

ALPINE COMMUNIQUE

Real Access. Real Value. Real People.



Q2 2015 Newsletter

Planting the Seeds of Farm Efficiency



Pictured are: Ben Wikner, Bob Wagner, Amos Troester, Suzanne & Joe Shirbroun



Pictured are: Joe Shirbroun and Amos Troester using an iPad to update their inventory and notify a customer of their seed corn delivery

Joe and Suzanne Shirbroun of Farmersburg are pioneers in the field of precision agriculture and rely on technology in many aspects of their operation. The Shirbrouns are sixth generation farmers and parents to three sons — Nate, Andre, and Tom. They also manage a Pioneer Hi-Bred seed dealership and seed treatment business, along with owning Agronomy Insights, a precision ag business. Suzanne writes a CommonGround blog entitled “2 Farmers and Their 3 Sprouts” and uses social media to educate people about agriculture. The Shirbroun family rely on Alpine Communications for phone and Internet service for their family and farm life.

Joe and Suzanne Shirbroun are prime examples of how ag businesses are using technology to work smarter. The Shirbrouns selected Alpine Communications to install a WiFi network enabling high-speed Internet connectivity in the warehouse and on the farm. iPads enable real-time seed inventory management and use the farm’s WiFi signal to send email notifications to customers for orders and deliveries, transmit crop photos to diagnose problems from remote locations, and print information.

Their connectivity doesn’t end on the farm yard. John Deere tractors and implements are equipped with monitors that wirelessly communicate between tractors and with the operation’s important planting and harvesting data. Corn dryer sensors are Alpine Internet-connected to allow remote monitoring of various dryer functions, providing hassle-free monitoring during the harvest season. Contact Alpine Communications to learn how you can leverage high-speed Internet connectivity on your farm. Call us at 563-245-4000 or visit www.alpinecom.net/security.



“I appreciate the great service Alpine Communications provides to our business,”

— Joe Shirbroun

If your phone number appears in parentheses (XXX-XXXX) in this edition of the Alpine Communique, please give us a call at 563-245-4000 by March 31, 2015, and we’ll apply a \$5 credit to your account!



Increase Your Farm's Efficiency, Safety, and Security!

For most farming operators, two key watchwords are yield and efficiency. Recent advancements in WiFi technology, combined with the wide availability of broadband Internet services in rural areas, means there is now an entirely new scope of technology that is available to farmers that can easily improve oversight and efficiency. Smart farm monitoring and remote management enables the farm operator to keep an eye on what is happening throughout the operation from the wireless phone that they already carry in their pocket.

Just as farmers rely on traditional vendors—like seed, chemical and implement dealers—to deliver the latest technology, they can now turn to the local telecommunications and broadband service provider to offer these time and labor-saving capabilities to the farm. From grain bin monitors that can measure the remaining capacity in a bin, to fuel tank sensors that will automatically send notifications when levels are getting low, to surveillance solutions for calving barns and other livestock operations, the efficiencies to be gained in the day to day operations of a farm are nearly limitless. (252-2163)

"A simple thing such as fuel tank monitors that notify the farmer and the fuel service operator if the tanks reach a selected level can take one logistical worry off the mind of a farmer when they are operating equipment around the clock," said Chris Hopp, General Manager for Alpine Communications.

Smart Farm services can deliver value and efficiency through inventory management, sensor monitoring, automated controls for livestock facilities, and even access control and surveillance.

For both grain and livestock operations, the real value to the farm operators doesn't reside in the data from a single sensor or the control of a single door or motor. Instead, the overarching value lies in the integration of all of these data points, and the intelligence built into the service delivery platform that interprets data, executes commands, and issues intelligent and actionable alerts. Of course, the addition of other functions such as remote-controlled access doors and locks, and energy management and HVAC control for the farmhouse and outbuildings adds convenience and value for the farmer as well.

BENEFITS OF USING SMART FARM TECHNOLOGY:

- Surveillance Cameras
- Livestock Feed and Water Management
- Bin Monitoring
- Fuel and Fertilizer Tank Monitoring
- Environment Monitoring in Outbuildings and Farmhouse
- Control of Door Access and Locks
- Management of Irrigation Systems

For a grain farmer, a grain bin sensor can provide real-time measurements of bin contents or temperature and moisture levels, while eliminating the need to climb a ladder and peer into—or even enter—the bin. However, when deployed as a Smart Farm solution, the value of this simple device increases exponentially as an essential component in a comprehensive monitoring service. Gathering information from multiple sensors and devices—and providing the farmer with a single dashboard view—delivers real value from the first day of deployment. The time savings just from eliminating the need to physically check bins could be worth the monthly service costs alone.

