

## IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR...

Isn't it amazing how quick a year can go? When you were in school, the year would seem to drag on and on, and then once you get out of school the year goes by in a blink of an eye.



As you start on the endeavor of Christmas shopping and preparing for holiday cheer, please remember to be extra careful of the predators waiting to latch onto your personal information, and banking information. There have already been reports of illegal activity just down the road in Denver. Protect yourself, and your banking information from the evils of the GRINCH!

And from all of us, we hope that you have a wonderful, blessed, rejoicing, and relaxing Holiday Season!

*Daniel, Larry, Jason, Judy, & Amy*

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3

DECEMBER 2012

## THE DRAWING WINNERS ARE...

Last quarter, we challenged our customers to sign up for the auto-pay program. All customers that were signed up were entered into a drawing for one free month of service.

In November the drawing occurred and Robert and Laurel Horton of Limon won the drawing. They have been satellite internet customers with Prairie Networks (our subsidiary) since July of 2008.



Congratulations Robert & Laurel!

So the challenge is back on... If you sign up for auto-pay with use by February 2013, you will be entered into the drawing to get one month free!

Auto pay allows you to provide us with either a bank account, or credit card information, and you set the date you want the payment to be made, and you never have to worry about a late payment again. Your bill is processed and you are sent a paid receipt in the mail.

All information is secure and no unwanted eyes will ever see your payment information. No checks will be lost in the mail, and no worrying about whether or not you paid your bill this month.

*Sign up for Auto-Pay and get entered into the drawing!*

## FROM THE MANAGER'S DESK...



This year has flown by, and taking over as the General Manager has been an adventure. I thought I would re-cap with you some of the projects that we have been doing and share some future thoughts going forward.

Our main concern is the FCC and all the changes that they have implemented, with no answers to the big questions; such as how will these changes affect us and if certain changes take effect, when? The changes in how we recover money to supply service in rural areas is the big focus right now; how one area is considered "rural" versus another, is a big mystery. This is due to the fact that the FCC is using a Quartile Regression Analysis (QRA) to say "this is what qualifies you to be rural". The problem with this analysis is because your company may not fit the model that they have laid out—there is no way to explain to them that we are not like the big guys in Denver, where we have 16 customers within a city block, but in fact we may only have 1 customer within 16 miles of the next customer. The QRA may be a good way to start, but with many variables not considered in the model, it is hard to figure out where we will end up on the totem pole.

Because of this, we have put together a worse-case-budget and a best-case-budget for the next few years, so that we have some game plan if and when the FCC determines how we will be affected. This will hopefully keep us above water like all the other phone companies that are facing the exact same dilemma.

On a positive note, we were able to start a phase 1 upgrade on our fiber from the corner of County Rd 153 and 162 and headed South for approximately 3 miles. This will upgrade the system heading towards Highway 86 with three phases, and increase speeds to our customers. Phase 1 should be completed early December 2012. If funding becomes available, then Phase 2 and 3 may start in 2013.

On the Prairie Networks side of the business, the new EXEDE Satellite was rolled out, and we had over 25 customers upgrade to the newer package. EXEDE allows for faster speeds and better reliability due to the fact that it has its own satellite and network. Overall, this has increased customer satisfaction.

For our DSL customers, we are hoping to rollout new pricing on our packages, to decrease the costs, and be able to give higher speeds to most customers. We hope to be rolling these new prices out by the end of the year. A survey was sent out to the current DSL customers to get feedback on our service and pricing, which will help us to finalize the pricing and get it rolled out.

Finally, I look forward to meeting your needs and hearing feedback from you at anytime. I can be reached at the office 719-764-2578, or by email at [danh@amtca.net](mailto:danh@amtca.net). I wish you all a safe and happy holidays!

Sincerely,

*Daniel Hollembeak*

General Manager, Agate Mutual and Prairie Networks



## SEVEN STEPS TO SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS...

1. **Make a list**– know what people want for Christmas and stick to the list. If the item isn't on the list than it may not satisfy the recipient.
2. **Dress comfortably**– you will be walking and lugging bags around so prepare for that.
3. **Begin shopping now**– if you see something you want now, get it, because it might not be there next week.
4. **Comparison shop**– use the internet to your benefit, by checking prices before your run out to other stores.
5. **Look for free or minimal online shipping costs**– many retailer's offer free or minimal shipping costs when a certain amount is purchased.
6. **Remember the reason for giving**– when all is said and done, the holiday season is about love, laughter, family and friends. The holidays are not about the number of gifts you give.
7. **Remember thanks**– don't forget to write your loved ones thank you notes, so that you can show your appreciation.



## MEET THE STAFF...

If you have had a billing question, or called into our office with a question, you may have spoken to Amy Noah. She has worked here for over two years, and was promoted to the Office Manager position in May of 2012.

Amy is the daughter of the Larry Pitzer and the late Gail Pitzer. She grew up in Agate and graduated from Agate High School in 1995. She holds an Associates Degree in Medical Assisting, and is currently completing a her Bachelor's Degree in Accounting (with only approximately six-months to go).

She has worked in various medical facilities in the Denver area, and then changed over to the utility industry and worked for Xcel Energy in Denver and Grand Junction for approximately 10 years. In November of 2012, Amy moved back to Agate to help out her family, and help take care of her grandparents. This is when she joined the office part time to help Gail, and started school full time. "Thankfully, mom had started to teach me most of the accounting here at the office, so that I could see how it relates to my college classes. Then when she passed so suddenly, I was at least able to know how she did things, and where things were. But it was still a big change once she passed away... I no longer had her to answer all my questions," Amy says.

Amy handles all the billing, and financial needs for the company, customer service and office operations, as well as the editor of the newsletter. "Streamlining, simplifying, and organizing are what we are trying to do with our plant and office records. Most places are going paperless, and I am trying to get us started on that track, but also trying not to reinvent the wheel."

Amy is married to Eric Noah. They were married on what would have been Gail's 60th birthday this year, this way the date would remain a special day forever. They have 3 four-legged children, Jessie, Cross (in picture), and Duke. And the couple resides in the Agate area.





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8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Monday—Friday



## SHORT SHORTS

### The Mistletoe

Shortly before Christmas, a business man was anxious to get home. The business trip has been grueling and he was not in a particularly good mood.

The airport loudspeakers blared Christmas carols he was sick of hearing. He thought their decorations were tacky. The worst decoration, he thought was a plastic mistletoe that hung over the luggage scale.

Being in a grumpy mood, he said to the woman at the counter, “you know, even if I weren’t married, I wouldn’t kiss you.”



The attendant smiled and replied, “That’s not what it’s there for...it’s so you can kiss your luggage goodbye!”

### The Four Stages of Christmas in a Man’s Life



1. You believe in Santa
2. You don’t believe in Santa
3. You are Santa
4. You look like Santa

## F U N F A C T S

Did you know...

- 95% of American’s celebrate Christmas, but less than 90% put up Christmas trees.
- The most expensive Christmas tree decorated was in 2010 and the estimated cost was over \$11 million.
- American’s send an estimated 1.5 billion Christmas cards each year.
- The heaviest snowfall on record was in Silver Lake, CO on April 14-15, 1921; 67 inches of fresh snow in 24 hours.
- More than 150 million chocolate Santas will be made for the holidays.



*Do you have something you want to put in our newsletter? Contact us.*