

Phone system update

As reported last month, phone system upgrades have been completed on the phone system. We've completed testing of our new SIP telephone line technology and have started the migration from 3 Rivers PRI lines to our SIP line provider. By the time you read this, all our incoming calls will be coming in on the new SIP lines as well as around 40% of our outbound calls as the phone systems are programmed to call out on the new lines. By the end of the calendar year we should no longer be using the 3 Rivers PRI lines and be fully implemented using our SIP trunk lines. Once we know everything is migrated to the new lines we will schedule termination of service of the PRI lines with 3 Rivers.

911 Calling - currently you need to know which building you are located in and it's line access code - "Dial 9" to get an outside line is the most common but we also have Dial 8, Dial 91, Dial 92, Dial 82 etc. depending on which building you are in. In a time of need making a 911 call can be hindered by not know the correct line access code for that building. I'm glad to say everything will be transitioned to "Dial 9" line access so it will no longer make a difference which building you are located in to make phone calls including emergencies.

Effects:

Phone calls for users - unless someone is reading this, there will be no change in the phone system with the exception of going to the single "Dial 9" access district wide. One minute they will be using the old PRI lines, the next minute they'll be using the new SIP trunk lines.

Financial - of course this is the big one with E-Rate subsidizing 10% of our telephone costs this year and 0% next year. Our 3 Rivers telephone bill will reduce around \$3200 per month this year with the cost of the SIP trunk lines around \$900 per month giving a net savings of \$2300 per month for the remainder of the 2018-19 fiscal year and up to \$2600-\$2800 per month savings July 2019 and beyond.

High School iPads

iPads have been deployed to students at the high school. Our next steps are to work with staff to become more proficient in their daily instructional needs.

E-Rate

November Tech Board Report

The 2019 E-Rate window will soon open. One of the significant changes for e-rate this year will be losing Category 1 monies for telephone costs as that part of the program under the current rules concludes with the 2018 funding year. We will continue to apply for our internet and WAN connections under Category 1 which subsidizes 90% of our monthly internet bandwidth costs. We have been with Access Montana for internet for 4 years and under e-rate rules our internet service is required to be advertised for bidding to make sure we are getting the best rates/services for our and the taxpayers money. The only 2 contenders we are aware of to supply those services will be Access Montana continuing our current service and 3 Rivers as they now offer 500 Mbps and 1 Gbps services that were not available when this was last bid out.

Also in the planning for network upgrades which are covered 85% under the Category 2 level of services. Our consultant was on-site this week to finalize the bidding document that will be filed with e-rate when the filing windows open. The steps include: a) finalizing plans and drawing up bid documents b) filing of the Form 470 request with e-rate c) advertising in the Glacier Reporter to solicit bids (as there may not be anyone local to do this specialized work additional companies will be notified that do specialize in fiber networks to solicit their bids) d) a scheduled walkthrough of the district for interested bidders e) final receipt of bids and closing of the Form 470 filing window f) evaluation of the bids received g) board approval of the best overall bid h) the waiting game for e-rate to approve everything and finally sometime in the 2019-20 fiscal year the actual installation of the fiber network. We will be noting in the Form 470 filing that all potential bidders must abide by Federal, State and local Tribal laws and regulations including local TERO and business license requirements.