

ALPINE COMMUNIQUÉ

Real Access. Real Value. Real People.

ALPINE
communications

Q3 2022 Newsletter

Aureon Grant Winners Announced

///AUREON®



Pictured: Eric Benson, Aureon; Jessica Goltz, Seva Center; Chris Hopp, Alpine Communications.

Within the last six months Seva Health: Center for Wellbeing has held educational opportunities for stress management, yoga, women's wellness, and resilience training. They have partnered with the Iowa Secretary of State to combat human trafficking and the Iowa National Mental Illness division to conduct mental health training sessions. This grant will be used to purchase a computer which will be used for education, presentations and individual coaching sessions supporting the improvement of mental health for residents in Clayton and surrounding counties.

Alpine Communications appreciates Seva Health: Center for Wellbeing for working with the MFL MarMac school and offering options for students to keep their mental health as fit as their physical health. Congratulations on being awarded an Aureon Grant for the purchase of a new laptop to help with your education efforts. (563-964-9320) *continued on page 2*

Stay Connected With the Northeast Iowa Regional Telephone Directory



The 2022-2023 Northeast Iowa Regional Telephone Directories have arrived and should be in customer mailboxes soon. Congratulations Carol DeSotel for taking the winning photo of Buck Creek by Valley Mill for our 2022-2023 directory!



Alpine Communications plays a **vital role** in our community by providing cutting-edge services.”



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, 2022, and we'll apply a \$5 credit to your account!

Aureon Grant Winners Announced



Pictured are Eric Benson, Aureon; Brian Wenger, Sons of American Legion Squadron #352; Brody Gavin and Elijah Hopp, Alpine Communications.

The Elgin Legion Post #352 coordinated the fundraising and construction of their building 40 years ago and it's been a vital part of the community, ever since. Families and groups besides the Legion have used it for a wide variety of events including receptions, family reunions and group meetings. The Sons of the American Legion Squadron #352 decided that having a working PA system, video projection and internet service will be valued by users and greatly expand the building's capabilities. We appreciate their desire to continue serving our communities by improving the A/V in this community building.



Pictured: Chad Ruegnitz, Alpine Communications; Eric Benson, Aureon; Denise Schneider, City of Guttenberg; Brian Koth, Alpine Communications.

The City of Guttenberg applied to Aureon for a grant to assist with the Guttenberg Artful Music Park project. Not only will this project enhance the park visually, but it also enables visitors to play and listen to music while enjoying the outdoors. Music is good for the soul, brain, heart, senses, memory and promotes happiness. It enhances emotion and can build harmonious connected communities. Congratulations on receiving funds for this enhancement to Guttenberg's ART experience for all ages.



Pictured are Eric Benson, Aureon; Bill Robinson, Garnavillo Day Care; Austin Behrend, Alpine Communications.

The Garnavillo Community Day Care provides services to families in and around the Garnavillo area. They currently serve 46 families with enrollment of 76 children, ranging from 6 weeks to 12 years of age. This grant will be used for a telecommunications upgrade which will expand their current phone system, add Internet to new classrooms, and provide iPads for staff to increase parent communication and connectivity to children and caregivers. Alpine Communications appreciates the Garnavillo Community Day Care's commitment to keeping families connected while they are apart.



Pictured are Tony Young, Alpine Communications; Eric Benson, Aureon; Danielle Shea and Ashley Augustyn, Elkader Main Street; Lara Duff, Alpine Communications.

Elkader is a destination for commerce, government services, entertainment and employment for the region. Elkader also attracts thousands of visitors from all over the Midwest, infusing the local economy with tourism dollars by offering a unique experience for all ages. Whether people are in Elkader to work, shop or play, Main Street Elkader strives to enhance the physical and visual assets that sets the commercial district apart from other destination communities. Lighting is a key component of creating an inviting atmosphere. The string lights throughout the downtown district will certainly enhance the environment and set the stage for the fun times to be had in Elkader. Congratulations on being awarded a grant to enhance Main Street and all its activities.

Meet the Crew - Brian Koth

Batter Up! Alpine's newest Customer Service Account Specialist has a passion for baseball. Brian Koth serves on the Elkader Little League Board of Directors and coaches Little League. You may recognize his name from a local radio station where he has worked off and on for more than 20 years.

