

Ho, Ho, Holy Cow Its Xmas...



Time sure flies, it seems like the summer had just started, and here it is almost Christmas time. Guess it's time to reflect on all the accomplishments, changes, and learning we have made in 2013.

Some of our highlights include: the remodel of our office inside, and now outside; we are getting new siding and gutters put on as we speak; we opened a convenience store and now sell snacks, and frozen goods out of the office; restructuring and re-budgeting has helped strengthen our financial prospects, and longevity of the company in the unforeseen future with the FCC changes.

But our biggest accomplishment is serving a total of 75 residential telephones, 20 business telephones, 56 DSL customers, and 75 satellite internet customers. Without you we would not be here— so from the bottom of our heart, thank you and have a very **Happy Holidays!**

Daniel, Judy, Eric, & Amy

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ONLINE SHOPPING SAFETY TIPS...

The holidays are almost upon us, and you'll soon be making your own holiday shopping list and checking it twice. With Shop.org predicting a 13-15% increase in online holiday shopping this year, holiday scammers and thieves are sure to increase their efforts too. The following 4 simple safe online shopping tips will help you avoid scams and malware this holiday season:

- ◇ **Keep a Clean Machine:** Make sure that all of your devices you use for online shopping have the most up-to-date operating systems, security software, apps, and Web browsers installed.
- ◇ **Don't use unsecured Wi-Fi Networks:** we know it's tempting to check pricing while inside the store to make sure your getting the best deal on gifts, but these networks are vulnerable to network attacks.
- ◇ **Think Before You Click:** Every year scammers come out with new ways to try and steal your holiday shopping money. Think twice about clicking on the links in emails you get this holiday. Be sure links are going where you expect them to go, and if the deal seems too good to be true, it probably is.
- ◇ **Protect Your Money:** Keep a close eye on your bank account over the holidays. The faster you catch fraudulent activity, the less time thieves have to siphon out your money.





December is here and it doesn't even seem possible, does it? It seems like just yesterday I was playing in the summer pool with the kids. We've only seen our first snow of the season, but even with that it doesn't seem like it could be Thanksgiving and Christmas yet.

As the end of 2013 rolls around, I thought I would update you on the current issues happening in the telecommunication realm. As I had previously stated, the FCC has a new leader; Tom Wheeler, who was sworn in on November 4, 2013. He is from the telecommunications industry and more apt to listen to both sides when they start looking at the reform plans implemented by former Chairman Genachowski, who seemed to be very one sided in his thinking and decision making. Wheeler is known as "The Bo Jackson of Telecomm" as he is not only in the telephone business, but also has experience in the Cable TV, Wireless, and Internet sections of telecommunications. So far Wheeler's nomination has been a positive one for the independent telephone companies. Though not all the changes made by the previous reform plan will be uprooted, Wheeler seems interested in how and why things were implemented and then going forward to make those changes more reasonable to the smaller companies. I guess we'll just have to wait to see.

Due to the FCC Reform, the Colorado Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) will be amending its rules to reflect competitive changes within the industry. The CPUC will look at issues such as whether there is effective competition from wireless, cable, and Voice over Internet Protocol of providers across the state to warrant further deregulation of telecom services. The reform effort will also address the Colorado High Cost Support Mechanism fund, which reimburses certain telecom providers for serving customers in high-cost areas of the state. Though we don't know how all these changes will help or hurt us, we are keeping a close eye on their actions and will relay them to you as we know it.

Finally, for Exede High Speed Satellite Internet, Exede (formerly Wildblue) is in the process of opening more beams to reach more areas with their service. This allows us to provide more coverage area in areas that was lacking it before. Exede is a better satellite internet system than the original plans, and it allows customers to have an actual reset date on the bandwidth usage and allows customers to take more control over their usages and needs. The best feature is the Buy More Now Program, which allows our customers to look at their usage and determine their needs until their reset date, and buy more GB's to get them through the remainder of that months needs. Several of our customers are very happy with the new system and are able to purchase more bandwidth when they want, without having to wait till our office is open.

