

# ALPINE COMMUNIQUE

Real Access. Real Value. Real People.



Q1 2015 Newsletter

## Garnavillo Library Receives INS Grant



Alpine Communications along with Iowa Network Services, Inc. is pleased to announce that the Garnavillo Public Library received a grant through the Iowa Network Services Charity Grant program. They were awarded \$500 to assist in funding the library renovation project.

### APPLY TODAY!

Iowa Network Services (INS) accepts year-round applications for the quarterly INS Charity Grant Program. INS created the grant program in 1993 to increase services and support to the rural Independent Telecommunications Companies and the communities it serves. The grant is available to Iowa communities sponsored by its participating telecommunication companies, such as Alpine Communications.

Grant application forms are available from Alpine Communications or the INS website, [www.iowanetworkservices.com](http://www.iowanetworkservices.com). There are virtually no restrictions on the number or types of charities that may apply for the grant; however, the program must benefit and be made available to all members of the community. The deadline for submission is the end of each calendar quarter. Interested organizations are encouraged to contact Alpine Communications to learn more. (873-1884)



*Pictured are Sara Hertrampf, Alpine; Karolyn Balk, Garnavillo Library; and Denise Schneider, City of Garnavillo; Joe Craig, Iowa Network Services*

## Alpine Donates \$500 to Valley Community Foundation Playground



*Pictured are North Fayette Valley Elementary students; Darla Butikofer, Partners in Education; Duane Willhite, NFV Superintendent; Deb Kahler, Valley Community Foundation; Micah Gearhart, Valley Elementary Principal; and Chris Hopp, Alpine General Manager*

## Annual Mitten Tree Program Warms Hands and Hearts

We extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the many customers who donated hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, money, and children's clothes to the Alpine Mitten Tree Program this year. We received many donations in both Elkader and at The Guttenberg Press. Thank you for warming the hearts, hands, and heads of many families in our community.

*Pictured is Jane Thein, The Guttenberg Press*



*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!*

## Are all your devices slowing down your Internet speed?

Having all your devices connected to a basic Internet connection can really inhibit your online activities. Recently, studies have shown that U.S. homes have an average of 6 devices connected to the Internet. Consider how many devices you have in your home using your Internet connection. For example, how many smart phones, entertainment devices like Xbox and WiiU, iPads, Kindles, Smart TVs, and streaming media players do you have connected to your Internet regularly? After considering your family's usage, also consider the usage of your children's friends and house guests. (426-5165)

Now that the devices are really adding up, do you know how much of your Internet speeds they are using at one time? Most people are surprised by the amount of bandwidth required to power all of today's connected devices and the demand is growing exponentially.

### CHECK OUT THE RECOMMENDATIONS BELOW:

ONLINE ACTIVITY	Speed Required (per device)	
	SD Resolution	HD Resolution
Netflix	3.0 Mbps	5.0 Mbps
Skype/Facetime video conferencing with one connection	0.5 Mbps	1.5 Mbps
Skype/Facetime video conferencing with multiple people (5 people)	4.0 Mbps	10.0 Mbps+
YouTube®	2-3 Mbps	5-6 Mbps
PlayStation, Xbox and other Internet-connected gaming boxes	1.5 Mbps	5.0 Mbps+
Pandora/Spotify or iHeartRadio	0.3 Mbps	0.5 Mbps

If your home's Internet connection was a 5 lane highway with 5 Mbps, each lane would carry 1 Mbps. According to the chart, a program that takes 2 Mbps of Internet space takes up multiple lanes of your highway, making your device a wide load. Furthermore, if you have 3 devices actively using 2 Mbps, it will take 6 lanes, and that's one more lane than your 5 lane highway provides. So, you will have to switch off, sharing your speed, causing an Internet traffic jam. You will still get your information, just at a much slower pace.

In a full home with a lot of devices, your speeds can add up quickly. If your Internet connection is lagging, take notice of how many devices are connected. While you can disconnect many devices, the digital world we live in doesn't always allow for that.

Consider super-sizing your Alpine Internet service if you are streaming media sites like Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Instant Video, or Vudu. That way, you won't have to wait while the movie loads, or buffers, and can enjoy higher-definition video.

For additional information on broadband speeds, visit [www.alpinecom.net](http://www.alpinecom.net) or call us at (563) 245-4000.



## Make These New Year's Resolutions About Your Computer

Alpine Communications encourages you to remember Internet security when you set goals for 2015.

### ADD THESE IMPORTANT RESOLUTIONS TO YOUR LIST:

- I will not respond to any email from anyone asking for my username and password no matter how important they make it sound.
- I will change the username and password for my wireless router to something different than the defaults it came with to keep the guy parked out in the street off my Internet connection.
- I will not use the same username and password for every Internet account I have.
- I will create strong passwords and change them regularly.
- I will keep my antivirus software updated and keep current with critical Windows Updates.