In poultry or other livestock operations, airflow and feed and water distribution systems are mission-critical. A high temperature alarm from a commercial poultry barn is a major event, and can signal a significant loss of birds if the situation isn't immediately addressed. The ability to access video and sensor data from the barn through a mobile device, and control airflow dampers and curtains could mean the difference between a profit and a loss for the operator.

Maximizing yields and operational efficiencies are business imperatives for today's farm operator. The adoption of smart farm monitoring and remote management services that leverages wireless and Internet availability can make any smart farm even smarter.

Remotely manage almost everything on your farm, right from your smartphone or high-speed Internet connection with Smart Farm Solutions, powered by Clear2there and offered by Alpine Communications. You can now manage many aspects of your farm at any time, from anywhere. Whether it be for crops or livestock, integrating Smart Farm solutions into your operation will maximize your profits and minimize losses.



Call 563-245-4000 for your FREE on-site assessment.

What to do if You're Having Trouble with Your Phone Service.

No matter where you live in the country, you may have experienced problems with your telephone service. Whether you're on the calling or the receiving end, these instances can be quite frustrating — particularly when the problems are persistent.

If you live in a rural area, you may have had long-distance or wireless callers tell you they had trouble reaching you. Likewise, if you have ever tried to place a long-distance or wireless call to a rural area, you may have experienced "failure to complete" problems, such as dead air, prolonged ringing or a recording such as, "this call cannot be completed as dialed."

Additionally, some calls placed to rural areas may connect but have "poor call quality" issues like echoes, transmission delays and choppy sound. If you experience these issues, there now are ways to report them with your phone company as well as with government agencies. These lost calls are often the byproduct of how long-distance phone carriers choose to route calls. Unfortunately, calls following the least-costly route can often fall into a loop of routers.

"Throughout rural America, calls are simply failing to connect," says Shirley Bloomfield, chief executive officer of NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association, which represents nearly 900 independent,

community-based telecommunications companies in rural and small-town America. "With personal calls, it's frustrating. With businesses, hospitals and first responders, call connection becomes a public safety and viability issue."

Known as "rural call completion," the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is taking a multi-pronged approach to addressing the issue. Additionally, NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association is advocating for rules and enforcement to end this practice, as well as uniting local carriers in an attempt to end rural call failures.

In the meantime, consumers can help themselves. The FCC recommends reporting these problems to one's long distance or wireless telephone service provider when they occur. Be sure to record the date and time of the call, the telephone numbers involved and the service provider of the calling customer. You can also file a complaint with the FCC.

To learn more about these problems and how to report them, visit www.NTCA.org/callcompletion.

As policies change, consumers can look forward to more reliable telephone service.

You'll Love What's in Zimbra Email (and What Isn't!)



As a customer of Alpine Communications high-speed Internet, you now have access to the well-designed and streamlined email service from Zimbra. (964-2003)
It's simple to use and takes only minutes to learn.

LOTS OF CONVENIENT FEATURES

Alpine Communications Mail, powered by Zimbra, is packed with features to save you time and make life a little easier:

- 15 GB of storage space for email — never max out your inbox again
- Anywhere, anytime access to email
- Top-of-the-line protection from spam and viruses to keep you safe from online threats
- Powerful search capabilities let you quickly and easily find messages and filter results based on email address, date and more
- 24-hour live technical support

If you prefer to view your email on a phone or tablet rather than on a computer, Zimbra's mobile access makes it easy to read, send and store emails right from your mobile device. And your email is always synced and current no matter what device you use.

NO ADVERTISING OR THIRD-PARTY ACCESS

Gone are the days of clunky, ad-laden webmail platforms. With Zimbra, there's no need to worry about third parties gaining access to your email. Unlike free email services, Zimbra has no advertising and information is not granted to advertisers, so your email remains private and free of ads.

Questions about this email service or want more information?
Call 563-245-4000 or visit www.alpinecom.net.

Don't forget to look for your phone number to win!



Hey, Elgin...