I wish you all a safe and happy holiday season. As always, I look forward to meeting your needs and hearing feedback from you at anytime. I can be reached at the office 719-764-3000, or by email at danh@amtca.net.

Sincerely,

Daniel Hollembeak

General Manager, Agate Mutual and Prairie Networks



HOW TO SAFELY “HAND DOWN” YOUR OLD DEVICES

Got a shiny new tech gadget for the holidays? Thinking about handing down or selling your old device?

Before you place your advertisement to sell your old smartphone, tablet, or computer, there are a few things you need to do to ensure your personal information is not available to the new owner:

1. Back up your data– Be sure to back up your data on your old computer, smartphone, or tablet, so you can easily move it to the new device.
2. Wipe the device– Smartphones and tablets generally have an option under the Settings menu to reset the device to its factory settings which will erase all your personal information. For computers, you will need to
3. Erase and reformat Smartphone or tablet memory card– If your smartphone or tablet comes with a memory card, you’ll want to erase it and reformat it for a new user or remove it from the device if you plan to re-use it.
4. Remove SIM card– If your smartphone or tablet comes with a removable SIM card, you’ll want to remove it to protect your private service subscriber key.



OFFICE HOURS CHANGE

Recently we looked into the idea of changing the office hours within the office to Monday through Thursday. This change was for two reasons: 1) This would allow us to have full staff on the four days, instead of being short on Mondays and Fridays, and 2) It allowed everyone to have the same schedule. We implemented a test period to see how many complaints, or inconveniences were made due to this change. There have been none reported, so we are going to move forward with a four day work week.



Officially, the office hours will be Monday—Thursday, 7:00 am to 5:00pm, with our technicians on call Friday– Sunday, and our 24/7 technical support lines open as well.

While the office is closed, you can still contact our regular phone number and option 3 from the menu and leave a message on the outage and trouble line. Messages will be checked by our technicians on a regular basis.

If you are experiencing issues with your email, or internet in general, we recommend that you call our 24/7 technical support phone numbers listed below, as many times your problem can be resolved over the phone.

Thank you for your continued business and support!

DSL Tech Support– 866-264-7356

Satellite Tech Support– 888-276-8118



38619 Monroe St
 PO Box 38
 Agate, CO 80101

Tel: 719-764-3000

Toll Free:

877-565-2045

Fax: 719-764-2391

PN Email:

pn@prairienetworks.net

Were On the
 Web!!

www.prairienetworks.net

Office Hours:

7:00 am to 5:00 pm

Monday—Thursday



SHORT SHORTS

Buy Your Own Gift

Last Christmas, grandpa was feeling his age, and found that shopping for Christmas gifts had become too difficult. So he decided to send checks to everyone instead.

In each card he wrote, "Buy your own present!" and mailed them early.

He enjoyed the usual flurry of family festivities, and it was only after the holiday that he noticed that he had received very few cards in return. Puzzled over this, he went into his study, intending to write a couple of his relatives and ask what had happened. It was then, as he cleared off his cluttered desk that he got his answer. Under a stack of papers, he was horrified to find the gift checks which he had forgotten to enclose with the cards.



Why Women Would Love To Be Santa

1. There'd be no more early morning decisions on what to wear to the office.
2. You could grow a gut and consider it a job requirement.
3. No more trips to the vending machine... you'd just snack on milk and cookies all day (for free).
4. You'd always work in sensible footwear.
5. No one would dare ask you for a ride to work.
6. You'd be guaranteed the best chair in the office.



F U N F A C T S

Did you know...

- According to the Guinness World Records, the tallest Christmas tree ever cut was a 221-foot Douglas fir.
- Christmas purchases account for 1/6 of all retail sales in the U.S..
- 7 out of 10 dogs get Christmas gifts from their owners.
- 5340 is the average number of times Visa Cards are used every minute during Christmas time.
- All the gifts in the "Twelve Days of Christmas" would equal 364.



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