Alpine Communications offers Tech Home packages to take care of the tech tasks for you, including anti-virus protection, data backup, and password keeping on computers and mobile devices for as low as \$7.95/month with your first month FREE!

Call Alpine today at (563) 245-4000 to learn more.

## Get ready for a new feature-packed email experience!

Your Alpine Communications @alpinecom.net email account will migrate to a new email system, called **Zimbra**, starting the evening of **January 26, 2015**.

This new system will give you access to self-organizing mailboxes, powerful and fast searches, comprehensive calendaring, and enhanced security. We chose it because we think you'll enjoy its many convenient features.

### PLEASE NOTE:

- Your email address will NOT change as a result of this migration. You can continue using email as you do now.
- Details on this migration to the new email system are being sent to your @alpinecom.net mail address. Please watch your inbox.

If you have questions, please call our email support team at **1-888-232-7964** or visit [www.alpinecom.net/internet/email](http://www.alpinecom.net/internet/email)



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



## Register Today for Free Internet Workshops

Try one of Alpine's FREE technology workshops to help you maximize your @Alpinecom.net email or learn about social media.

Workshops are held at the Alpine Communications Business Office in Elkader and are free to all Alpine Internet customers. Training lasts approximately one hour and class sizes are limited. Register today by calling (563) 245-4000 or register online at [www.alpinecom.net](http://www.alpinecom.net).

## INTRO TO WEBMAIL USING ZIMBRA

Thursday, February 19, 2015, 1:30 - 2:30 p.m.

- Learn how to use webmail to access your @Alpinecom.net email from any Internet-connected device.

## SOCIAL MEDIA FOR BEGINNERS

Tuesday, March 3, 2015, 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. and 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

- Learn the basics of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram along with best practices for safety and privacy.

## Need help paying your phone bill?

Many low-income families qualify for assistance with phone charges, but don't realize that this help is available. If you're experiencing financial difficulties, or have a friend or family member in this situation, Alpine Communications encourages you to look into the Lifeline program. It provides qualified customers with a monthly discount on charges for their primary home phone line.

Eligibility guidelines vary depending on where you live. For details, visit the Universal Service Administrative Company's web site at [www.lifelinesupport.org](http://www.lifelinesupport.org). Or give us a call at (563) 245-4000 to determine whether or not you qualify. We'll provide you with an application form to get you started toward saving on your monthly phone bill.



## Fight Back And Take Control Of Unwanted Calls and Mail

Your time is valuable. So if you're tired of answering annoying telemarketer calls or having to safely dispose of credit card mailings, take action today by visiting the websites below.

### NATIONAL DO NOT CALL REGISTRY

The National Do Not Call Registry gives you a choice about whether to receive telemarketing calls at home. Most telemarketers should not call your number once it has been on the registry for 31 days. If they do, you can file a complaint at this website. The service is free and you can register up to three phone numbers (landline or mobile) in the online form. (252-3953)

[www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov)

### CONSUMER CREDIT REPORTING INDUSTRY

Credit card offers may help you compare interest rates and get good deals, but they can also be stolen by identity thieves from your mailbox. For security reasons, these mailings should be shredded before being thrown away, which can be time-consuming. OptOutPrescreen.com is a centralized service to accept and process requests from consumers to opt-out of these credit card offers. It's a joint venture among the Consumer Credit Reporting Companies of Equifax, Experian, Innovis, and TransUnion.

[www.optoutprescreen.com](http://www.optoutprescreen.com)

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



## Cash for College: Apply Today for Local Scholarship Opportunities

Alpine Communications has teamed up with The Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) and the Iowa Communications Alliance to offer three scholarship opportunities to our service areas' high school seniors.

- 1. The FRS college scholarship program awards twenty-five scholarships in the amount of \$2,500** to winning applicants across the nation. Eligibility requirements and the application can be downloaded from FRS at [www.frs.org](http://www.frs.org). **Completed applications must be returned to our office by February 15, 2015**, so that we may complete the sponsor certification and forward the applications to FRS.
- 2. The Iowa Communications Alliance college scholarship program will award \$2,500** to a winning applicant from a rural area who receives telecommunications services from an Iowa Communications Alliance member (Alpine is a member). Eligibility requirements and the application can be downloaded from the Iowa Communications Alliance website at [www.IACommunicationsALL.org](http://www.IACommunicationsALL.org). **Completed applications must be returned to our office by March 13, 2015** to be signed by Alpine's manager prior to the scholarship deadline.
- 3. The Alpine Communications scholarship program will award four \$500 scholarships** to winning applicants, one graduating senior from Central, North Fayette Valley, Clayton Ridge and MFL MarMac schools. Each school's Dollars for Scholars program administers the scholarship. Eligibility requirements and the application can be obtained from your guidance counselor's office.

