

# ALPINE COMMUNIQUÉ

Real Access. Real Value. Real People.



Q3 2020 Newsletter

## Meet the Crew

Alpine Communications is excited to announce three new employees to our team. Please join us in welcoming Rachel, Jim, and Josh!

WELCOME!



*Rachel Franks*, Accounting Clerk



*Jim Berry*, Broadband Technician



*Josh Dudley*, Broadband Technician

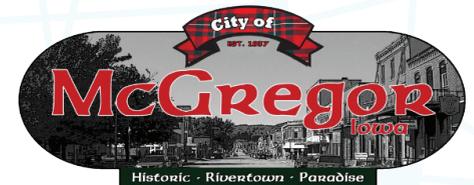
## Conference Calling Creates Connections for City of McGregor During COVID-19 Crisis

While needing a quick solution for giving the public access to their city council meeting, the City of McGregor turned to Alpine Communications for help. The Center for Disease Control released COVID-19 guidelines that gatherings must be limited to no more than ten people. McGregor's City Clerk, Lynette McManus, sprang into action to find a solution that enabled the public to listen to the meeting.

Late in the morning of the City Council Meeting, Lynette contacted Alpine Communications to determine if they offered a conference calling service. Broadcasting the City Council Meeting via conference call would enable them to abide by the open meeting rules while staying safe and transparent with the residents.

Alpine team members Sara Hertrampf and Lori Keppler efficiently created an on-demand conference bridge for the City of McGregor. They took the time to train Lynette on how to manage the conference through Alpine's web portal, record the City Council meeting for future reference, and test the conference bridge with Lynette and Mayor Lyle Troester.

**Alpine Communications believes communities thrive with connections**, and they were ready to answer the challenge. "We thrive on these types of scenarios. It enables our team to showcase our unique ability to solve customers' technology challenges quickly and maximize the investments we've made in our service offering and network," noted Hertrampf.



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 September 30, 2020, and we'll apply a \$5 credit to your account!

**Do you need help with a technology solution during the COVID-19 crisis?** Perhaps you have a story to share about a unique way you are using technology. Alpine Communications invites you to share your stories and challenges because we are all in this together.

# Fiber Broadband Empowers Entrepreneur to Plant Roots in Rural Iowa

Midwest roots run deep and for a bi-coastal couple. Brent and Katie Grinna of Boston, Massachusetts, call McGregor, Iowa, their home away from home. Fiber-optic broadband connections deliver the quality of life they dreamed about for their young family.

Brent Grinna is the founder of EverTrue, a software platform that helps colleges and universities engage alumni and raise money. Brent is a native of rural Postville, Iowa, and his parents instilled in him a strong work ethic. Ivy League Brown University recruited Brent to play football. Life led Brent to Chicago as an investment banker, Harvard Business School, Mexico, and ultimately to settle in Boston, Massachusetts, the headquarters for EverTrue. Notably, Grinna named EverTrue after his alma mater's fight song.

But as the saying goes, you can take the boy out of the farm, but you can't take the farm out of the boy. Brent married his high school sweetheart, Katie, whom he met at the Sports Unlimited Campground in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. After ten years in business, the Grinnas looked to Iowa to establish roots for their family of five. Brent shared, "As our kids were getting older, we wanted to come back and give them exposure to a place where we both grew up and meant so much to us." (252-1108)

They returned to Iowa each summer and connected with their families. Still, as the family grew, it was challenging to find long-term lodging. Grinna weighed his options and invested in

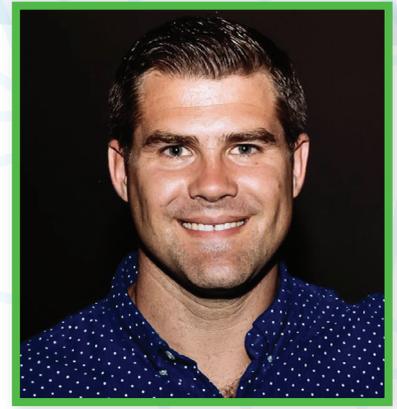
a bed-and-breakfast in McGregor, Iowa. The home suits their family's desire for space and access to outdoor adventures.

