



Excellence in South Dakota

THE RURAL BROADBAND INDUSTRY

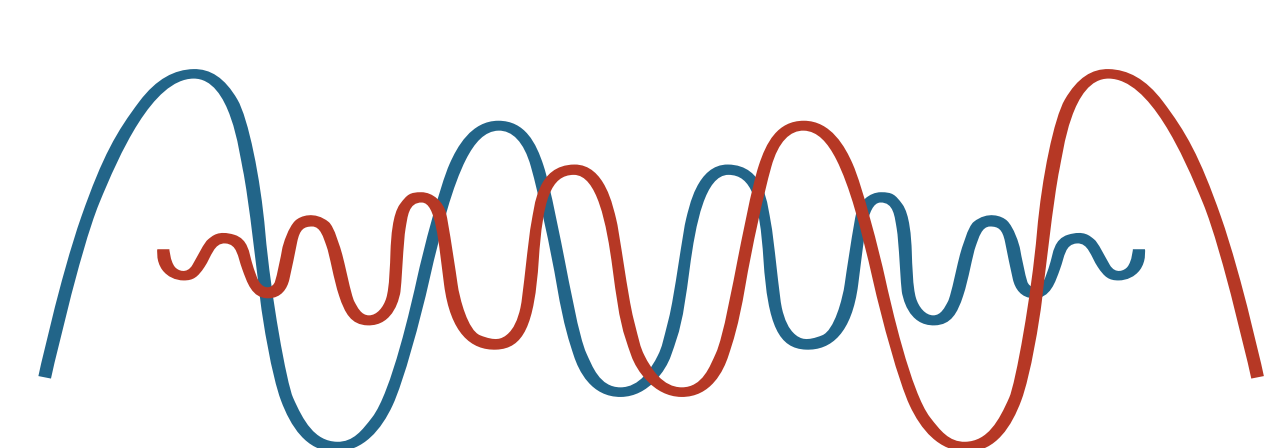


Since 1952, when Midstate Communications was incorporated as a telephone membership cooperative, they have proudly serviced the communication needs of central South Dakota with state-of-the-art telecommunications technology and services. Headquartered in Kimball, SD, Midstate currently services nearly 5000 access lines in eleven (11) exchanges and approximately 3,000 route miles of fiber optics throughout central South Dakota.

On October 30, 1952 the Articles of Incorporation for Midstate Telephone Company were drafted and signed. Over the next couple of year acquisitions were made to include Kimball, White Lake and Stickney Exchanges in 1955; the Gann Valley, Pukwana and New Holland

Exchanges in 1956; the Delmont Exchange in 1957; the Fort Thompson Exchange in 1959; Platte and Geddes Exchanges in 1998; and in 2014 the communities of Chamberlain and Oacoma were welcomed into the Cooperative to form the modern day Midstate Communications Cooperative.

During the almost half-century of service provided by Midstate Communications many things have changed, personnel, technology and customers. Through all this change Midstate Communications has always maintained a simple business philosophy: "Delivering the best technology, customer experience and value to our members."



SDN COMMUNICATIONS®

SDN Communications interconnects independent broadband companies in South Dakota (17 companies), Minnesota (8) and Iowa (1), creating a 50,000-mile fiber optic footprint - the largest fiber network of the Northern Plains.

Although a fiber optic based company, SDN plays a pivotal role in making wireless services work. Calls and data from smart phones travel wirelessly to the tower nearest the device, but from there, the calls/data traverse fiber optics owned and managed by SDN and its member companies.

Additionally, Sioux Falls-based SDN offers business-to-business (B2B) broadband services for multi-location businesses, such as hospitals, banks, schools, manufacturing, and agriculture. SDN's B2B products include Wide Area Networking, internet, and managed cybersecurity.

SDN got its start more than 30 years ago (1989) as South Dakota Network when today's rural independent broadband companies were telephone companies looking to offer more affordable long distance options to their rural customers. Collectively, those 17 rural South Dakota broadband companies that own SDN cover 76 percent of the state's geography.

The network, built by SDN and its member owners, now touches more than 300 communities within South Dakota and eight neighboring states, offering connectivity to other regional and national networks. SDN's partnerships with broadband companies in South Dakota, Iowa, and Minnesota have improved connectivity and internet options for businesses throughout the region.



CONNECTIONS IN EXCELLENCE



From the first telephone installed in 1899 to state-of-the-art high-speed fiber optic networks, communications are essential in promoting community and prosperity in South Dakota. Today, people across our state's vast, diverse landscape benefit from connecting to the world through technology.

