

ALPINE COMMUNIQUÉ

Real Access. Real Value. Real People.

ALPINE
communications

Q1 2017 Newsletter

Meet the Crew - Kelly Blockhus

Please join us in welcoming Kelly Blockhus to Alpine Communications as a combination technician specializing in security systems. Kelly joined Alpine in September and his duties include installing, servicing, and maintaining phone, FusionTV, and internet services. As a Level 1 Certified Alarm Technician, Kelly will also install and service PERS, intrusion detection and surveillance systems for Alpine.

Kelly is a native of Clermont, Iowa and a graduate of Valley of Elgin. He received a technical degree in HVAC from Northeast Iowa Community College and an AAS in Computer Information Systems from Kaplan University. Kelly previously owned Blockhus Plumbing and Heating, LLC in Elkader and worked in the Des Moines metro area as an HVAC technician and plumber before relocating his family back to Elgin. (563-252-8254)

Kelly and his wife, LeAnn, have four sons: Connor (age 12 and he is the builder), Alexander (age 8 and he is the problem-solver), Eean (age 7 and he is very inquisitive), and Colin (age 5 and he is mom's helper). Outside of work, Kelly enjoys spending time with his wife and boys and he notes that movie nights with popcorn are a family favorite.

When asked about his experience at Alpine Communications so far, Kelly said, "It's nice to be working on a team again. Everyone has been helpful in teaching me what I need to know to be able to do a quality job for our customers."



Welcome, Kelly!

COMMUNITY GENEROUSLY DONATED TO FOOD SHELF AND MITTEN TREE

With outstanding community support, Alpine Communications was able to help folks in need through our annual Food Shelf and Mitten Tree Drive. The Guttenberg Press coordinated with Alpine Communications to collect donations in Guttenberg. We work directly with the Clayton County Food Shelf to distribute non-perishable food items, hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves that are donated by employees and customers.



Pictured are: Lanette Schutte and Carol Berns, Alpine Communications



Pictured is: Jane Thein, The Guttenberg Press



Community Workshops

Social Media for Beginners
Tuesday, March 14, 2017
6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Guttenberg Public Library,
603 S 2nd St, Guttenberg

Class size is limited, please
RSVP by calling 563-252-3108
to reserve your seat.



If your phone number appears in parentheses (XXX-XXXX) in this edition of the Alpine Communiqué, please give us a call at 563-245-4000 by March 31, 2017, and we'll apply a \$5 credit to your account!

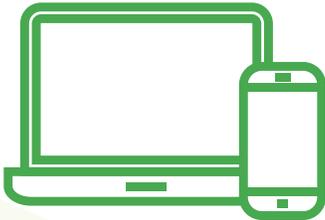
THE FUSION FIBER-OPTIC NETWORK IS COMING TO MCGREGOR

Alpine Communications will be making a \$3-million-dollar investment in constructing the Fusion fiber-optic network to McGregor in 2017. The state-of-the-art Fusion Network will provide a fiber optic connection to all businesses and households within the city limits of McGregor. All Alpine customers living within the city limits of McGregor will have their service switched to the Fusion Network at no additional charge.



What is Fiber-to-the-Home and why is it important?

- This infrastructure brings virtually unlimited bandwidth and will be a positive impact on economic development:
- A fiber network is easier to maintain and delivers 100 times more bandwidth than coaxial, wireless, or copper networks.
- Businesses will have a greater ability to compete in the global economy due to connectivity that allows more applications such as remote data backups and telecommuting.
- Quality of life is enhanced by improved access to online entertainment, education, and e-commerce.
- Homes and businesses can expect an increase in value.



Besides providing great sound quality and high levels of reliability, this new fiber network will enable Alpine to provide increased Internet speeds, FusionTV, and other enhanced services.

When is construction starting and what do I need to do?

In order to prepare for the start of construction, Alpine field technicians and contractors are surveying the area. Alpine Communications General Manager Chris Hopp stated, "You may have already noticed an increased presence of Alpine Communications vehicles and technicians in your neighborhood. Starting in February, Vantage Point employees and Alpine technicians will visit all homes and businesses in McGregor to discuss the fiber project with customers. All Vantage Point and Alpine employees will be wearing company shirts and have company identification." (563-245-1003)

Construction of the network will begin this spring and service activation will be completed throughout the summer and early fall of 2017. Residents will be notified before construction begins in their neighborhood.