Grinna's decision to land in McGregor is, in part, due to fiber-optic broadband services from Alpine Communications. "Fiber was an influencer in getting more comfortable with the idea of working from Iowa and getting plugged in with my team. We love to hike, and we love the river. In McGregor, we get all of that balanced with staying connected and productive in the high-growth technology environment," explained Brent.

“**My Eero mesh network broadcasts WiFi throughout our home, which means I have better WiFi in McGregor than I have in Boston**”

"My Eero mesh network broadcasts WiFi throughout our home, which means I have better WiFi in McGregor than I have in Boston," he said. The growth of video conference calling has accelerated over the last decade. Fiber broadband helps Grinna feel more comfortable with connecting to his company, colleagues, and customers. "I can be as productive as Boston, if not more so, in my office with great WiFi in McGregor. I don't miss a beat.

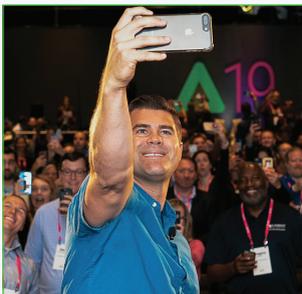
That has influenced our decision to spend two months here in the summer," he stated. Grinna attributes broadband technology for helping him feel far less pressure to be in the office.



Access to virtually unlimited broadband means untethered potential for the Grinnas and other working professionals. Brent shared his passion for growing rural Iowa, "Anyone who has visited knows this is a special place. We can attract the next generation of workers to the area if we offer people flexibility in location and the ability to work from home."

Grinna believes broadband internet is the great equalizer for McGregor and other small towns with fiber-optic networks. Many companies, including EverTrue, are embracing more flexible work policies for the foreseeable future due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "This could further support growth for regions like Northeast Iowa that offer a great quality of life with strong technology connectivity."

Grinna shared his experience with regional economic development leaders and community stakeholders at Alpine Communications' Connected Communities Summit in October 2019. He encouraged community leaders to leverage fiber-optic broadband services to grow rural Iowa. When asked what connectivity means to him, Grinna explained, "My ability to work from home was one of the considerations in making an investment in real estate projects in the area (McGregor). So it was an absolute thrill to find out there was better internet in McGregor than in my neighborhood in Boston. It has made it feasible to spend many weeks of the year in Northeast Iowa."



# Local Dairy Producers Rely on Smart Farm Milking Robots and Broadband Service to Fulfill Family Dream

Jamie and Tony Goodrich are fulfilling their dream of raising a family on a dairy farm. Advancements in smart farm technology and reliable high-speed internet contribute to turning their vision into reality, meanwhile improving the quality of life for dairy producers. Jamie and her husband, Tony, have invested in artificial intelligence and robotics to give their operation a chance of surviving during tumultuous times.

Jamie and Tony, with Jeff West, own a thriving dairy operation in rural Clayton County, Iowa. A few years ago, the trio installed three milking robots for their herd of 150 cows. Additionally, the couple raises 8-month heifers at their home place and then move them to the dairy farm for breeding at 13 months.

As a smart farm, innovative technology is the lifeblood of their operation. “All of the robots are run over the internet,” said Jamie. “The cows have responders on their collars that track rumination minutes and the animal’s activity. A slow-down indicates they are sick. Conductivity sensors on the milkers can detect mastitis,” explained Goodrich. These early indicators enable them to proactively treat their herd’s health, improve the composition and quality of the milk, and increase profitability for their operation.

In addition to robotic milkers, the Goodrichs have implemented internet-connected, automated calf feeders, which eliminates the filling and lifting of heavy buckets while optimizing hygiene. “We have apps on our smartphones that monitors our feeders and calves. If the drinking speed for a calf slows down or the calf is not coming into the feeders as often as it was before, the feeder alerts our smartphone about the condition of the calf,” described Jamie. (873-1552)

Jamie shared how technology has changed the way they manage their operation. She explains, “Robotic milking gives us much more information on our herd. We now have data on our cows about nutrition, rumination minutes, breeding, and overall herd health. With having kids, the robots free up our time. We can be flexible with our hours because we don’t have to be at the dairy at the same time every day, which improves our quality of life.”