Half of all South Dakotans live in small communities and rural areas, and the 18 member companies of the South Dakota Telecommunications Association (SDTA) are dedicated to providing high-speed broadband connectivity, enabling people to engage in commerce and society online.

Recent investments by the rural broadband providers that are part of SDTA demonstrate a strong continuing commitment. In just the four years ending in 2017, SDTA member companies' capital expenditures for fiber optic lines, switches, equipment, buildings, and other long-term assets were almost \$400 million. For the years between 2018 and 2021, SDTA estimates that the additional broadband related investments by its member companies will exceed \$300 million. This investment in state-of-the-art broadband infrastructure and service gives rural consumers and businesses the ability

to move information, products, and ideas from even the most remote corners of the state to the far reaches of the globe.

In remote South Dakota, the SDTA member companies cover vast distances with wirelines and signals to ensure that all citizens are served. The costs to serve rural customers are high, but the true benefit of a telecommunications network is found in its reach to all customers. The federal government supports this goal by collecting fees throughout the country to assist with network investments and provide affordable "universal service." Rural communities in South Dakota also receive support from the US Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service (RUS), which provides loans, loan guarantees, and grants to help build telecommunications infrastructure.

SDTA members know that broadband infrastructure and services are revolutionizing life in small cities and rural communities throughout our state. And understand that important aspects of our great South Dakota way of life – agriculture, business, health, social, and education – are substantially dependent on the availability of high-speed, high-quality broadband services.



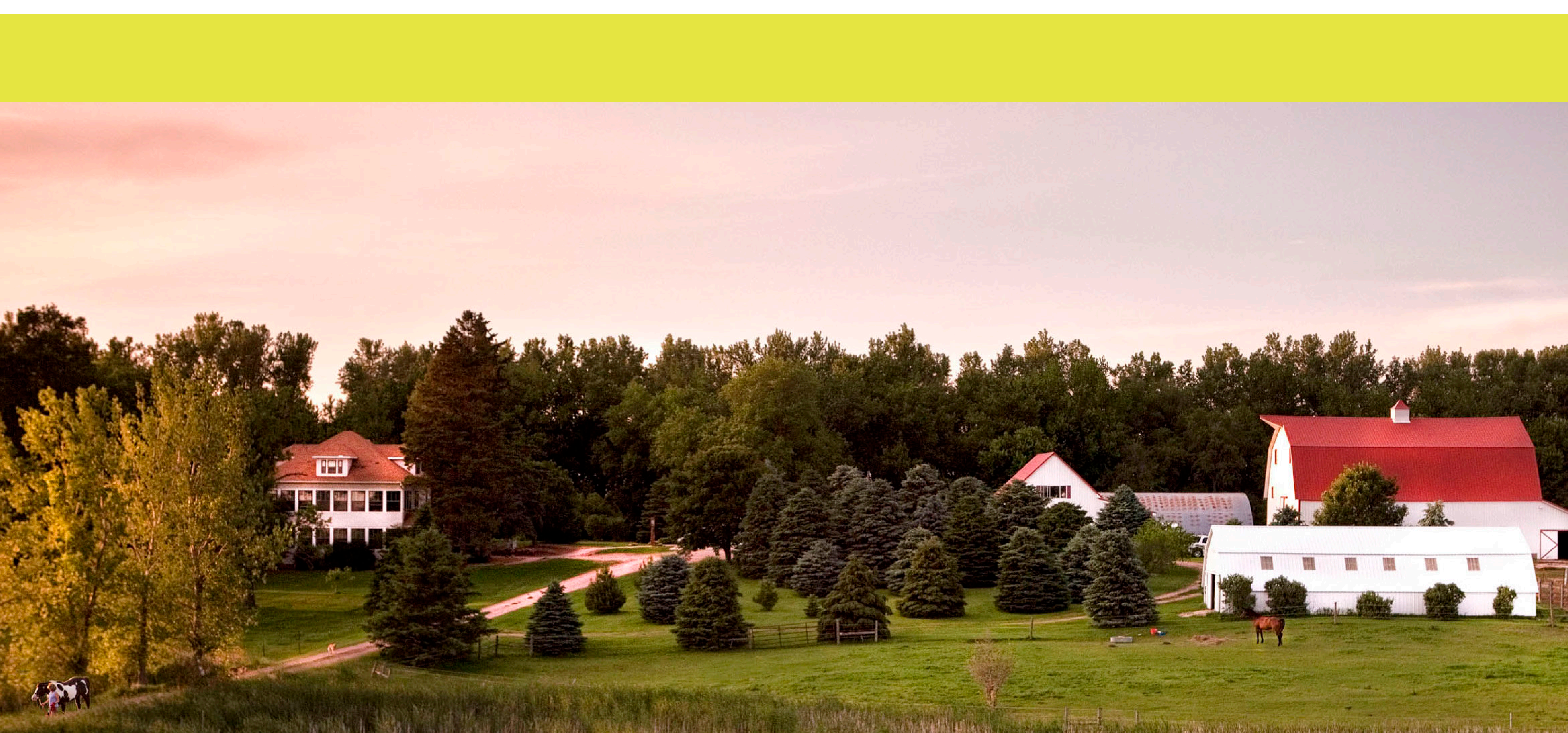
Responding to opportunity and providing new technology to central South Dakota are the hallmarks of Venture Communications since its beginning in 1952. Known as Sully Buttes Telephone Cooperative back then, the newly formed enterprise revolutionized communication.

