. Dream Whip mix
- 1 C. cold milk, whole or 2%
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2qty 21oz cans cherry pie filling

Instructions:

Crust:

Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly grease a 9"x13" casserole pan. Mix graham cracker crumbs with the salt and melted butter and stir until thoroughly combined until resembles wet sand. Press graham cracker mixture into the casserole dish with short edges around the sides. Bake for 10 mins. and cool completely.

Filling:

Pour the 2 env of Dream Whip mix into a medium sized bowl along with milk and vanilla extract. Using a mixer, beat for 30 secs on low. Increase speed to medium high and beat for 3-4mins until mixture forms peaks. Refrigerate until needed. In a large mixing bowl beat the 2 pkgs of cream cheese on medium, until soft and creamy. Reduce

to low speed and gradually add the 2 cups of powdered sugar. Once incorporated increase speed to medium high and beat until smooth and creamy, about 2 min. Gently fold Dream Whip into cream cheese mixture. Spread mixture over the cooled crust, spreading to the edges. Top the cream cheese mixture with the 2 cans of cherry pie filling. Refrigerate for at least 3hrs before serving or overnight.

*Dream Whip may be substituted with Cool Whip, this changes the flavor slightly & makes it sweeter.

Do you have a file box, notebook, folder, shelf or *cough cough* closet of recipes? Dig out your favorites and submit them to marketing@gbtlive.com or drop them by the office. If GBT selects your recipe to use, you will receive a \$10 credit on your bill.



785-372-4236
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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 - 12 pm; 1 pm-5 pm

St. John
602 N US Hwy 281 | Open: Mon.-Fri.
8 am - 1 pm; 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 - 12 pm; 1 pm-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

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