Alpine Communications is independently owned and steadfastly focused on our customers. We have proudly served this community since 1997 and you can count on us for reliability, responsiveness, and local customer service. As technology changes, we change along with it, keeping you connected to a new world of possibilities. We look forward to bringing this state-of-the-art fiber network to your doorstep.

For more information about the fiber project, contact Alpine Communications at 563-245-4000.



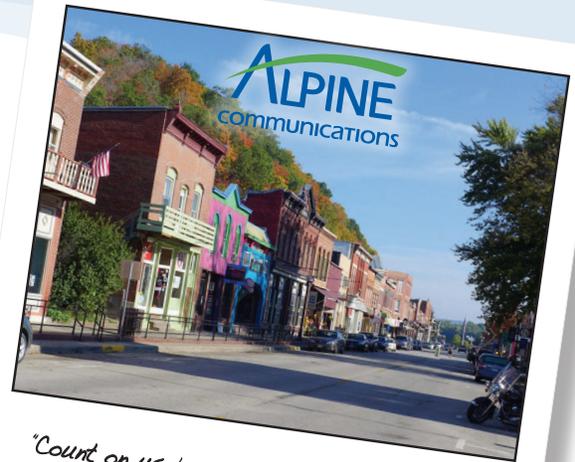
Don't forget to look for your phone number to win!



4 ADVANTAGES OF A FUSION FIBER-OPTIC NETWORK

The Fusion fiber-optic network offers powerful advantages to our communities:

- 1 "FUTURE PROOF" TECHNOLOGY:**
Only fiber delivers enough bandwidth — reliably and at a low enough cost — to meet the ever-increasing demand for more robust Internet, video, and voice services as well as other online applications.
- 2 FLEXIBILITY AND SCALABILITY:**
A fiber-optic network provides virtually unlimited bandwidth without having to change the fiber. Once customers are connected to our fiber network, we can easily provide Internet speeds up to 1 Gigabit per second.
- 3 NOT AFFECTED BY WEATHER OR TERRAIN:**
Temperature, humidity, precipitation and wind can all cause interference with microwave radio transmission, and topographical features and trees can also affect its reception. By contrast, our fiber broadband provides reliable connections regardless of environmental conditions.
- 4 LOCAL SERVICE AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT:**
Our dedicated local team is always available to you. Count on us to go the extra mile to respond promptly to your questions or concerns and keep you connected when you need it the most.



"Count on us to go the extra mile to respond promptly to your questions or concerns and keep you connected when you need it the most."

FRS SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY – APPLY TODAY

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

In 2017, FRS will award scholarships per geographic region of the NTCA membership and one sponsored by an NTCA associate member. The awards will be distributed proportionate to the number of applications received per region. FRS will fund \$2,000 of each scholarship, with the sponsoring organization of each winning student providing a \$500 match.

Additionally, FRS will award four (4) \$5,000 Staurulakis Family Scholarships, with a preference to students who are majoring in math, science, engineering or medicine; two (2) \$1,500 TMS Scholarships, and one (1) \$7,000 Everett Kneece Return to Rural America Scholarship will be awarded.

Eligibility requirements and the application can be downloaded from FRS at www.frs.org. Completed applications must be returned to our office by February 15, 2017, so that we may complete the sponsor certification and forward the applications to FRS.