Growth was rapid and by 1955, 15 telephone exchanges were active. By the mid-1970s, Sully Buttes Telephone had nearly 4,000 telephone lines in service and connected businesses, homes and ranches across a large territory.

Telephone lines were just the beginning. In the early 1980s, Sully Buttes Telephone developed and began operating coaxial cable TV systems within the city limits of the towns in its serving areas. The 1990s ushered in a new world of communication when it began offering Dial-Up

Internet. Today, such technology seems quaint as gigabit internet services with WiFi is now the standard. Venture Communications also offers an exceptional IP Digital TV service and high-speed internet service has become the leading product for its members via a company-wide fiber-to-home network.

In 2002 the members voted to change the name to Venture Communications Cooperative, reflecting a commitment to the opportunity that communications and technology provide. While connecting rural South Dakota to the world, the cooperative remains solidly rooted in its home communities and committed to its customers and member owners. As a cooperative the Board of Directors is comprised of members who live in the areas, served. The company now serves over 30 communities across a broad expanse of central and northeast South Dakota.





Serving friends and neighbors in central South Dakota, Kennebec Telephone Company has been family owned and operated since 1908. Benefiting from progressive leadership since its earliest days, the company is continually upgrading technology products and service lines.

Today the company offers long-distance service, broadband internet, excavation, electrical work, Real Choice TV, computer repair, welding services, and auto parts and auto repair. With headquarters on Main Street, it employs 53 people in Lyman & Brule counties.

Being central to the life of the community is the way Kennebec Telephone Company does business. The days when someone would call the switchboard and ask, "what time does the train come in with the mail?" are long gone, but

the company continues to bring people together. And not just through technology. KTCI and its employees serve on many numerous boards and organizations in Lyman & Brule counties including but not limited to, Mitchell Technical Institute Foundation Board, the Kennebec Town Board, SDN, South Dakota Telephone Association, South Dakota Board of Technical Education, Dakota Prairie Bank Board, Lyman School Board, Youth Coaching, Local Fire Departments, Shriners. Its grill and picnic table can be used for group and family events, and offices serve as a hub for the entire region.

A member of the South Dakota Network (SDN), the Kennebec Telephone Company has changed lives, achieved much and is integral to the economic and community life of its customers.

JOIN THE TELECOM INDUSTRY AT MITCHELL AREA TECH

Telecommunications has been a backbone of South Dakota's economy, connectivity and communities since the first telegraph wires were strung prior to statehood. Despite being a rural state with wide open spaces, South Dakota's community based rural telephone companies, including cooperatives, municipalities, tribal and small family owned companies, have built and maintained networks across our vast State dating back to the "party lines" many decades ago continuing to today, with our high capacity broadband networks supporting fiber-to-the-premise and emerging 5G technologies.

For more than fifty years, Mitchell Technical Institute's Telecommunications program has kept the industry supplied with highly qualified technicians who keep our state's networks operational. As we move into a new decade, we are facing new challenges filling positions and ensuring that our telecom workforce is adequate to maintain South Dakota's reputation as a leader in broadband and wireless technology.

If you or someone you know is looking for an excellent career in this high-demand occupation, you are encouraged to contact Mitchell Tech. Their newly named "Wi-Fi and Broadband Technologies" (Telecommunications) program has openings, and, with 100% placement in the program, students are on their way to a rewarding career in just two years. Each graduate will also complete a summer internship with a telecommunications company, giving them an advantage at hiring time. And the program qualifies for the Build Dakota Scholarship, meaning all students have the chance to apply for a full-ride scholarship.

Check out mitchelltech.edu for more information or contact the Admissions office at 800.864.1969 or email mtiadmissions@mitchelltech.edu.

**Don't let this call go unanswered!
Find your new telecommunications
career today!**

Championing a Culture of Excellence in South Dakota

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