Schedule Your Fusion Fiber-Optic Activation

Alpine Communications fiber-optic Fusion Network positively impacts economic development by bringing virtually unlimited bandwidth to our communities. Fiber-optic networks help define successful communities just as good water, power, transportation, public safety and schools have done for decades. Alpine's goal is to convert every customer in Elgin by the end of June,

and we appreciate your cooperation in scheduling your appointment soon. Even if you only subscribe to telephone service and do not have Internet service, you still need to schedule an appointment to activate your fiber-optic connection.

Please call our office at 563-245-4000 and choose the time of day and day of week that best fits your schedule.

Thank you to all of the enthusiastic customers that attended Alpine's Fusion Network Open House on March 26, 2015. We were overwhelmed by the positive response and interest in Alpine services delivered over the fiber-optic Fusion Network

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING WINNERS:

- Greg Johnson — Patagonia A&E Jacket
- Todd & CathyScheidel — Scripps/HGTV/Food Network/GAC Gift Basket
- Phil Metzger — Duck Dynasty Uncle Si Chia Pet and Alpine T-Shirt
- Jean Roach — \$50 Alpine Gift Certificate
- Bill Pfister — Duck Dynasty Travel Case and Trimmer
- Sherry Jaeger — Red Leather Bag from Lifetime

Register Today for Free Spring Workshops!

You are invited to attend Alpine Communications' FREE technology workshops. We include tips and information for technology users of all levels. Workshops are held at the Alpine Communications Business Office in Elkader and are free to all Alpine Internet customers. Class sizes are limited so register today by calling 245-4000.

Social Media For Beginners

THURSDAY, APRIL 23 from 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. and 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

Learn the basics of popular social media websites along with best practices for safety and privacy. Register with the Elgin Public Library at 426-5313



Facebook for Businesses

MONDAY, MAY 4 from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Learn how to promote your business, organization, or event using Facebook Pages.

Maximize Your FusionTV Service

THURSDAY, MAY 21 from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Learn how to use on-screen apps and take FusionTV with you on-the-go with FusionTV's FREE WatchTVEverywhere service. We'll also assist you in downloading and using the Manage MyTVs app to schedule DVR recordings, search the Channel Guide, and as a remote.



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

Call 811 before you do any digging on your property for home improvements or landscaping.

This will allow buried wiring and other utility lines to be located before the project begins. By taking a minute to make this call, you could prevent days of disruption to services in your neighborhood.

Keep Boredom at Bay with WatchTVEverywhere!

CARRY ENTERTAINMENT WITH YOU ON ANY DEVICE FOR FREE!

Banish boredom! WatchTVEverywhere provides streaming access to top rated shows and movies from over 60 different networks. You can WatchTVEverywhere from wherever you receive an Internet connection — school, work, or on vacation! Watch programs anytime, anywhere, on any device — smartphone, tablet, or computer.

- Watch your favorite shows and movies wherever you have Internet.
- Enjoy live, real-time streaming.
- Access channels you currently subscribe to on FusionTV, FREE!*
- Platform is simple and easy to use.

Getting started has never been easier. Visit www.watchtveverywhere.com to create a free account, username and password.

60 WATCHTVEVERYWHERE NETWORKS:*

ABC Family	E!	History	Nick Jr.
Adult Swim	Encore	HLN	Oxygen
A&E	ESPN	Lifetime	QVC
Bravo	ESPN2	LMN	SEC
C-SPAN	ESPN3	MSNBC	Spike
Cartoon Network	ESPN News	MTV	Starz
CMT	ESPNU	Music Choice	Style
CNBC	Food Network	NBC	Syfy
CNN	FOX Business Channel	NBC Entertainment	TBS
Comedy	FOX News Channel	NBC News	TCM
Cooking Channel	FX	NBCSN	TNT
Disney Channel	FX	NCAA	Travel Channel
Disney Junior	Golf	NFL	TruTV
Disney XD	H2	NFL RedZone	USA Network
DIY Network	Hallmark Channel	Nickelodeon	VH1
	HGTV		