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



FOUNDATION FOR
RURAL SERVICE

Get a New Smartphone for the New Year

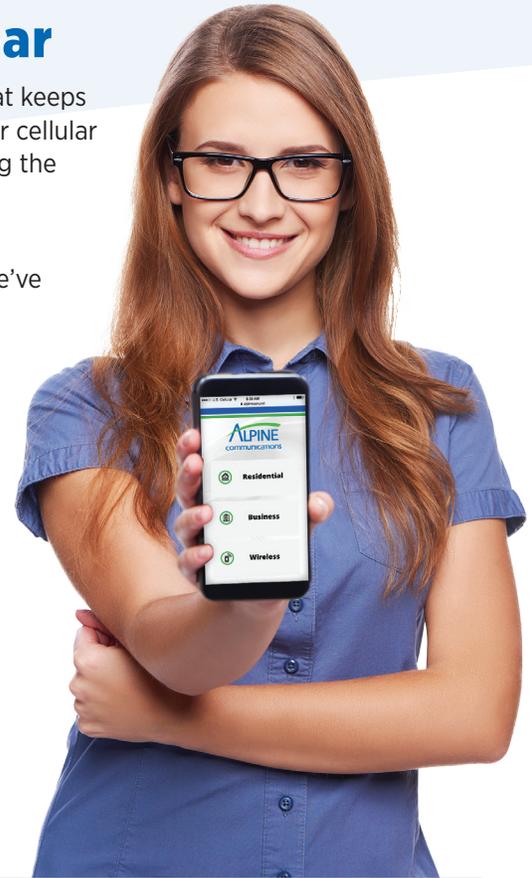
Did you also know that Alpine Communications offers 4G LTE nationwide service that keeps you covered whether at home or when you travel? Now is a great time to switch your cellular service to Alpine Wireless and choose from the most popular smartphones (including the iPhone 7, Samsung Galaxy S7, Google Pixel) and low-priced data plans.

At Alpine Wireless you get:

- Reliable 4G LTE nationwide coverage – No matter where your travels take you, we've got you covered
- Local customer service and support that provides you assistance in setting up your phone
- No more worrying about air time balance or days of service
- A wide variety of phone choices to meet your calling needs
- Simplicity of one, easy-to-read bill for cellular, home phone, internet, TV, security and more (563-964-3029)
- Competitively priced family plan options and data
- Ability to port your current cell phone number to Alpine Wireless

We will help you make the transition as seamless and easy as possible when you switch to our service. Keep your same cellular number when you switch to Alpine Wireless, choose from the latest smartphones and price plans that are within your budget and enjoy 4G LTE nationwide coverage.

Plus, for a limited time, get a new smartphone for as low as \$4.99/month when you switch today.



YOUR PHOTO COULD BE FAMOUS

Take a shot at getting your photo on our 2017-2018 directory cover!

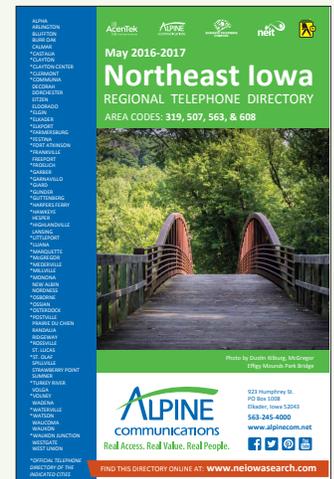
Alpine Communications is looking for amazing photos that represent the communities we serve, so we can put them on the cover of our 2017-2018 Northeast Iowa Regional Telephone Directory. Thousands of copies are distributed around Northeast Iowa, Southern Minnesota, and Southwest Wisconsin during the 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 Alpine Communications gift certificate. As a thank you, each person will receive one 5x7 print of one of their entries.

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.
- 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.

If you'd like more information, call Alpine Communications at 563-245-4000.



HOW TO ENTER:

- Send digital photos by the entry deadline of February 17, 2017.
- Upload your photos using the form at www.alpinecom.net.
- Include name, address, telephone, description of photo, and where the photo was taken.
- Limit two entries per household.

RANSOMWARE FACTS & TIPS

As technology evolves, the prevalence of ransomware attacks is growing among businesses and consumers alike. It's important for digital citizens to be vigilant about basic digital hygiene in an increasingly connected world.

WHAT IS RANSOMWARE?