Brian is a seasoned veteran from the cellular industry. He moved his way through the ranks of customer service, technician, and manager for a cellular company. He now plays for the 21st century communications home team, Alpine Communications. When asked why he chose Alpine, it was plain and simple, the commitment to our customers. "Alpine is not a large faceless corporation. We are a local company employing your friends and neighbors who work hard every day to make sure you have the best experience possible." explains Brian. (563-252-1960)

Brian began working at Alpine in December 2021. He and his wife, Christina, reside outside of Elkader with their son. His family includes four sons, two stepsons, seven grandchildren and three more on the way. It appears he has a good start on a league of their own. Along with baseball, Brian enjoys hunting and farming.

The culture at Alpine Communications is what Brian enjoys the most. It is friendly and customer centered. In the ever growing and changing world of the 21st century that is a must, especially in telecommunications. Brian says, "Even though technology is leap years ahead of where it was 30 years ago, it is not done growing. There is always something new to learn which is a highlight to working in the industry." He is excited to learn more about the technical aspects including switch operations and fiber technology.



Welcome, Brian!

We think we have a homerun with Brian at the plate helping customers navigate technology. Welcome to Alpine Brian!

An advertisement for Alpine Communications' smart home security services. On the left, a blue and green graphic contains the text "24/7 Smart Home Security from Alpine Communications" in white and orange. Below the text are icons for a smart light bulb, a tablet displaying a security app interface with a green padlock icon and the text "SYSTEM DISARMED", and two white smart sensors. A QR code is located at the bottom left of the graphic, with a green arrow pointing to it and the text "Contact us or scan the QR code to learn more." On the right, a photograph shows a smiling woman in a white t-shirt holding a baby in a pink dress, with a smiling man in a white shirt sitting next to her. The background is a bright, modern living room.

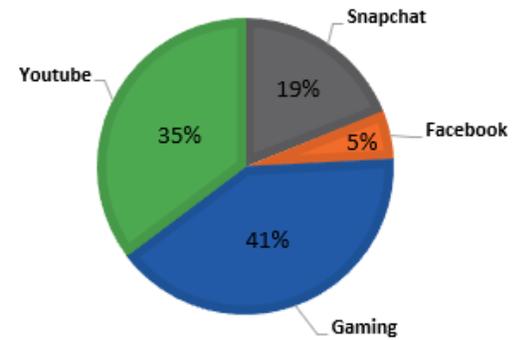
Internet Safety at the Clayton County Fairgrounds

Alpine Communications participated in the 2022 ISU Extension and Outreach Safety Day on May 12, 2022 at the Clayton County Fairgrounds. Lori Keppler and Austin Behrend worked with fourth graders from MFL Mar Mac, Clayton Ridge, Central, and Postville schools to learn their knowledge about Internet safety and help them understand the dangers online.

In the first activity, students were asked to go to a corner of the building that best represented their answer to questions. This helped understand how students use the Internet and their thoughts on Internet safety.

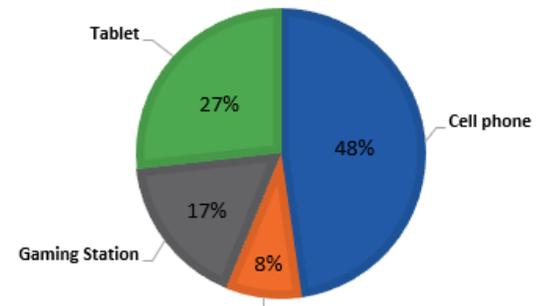
Where do students spend most of their time online?

With the age of the students, it is not surprising gaming and YouTube were the most popular answers to where they spend most of their time online. These arenas may not be the first place you would think danger lurks. YouTube and gaming sites have areas that allow for chatting with other users. When students were asked if they had ever chatted with anyone they did not know online, 60% said they had. It is important students know who they are talking with and what information they should and should not be sharing with others.



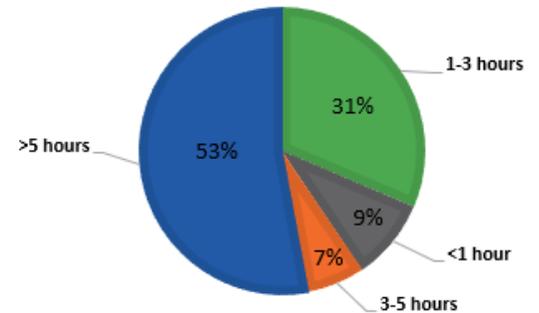
What device do fourth graders spend the most time on?