Reliable internet access gives Jamie the flexibility to work from home and be a mom, too. “I connect to the computer at the dairy over the internet using TeamViewer to input data from home. Now I don’t have to wake the kids up at 3:30 AM to go to the farm,” explained Jamie.

Establishing strategic partnerships with responsive providers gives the producers peace-of-mind when they experience technical difficulties. “We have a generator for power. When we have computer issues, our technician can be on the farm quickly,” she said. “If one part of the network is down, the robots will keep milking, but it doesn’t track the data, and then the cows will get off on their production.”



“Over the years, when we’ve had trouble, Alpine has been right out here like boom! There are other ISPs, but they are not going to respond as soon as Alpine can,” explained Jamie. Responsiveness and reliability are key reasons why the Goodrichs chose Alpine Communications as their local broadband and telephone service provider.

Dairy farming is more than a job. It’s a way of life, a vocation. Jamie described why she loves the dairy industry, “The cows; I’ve always been an animal person. When I go away for the weekend, and I return, the girls are happy and in my face! I love raising the calves, knowing we are raising them to be our milk cows that are making money.”

Jamie is a fourth-generation dairy farmer and hopes her children will carry on the family tradition. “I want my kids to farm. My son is all farm, all of the time. My daughter has two show calves, and she loves them.”





**CONNECT WITH US:**

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Monday - Friday  
563-245-4000  
or 1-800-635-1059  
www.alpinecom.net

Technical Support:

1-888-264-2908

SecureIT Tech Support:

1-877-373-3320



**IS PANIC BUTTON SERVICE RIGHT FOR YOUR BUSINESS?**

Ask yourself these questions, then talk with us at Alpine Communications for more assistance.

- 1 Is my place of business open to the public?
- 2 Do I have employees who work alone or in isolated parts of a large building?
- 3 Are cash, prescription drugs, or other valuable items easily accessible by someone entering the business?
- 4 Have I heard of increased crime in my business area?
- 5 Would sounding an audible alarm escalate an already dangerous situation?

The National Safety Council says 2 million American workers report having been victims of workplace violence every year.



Restore Peace of Mind at the Workplace with

# PANIC BUTTON SERVICE

Stay **connected** and alert law enforcement quickly and silently.

**The National Safety Council says 2 million American workers report having been victims of workplace violence every year.** Certain industries — including health care, service providers, and education — are more prone to workplace violence than others. But make no mistake. It can happen anywhere. (964-9763)

When you subscribe to Panic Button Service, Alpine Communications will install a hidden button underneath a counter or other discreet place. When pressed, this button will instantly alert the central monitoring station to dispatch the police immediately to your location. You don't need to pick up a phone or say a single word, and no alarm sound will be heard.

**For less than one dollar per day, Panic Button Service provides priceless peace of mind to you and your employees by equipping your business with the ability to get help there fast.**

**Take Action Now to Provide a Safe Workplace Environment.**

**Call 563-245-4444 or Click [www.alpinecom.net](http://www.alpinecom.net)**



## Faces of the Brand – Lara Duff

When you meet Lara Duff, you will quickly learn that she has a zest for life, a witty sense of humor, and genuine care for helping others. Lara is an Elkader native and has worked as a customer service representative for Alpine since 2016.

When asked what ignites a passion for her work, Lara described, “I like to fix problems and think in different ways or logistically to find solutions.” Her favorite moments with customers are helping them set up their @alpinecom.net email accounts on smartphones and tablets. “I like interacting with customers in this way because I enjoy face-to-face connections and getting to know customers in person. Non-verbal communications help facilitate conversations,” shared Lara.

Lara takes pride in her work, and she recently accomplished helping customers get assistance through the Lifeline program. “The Lifeline program changed this year, and I led the task to audit and certify qualifying customers so they could afford broadband and telephone services. It was rewarding because I could help people and take ownership of the project,” explained Duff. (245-1123)

When asked which Alpine brand standard resonated with her, she said, “be tenacious about getting it right. I’ve always loved the word tenacious and tenacity, and I believe it’s something we do well and something we can all strive to do better.”