Ransomware is a type of malware that accesses a victim's files, locks and encrypts them and then demands the victim to pay a ransom to get them back. Cybercriminals use these attacks to try to get users to click on attachments or links that appear legitimate but actually contain malicious code. Ransomware is like the "digital kidnapping" of valuable data – from personal photos and memories to client information, financial records and intellectual property. Any individual or organization could be a potential ransomware target.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

We can all help protect ourselves – and our organizations – against ransomware and other malicious attacks by following these STOP. THINK. CONNECT. tips:

- **Keep all machines clean:** Keep the software on all Internet-connected devices up to date. All critical software, including computer and mobile operating systems, security software and other frequently used programs and apps, should be running the most current versions.
- **Get two steps ahead:** Turn on two-step authentication – also known as two-step verification or multi-factor authentication – on accounts where available. Two-factor authentication can use anything from a text message to your phone to a token to a biometric like your fingerprint to provide enhanced account security.
- **Back it up:** Protect your valuable work, music, photos and other digital information by regularly making an electronic copy and storing it safely.
- **Make better passwords:** A strong password is a sentence that is at least 12 characters long. Focus on positive sentences or phrases that you like to think about and are easy to remember.
- **When in doubt, throw it out:** Links in email, social media posts and online advertising are often how cybercriminals try to steal your personal information. Even if you know the source, if something looks suspicious, delete it.
- **Plug & scan:** USBs and other external devices can be infected by viruses and malware. Use your security software to scan them.

Get comprehensive computer protection and local support with Tech Home Protect starting at \$7.95/month with a Peak Savings Pak. Get your first months free of any Tech Home package when you subscribe before March 31, 2017. Call 563-245-4000 today!

*Courtesy of the National Cyber Security Alliance



FCC/FEMA TIPS FOR EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

When weather-related emergencies strike, it's important for your safety to be prepared and stay connected:

✓ BEFORE AN EMERGENCY

- Traditional landline telephone service usually works during electric power outages but you may need to use a corded phone; many cordless home phones rely on electric power to operate.
- If a storm is coming, charge your wireless phone; keep an extra battery and a car charger on hand. Also, charge your laptop or tablet.
- Broadcasters are an important source of news during emergencies. Keep a battery-operated, solar-powered, or hand-crank-operated radio or portable television for use during power outages.

To learn more about the value of landlines during emergencies, call Alpine Communications at 563-245-4000.

✓ DURING AN EMERGENCY

- Limit non-emergency phone calls. This will minimize network congestion, free up "space" on the network for emergency communications, and conserve battery power if you are using a wireless phone. If you do need to make a call, try to keep it brief.
- Call 911 only for emergencies. Learn and use the designated number in your state for highway accidents or other non-life-threatening incidents.
- If you do not have electric power in your home and are using your car to charge wireless phones or listen to news on the car radio, be careful. Remain vigilant about carbon monoxide emissions from your car, especially if it is in a closed space.

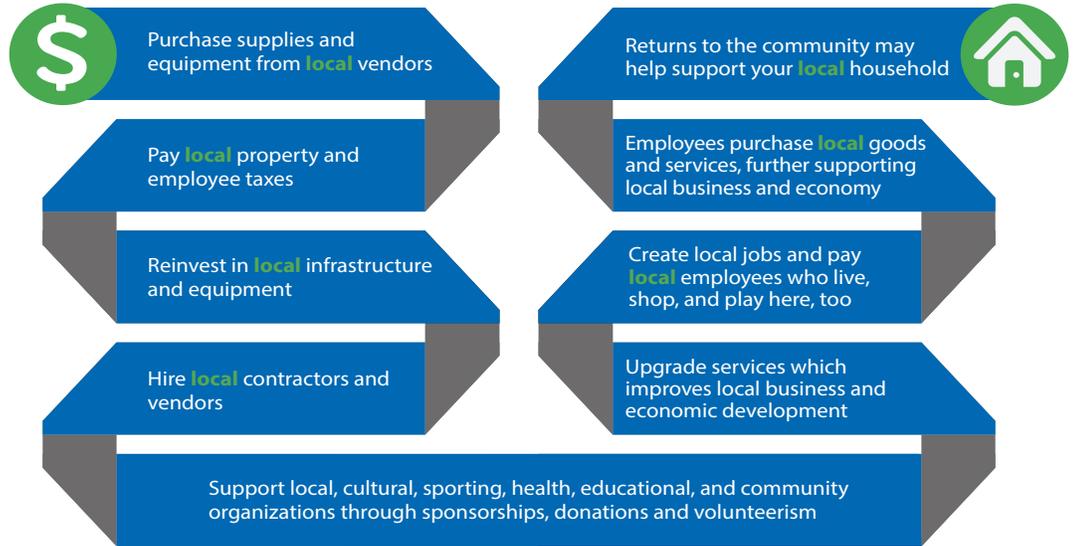


WANT TO HELP OUR COMMUNITY WIN?