Students spend most of their time using their cell phones to connect online. These devices are easily accessible outside of the watchful eyes of an adult which may be why 40% of students did not feel their parents had a good idea of what they do when they are online. That is especially concerning considering the amount of time students spend online outside of school per day.



How many hours do students spend online per day?

With 91% of students spending over an hour a day online outside of school, it is imperative parents keep a watchful eye on their activities and the who they are interacting with. Monitoring services, such as Tech Home, are available for mobile devices which give parents control as to what is taking place on mobile devices. (563-426-5380)



The information gathered gave insight for the final activity where students were given a screen name, instant message, and profile picture of someone reaching out to chat with them. At the end of the exercise, a photo was revealed to expose who they were really talking with. Students were surprised at the images. The person in the photo did not come close to representing the images students were imagining. This set a great stage for discussion about what to believe when you are communicating online.

There are a lot of other dangers everyone should be aware of including phishing emails, viruses, hackers, ransomware, etc. Tech Home is available for computers and mobile devices to help manage online activity, protect devices from viruses, manage passwords, backup data, and other tools.



Call Alpine Communications at 563-245-4000 to learn more about how Tech Home can help you stay in tune with your child's online activity and keep your family safe from online dangers.

Filter **Web Content** with Tech Home!

All Tech Home plans include Parental Controls to help keep your family safe online. The web can be a great resource but it also has a lot of content and threats we'd like to shield from our loved ones. Parental Controls help put the power back in your hands whether you want to block certain types of websites, set individual parameters for internet usage, or get reporting on web activity. See below for additional details on how you could use Parental Controls.



Protect

\$9.95/mo.

- Covers 1 computer & 1 mobile device
- Web security, ransomware protection & bloatware removal
- Mobile anti-theft protection
- 50GB data backup
- Password manager

Protect Plus

\$14.95/mo.

- Covers 4 devices (computer/mobile)
- Web security, ransomware protection & bloatware removal
- Mobile anti-theft protection
- 250GB data backup
- Password manager

TECH HOME[®]
Technology Made Easy

Support

\$21.95/mo.

- Includes Protect Plus for 4 devices (computer/mobile)
- Premium technical support
- 24/7, US-based service
- Setup, diagnostics & troubleshooting
- Wi-Fi support with self-assessment app



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Technical Support:

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3 Simple Ways to Keep Your Smart Devices Secure



“Smart” tech is connecting us to one another, and to our surroundings, now more than ever. Devices that didn’t exist a few years ago are now indispensable, reminding us of important appointments, storing our personal data, and helping us efficiently control our households. Experts estimate that 20 billion smart devices were in use in 2020. That’s 2.5 devices per each person on Earth!

With the comfort and convenience that smart devices bring, there also come security concerns. Since our smart devices are almost always connected via Bluetooth or the internet, they’re particularly vulnerable to cyber-attacks if they aren’t properly protected. So how can you best defend your devices?

Here are three simple ways you can protect the smart devices you own:

1. Protect Your Wi-Fi Network

The most important thing you need to do is make sure your home WiFi network is secured with WPA2 encryption. If you aren’t sure which type of encryption you have, contact your Internet service provider (ISP). Because WPA2 scrambles the encryption and ensures the data isn’t compromised during transfer, it makes it much harder for would-be hackers to decipher the information being sent between your devices or to attack any vulnerabilities. (563-245-1999)

2. Update Your Smart Devices

Just as with your smartphone or computer, you should receive patches or firmware updates from other device manufacturers. These updates may deliver a multitude of revisions to your device such as adding new features, removing outdated features, updating drivers, delivering bug fixes and, most importantly, patching security holes that have been recently discovered. For this reason, it’s very important to keep your devices up to date.

3. Turn Off Your Smart Devices When Not in Use

Even though it may be more convenient for you to have your thermostat constantly connected to the internet, keep in mind that the longer your devices are connected, the more likely they are to become compromised. This applies to Bluetooth-enabled devices as well. Hackers may exploit the technology to access private information and spread malicious software.

The Bottom Line

Smart device sales don’t seem to be slowing down. For example, as many as 43 million Americans already own a smart speaker, and approximately half of us plan to purchase another. As with any new tech trends, there are risks. But as long as you encrypt your WiFi connection, update your devices, and pull the plug when you’re not online, you can rest assured you’re taking smart steps toward keeping your tech safe and secure.