In five years from now, Lara envisions herself becoming more familiar with our customers and improving her expertise in Alpine’s services. Lara continued, “this industry is fast-paced and exciting. I would like to have a better understanding of future developments in fiber-optic technology and what’s next. Maybe in five years, we will be using teleportation!”

Lara has an animated personality and enjoys connecting with clients and coworkers through sharing stories. “Everyone has a different story. I also like hearing the reactions to mine because they are pretty out-there,” said Lara. Coincidentally, Lara is known around the office for her funny stories.

Her close friends and family describe Lara as playful, empathetic, funny, silly, and good at internalizing her emotions. Lara shared that most people don’t know that she is a very anxious person. “Most people think I’m really laid back, but my mind is always going.”

When asked what the quirkiest thing about her was, Lara laughed and said, “it’s a grab bag – reach in and pick one! I would say maybe quirkiest thing about me is my extensive knowledge of movies.” In that same vein, her favorite movies are Forrest Gump (which she can quote by rote), Zoolander, The Sponge Bob Movie, and Toy Story.



### IN THE LOOP

- ✓ Three words that always describe Lara: Tired, Curious, and Thoughtful
- ✓ Three words that never describe Lara: Militant, Closed-minded, and Tan
- ✓ Unique Office Skill: Lara is an outstanding proofreader and grammarian



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# Midwestern Creative Innovator Cultivates Communities in Elgin

Amanda Pasket saw the beauty and potential in the scenic Echo Valley as a young adult. She chose to make her mark on the business landscape as an entrepreneur. Amanda is the owner of The Visual Element, LLC, a graphic design and marketing agency in Elgin, Iowa. With a focus on community, she has planted roots in Elgin and works to cultivate a bright future for her fellow residents.

Amanda says technology and community are two main factors that help her business thrive in Elgin. Broadband technology enables virtual connections with her clients so she can build her business without the need to travel. Elgin's quality of life and affordable housing provide a safe haven for the Pasket family. (426-5486)

Most of Amanda's clients are in the real estate sector in Chicago. She enjoys the challenge of designing and communicating each agent's brand using visual arts – without ever meeting them in person. "I use email, social media, and my website to communicate with my clients," explained the entrepreneur. "I'm constantly improving my communications channels to be more useful to the users. For example, I created a client portal similar to what someone would use with a medical clinic. I can manage all of the communications, projects, and tasks with my clients in one place."

100% fiber-optic Fusion Internet from Alpine Communications connects Amanda to her clients and vendors, even during the pandemic. "My internet has met my business demands. I can send large files and download files at the same time that I'm emailing my clients. If it weren't for my internet, I would be stuck with one job a month versus an email inbox full of work," she shared.

Two words that would describe Amanda are "creator" and "innovator," which is apparent by the numerous printers, including a 3-D printer, and tools in her diverse workshop. "I push myself beyond the role of a graphic designer to an artist and creator," explains Amanda. "I'm very versatile." When asked how she uses her 3-D printer, Amanda shared how she created a personalized business card holder with the word "READ" on it in the shape of bookends for Lisa Leuck, the Elgin Public Library Director. Amanda also works part-time at the Elgin Library, which shows that she highly values community, reading, and lifelong learning.

Amanda utilizes technology and innovation to go above and beyond for her clients, even in a small rural community. "We need to keep pushing



technology past the limits, but not just technology. We need to push each other to be better – build each other up to a higher potential than we could have ever dreamed of by ourselves. We are the future of our small towns."

Amanda graduated from Upper Iowa University with a BFA in Graphic Design and is working to obtain her Master's degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Organizational Development. "I am learning how leadership and mentoring will be the new normal for businesses," she explained how the workplace is transforming from today's company hierarchy of various levels of management. She also believes in small rural community betterment and building support systems to help everyone thrive. Amanda is working with Lisa Leuck to launch a women's business support system called The IDEA Exchange - <https://www.facebook.com/TheIDEAExchange>

"I feel like our community is similar to the internet, which is made of a series of servers (community members) linked together through common connections. People who are willing to share information, unique skills, and the expertise they have with others is what makes a small town ideal because the data is quickly accessible," she described.



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