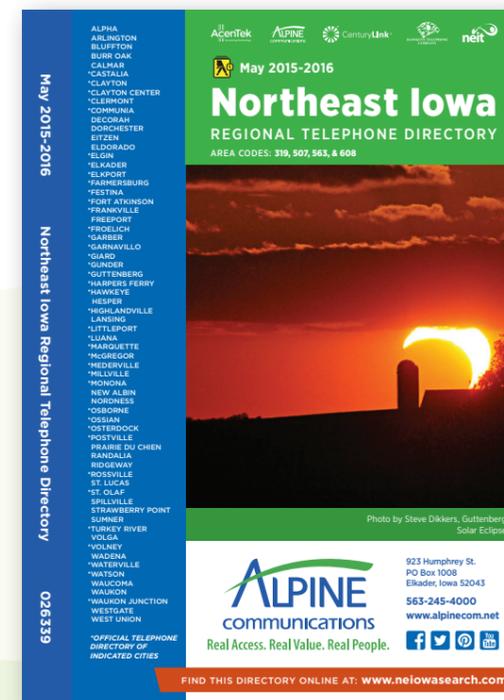
*Access to networks is dependent on package subscription.

2015-2016 Directory Cover Winner

Steve Dikkers of Guttenberg submitted the winning entry in our recent directory cover photo contest. The photo, pictured here, was taken on May 20, 2012 during a solar eclipse from near the water tower north of Guttenberg. Steve's picture will be featured on the cover of the 2015-2016 Northeast Iowa Regional Directory, which will be distributed to Alpine Communications customers in May. He will also receive a \$50 gift certificate to the Alpine TEC Store. (245-1806)

Thank you to everyone who participated in this contest. We received many photo entries from customers all over the area. Each contestant received a 5x7 copy of their photograph printed at the Alpine Digital Photo Center.

Visit www.alpinecom.net to view the gallery of photos submitted this year.



Don't forget to look for your phone number to win!





CONNECT WITH US:

923 Humphrey St.
PO Box 1008
Elkader, Iowa 52043

Hours: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Monday - Friday

563-245-4000

or 1-800-635-1059

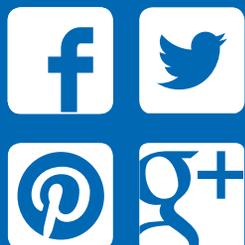
www.alpinecom.net

Internet Tech Support:

1-888-264-2908

SecureIT Tech Support:

1-877-373-3320



Alpine Survey Results and Winners!

Alpine Communications recently conducted surveys of our customers to measure customer satisfaction, service awareness and interest in new technologies. We appreciate the willingness of our customers to participate as well as the great feedback we received. (426-1024)

It was evident that you are keeping up with technology — so, we want to keep up with you!

- When asked how you prefer to receive communication from Alpine Communications, over 68% prefer email, 60% bill inserts, and 55% direct mail.
 - Please keep us up-to-date with your current contact information, including email addresses, by sending us an email at alpine@alpinecom.net if you have not received emails from Alpine Communications.
- You gave Alpine Communications high marks in the areas of quality products and services, responsiveness, and knowledgeable staff compared to other service providers.
 - Help your friends and neighbors get affordable, quality services by referring them to Alpine Communications through our Friends and Family Referral Program. Each time you make a referral for home phone, FusionTV, or high-speed Internet service that results in a sale, you'll earn a one-time credit of \$50 to your Alpine Communications bill. There's no limit — the more you refer, the more you earn.
- A majority of you indicated that you have 3-4 Internet connected devices. Some also noted they occasionally see a slowdown when multiple devices are using their Internet service at the same time.
 - Try rebooting your WiFi router by unplugging it from the power source for 10-15 minutes. If you don't notice an improvement, verify that your devices are up-to-date, as older technology may affect performance of all of your devices on your network. When possible, a wired Internet connection achieves the highest speed performance. Finally, you may need to update your wireless router or your Fusion Internet service to meet your household's growing bandwidth needs. Alpine Communications carries wireless routers and has the expertise to help you with your Internet needs.
- Thank you for recognizing the importance of our local involvement in the community, and we appreciate your support!
 - Alpine Communications will sponsor many community festivals, civic and non-profit organizations along with our employees' involvement in community organizations, churches and schools.

Your answers and opinions will help us serve you better and develop plans for future technology.

Congratulations to the survey drawing winners:

\$100 WINNER:

EK Syverson

\$50 WINNERS:

Rondee Troester
Matthew Ellis
Norma Thiese

\$25 WINNERS:

Marge Costigan
Mary Waterman
Bernard Jaster
Joshua Dudley

\$75 WINNERS:

Patrick L Drips
Harold McMillin

What Our Customers Are Saying:



We enjoy the services. I tried out the Android app for controlling the fusion boxes. It has tons of functionality. I love it!

- Josh Dudley, Guttenberg