Support the Alpine Communications team!

When you choose Alpine Communications as your communications provider, the benefits go well beyond your home or business to places throughout our community. Each year, we donate generously to local nonprofit organizations including these. Because you support us, we can support them. (563-255-2530)

Unlike our national competitors, we care about more than just making a profit. We care about making a difference.



Alpine Communications and our employees have been involved in and contributed to:

- American Cancer Society - Clayton County Relay for Life
- Art in the Park Elkader
- Carter House Museum
- Central Ambulance Service
- Central Athletic Boosters
- Central Food and Fitness
- Central Community Hospital Foundation
- Central Community School District
- Central Reading is Fundamental (RIF)
- Central Dollars for Scholars
- City of Clayton
- City of Elkader - Park Board
- Clay-Gar American Legion
- Clayton County 4-H
- Clayton County Cattlemen's Association
- Clayton County Conservation
- Clayton County Conservation Awareness Network
- Clayton County Development Group
- Clayton County Fair
- Clayton County Food Shelf
- Clayton County Foundation for the Future
- Clayton County Library Association
- Clayton County Pork Producers
- Clayton County Sheriff Drug Prevention
- Clayton Ridge Schools
- Clayton Ridge Booster Club
- Clayton Ridge Grid Iron Club
- Clayton Ridge Dollars for Scholars
- Decorah Area Chamber of Commerce
- Driftless Area Wetland Centre
- Ed-Co Youth Football
- Elgin Betterment Club
- Elgin Homecoming
- Elgin Lions Club
- Elgin Public Library
- Elgin Fire Department
- Elkader Area Chamber of Commerce
- Elkader Child Care and Learning Center
- Elkader Development Corporation
- Elkader Fire Department
- Elkader Funds for Fields
- Elkader Little League
- Elkader Lions Club
- Elkader Opera House
- Elkader Police Department
- Elkader Senior Meal Site
- Elkader Soccer Club
- Elkader Sweet Corn Days
- ESP Swim Team
- Elkader Fitness
- Fayette County Fair
- Friends of the Elkader Public Library
- Garber Fire Department
- Garnavillo Boosters
- Garnavillo Community Daycare
- Garnavillo Little League
- Grand Excursion 2004
- Garnavillo Hawks 4-H Club
- Garnavillo Historical Society
- Garnavillo Volunteer Fire Dept.
- Garnavillo EMS
- Guttenberg Chamber of Commerce
- Guttenberg Dollars for Scholars
- Guttenberg German Band
- Guttenberg German Fest
- Guttenberg Police Department
- Guttenberg Public Library
- Guttenberg Rotary
- Helping Services For Northeast Iowa
- Keystone Chorus
- Kids Kampus
- Knob Prairie Benefit
- Lazy River Beer and Win Fest
- The Left Bank Shop and Gallery
- Main Street Elkader
- Maize Maze
- McGregor Historical Society and Museum
- McGregor Center for the Arts/The Left Bank Shop and Gallery
- McGregor-Marquette Chamber of Commerce
- MFL MarMac Dollars for Scholars
- MFL MarMac Athletic Boosters
- Mississippi Blackhawks Ski Team
- Motor Mill Foundation
- NEI3A
- Northeast Iowa Farm Antique Association
- North Fayette Valley Fine Arts Boosters
- North Fayette Valley Athletic Boosters
- North Fayette Valley Dollars for Scholars
- North Fayette Valley Community School District
- Northeast Iowa Community College
- Parent Share & Support
- Post-Prom Committees
- St. Mary Immaculate Conception School
- Substance Abuse Services for Clayton County, Inc.
- The Spectrum Network
- Turkey River Recreational Corridor
- Umbrella Arts
- Valley Leggin It for Learning
- Winneshie County Fair
- Yellow Ribbon Chapter Mar-Mac
- Suicide Prevention

CONNECT WITH US:

923 Humphrey St.
PO Box 1008
Elkader, Iowa 52043

Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 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