Contact Sara Hertrampf at Alpine for more information or assistance with applying for a scholarship.

## Fusion Network Activation Begins in Elgin

After much anticipation, the Fusion Network is now available in Elgin. Activate your service today and start enjoying the benefits of your super-fast, super-reliable fiber-optic connection. Maybe you are waiting to schedule your appointment for warmer weather because you are afraid technicians will be tracking in and out of your home or business, bringing cold air and snow in with them. The installation technicians are careful to limit trips in and out and remove wet boots before they enter the interior of your home or business. (964-2222)

Maybe you only have basic telephone service, so you don't think it's necessary to schedule your Fusion Network activation appointment. ALL customers in Elgin will get a fiber-optic connection, even if they do not have Internet service.

### THE FUSION NETWORK BENEFITS ARE MANY:

- Highest quality connection offering crystal-clear voice sound and virtually unlimited bandwidth for data services
- Incredibly fast download and upload speeds that are fantastic for video, audio, web surfing and gaming
- Greater reliability—no interference during bad weather
- Increases the productivity of businesses and increases home values which is important to the economic vitality of Elgin

Our goal is to convert every customer in Elgin to fiber-optics by mid-year, so we appreciate your cooperation in scheduling your appointment today. Please call our office at (563) 245-4000 and choose the time of day or day of the week that best fits your schedule.

## During Severe Weather Emergencies... Landlines Can Be Lifelines

Alpine Communications wants to make sure your family is able to maintain phone communications during severe weather. Please remember that VoIP and wireless services can fail to perform as needed during power outages.

Landline connections are still far superior for emergency needs, and we strongly encourage you to stay with, or return to, landline phone service for safety and reliability.



**DOUBLE YOUR SPEED**

Gold or Platinum for

**NO EXTRA CHARGE**

when you activate your Fusion Network connection



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



## Enter Alpine's 9th Annual Directory Photo Contest

Alpine Communications invites amateur photographers of all ages and experience to join in celebrating the beauty of Northeast Iowa through our Alpine Directory Photo Contest.

The Alpine Directory Photo Contest features the winning photo as the front cover of our annual Northeast Iowa Regional Directory. Thousands of copies are distributed around Northeast Iowa, Southern Minnesota, and Southwest Wisconsin during the year and all winning images are proudly displayed on the walls of Alpine's office at 923 Humphrey Street in Elkader.

Alpine's Photo Directory Contest is open to amateur photographers at all levels of experience. Our goal is to highlight the natural beauty and scenic settings that surround us while promoting the art of local photography. The winning photographer will receive a \$50 gift certificate to the Alpine TEC Store. The winning photograph(s) will be published on the cover of the 2015-2016 Northeast Iowa Regional Directory distributed by Alpine Communications. As a thank you, each person will receive one 5x7 print of one of their entries.

**PHOTO CONTEST RULES & ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:**

### PHOTO CONTEST RULES & ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

- Entries are open to customers of all ages who are Alpine Communications customers.
- Photos must have been shot within Alpine Communications' serving areas of Elkader, Elgin, Guttenberg, Garnavillo, Garber, Marquette, McGregor, and the surrounding rural areas. (245-3597)
- Photos must have been shot within the past three years.
- Digital photos must be high-resolution, at least 300 dpi, and formatted as a .jpg, .pdf, .bmp, .eps, .tif, or .gif. Scanned or hard copy photo entries will not be accepted.
- Relatives of Alpine Communications employees are not eligible to enter.

### HOW TO ENTER:

- Send digital photos by the entry deadline of February 15, 2015.
- Upload your photos using the form at [www.alpinecom.net](http://www.alpinecom.net).
- Include name, address, telephone, description of photo, and where the photo was taken.
- Limit two entries per household.

## SIGN UP TODAY and get a \$50 SIGNING BONUS\*

Start the year off with a new smart phone for the entire family. Get a \$50 Signing Bonus on up to 5 lines during our New Year Sale.

Come in today, support your neighbor, and see why we have the best value in wireless.

Visit Alpine Wireless at 923 Humphrey St., Elkader or call 245-4000.



\*Available to new subscribers who activate a two-year contract with a 300 Voice plan (or higher). Customer receives a minimum \$25 credit per line activated on their first bill. Customer receives \$50 credit per line activated on their first bill during booster dates of 2/8-2/15, 3/15-3/22, 4/5-4/12, 5/3-5/10, 6/14-6/21. Some restrictions apply. Contact us for details.