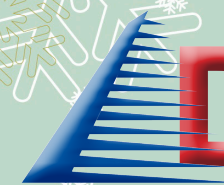




COLORADO
VALLEY

Telephone Cooperative
4915 South US Hwy. 77
PO Box 130
La Grange, Texas 78945

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #1434
AUSTIN TX



Direct Lines

Colorado Valley Telephone Cooperative Member Newsletter

Winter 2015

*One of the greatest joys of the season is the
opportunity to thank our members for their business
and to wish them all the best in 2016.*

*Happy Holidays
from all of us at
Colorado Valley Telephone Cooperative*

2016 Calendars and Desk Planners are here!

*Stop by for a visit and get yours
before they disappear!*

Comments from Kelly

by Kelly Allison, CVTC General Manager

Greetings! It's hard to believe that an entire year has passed since I first introduced myself to you as the new General Manager of Colorado Valley Telephone Cooperative. It's been a year full of adventure and growth. We have accomplished a great deal and have much to be proud of.


One accomplishment that has touched every single customer is the recent conversion to our new billing system. By now, you have received two statements in our new billing format. We hope that this new format is easier for you to read and understand. Along with the billing conversion, there are several new payment options available to make paying your bill faster and easier than ever (see article on page 5).

We have also revamped our entire website to include more local news and events, as well as making the website easier to find what you need from us. A brand new function on our website is the Live Chat feature. The Live Chat function allows you to type a message to us in real time during business hours. We have also installed a weather station here at the Cooperative and linked it to our website so we all can keep up with rainfall amounts. The link is found at www.cvctx.com and is located with the five day forecast.

Our broadband network has been expanded in Ellinger. We now have more capability in La Grange and are working to improve service in Weimar. Most recently, we rolled out GigaNet fiber service to downtown La Grange businesses. We are in the beginning stages of a fiber build in the Round Top/Warrenton area which will soon be available to both businesses and residences there. And, we are increasing the capacity for the Internet connection to Austin and Houston in preparation for future Internet usage growth.

As you can see, we have had a very productive year! We understand that it is your loyalty to the Cooperative that enables us to expand—providing new and improved services to the communities we serve. I look forward to continuing with the progress and expansion of the services we offer.

Have a safe and wonderful New Year,

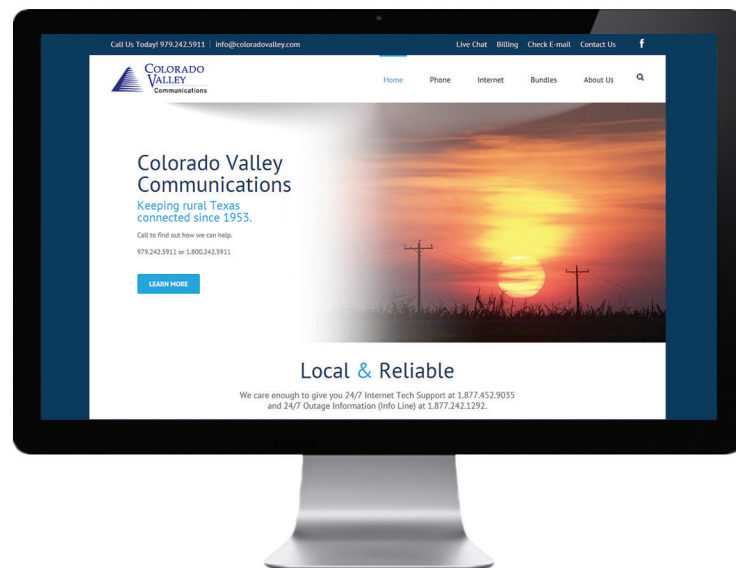


Website Gets Facelift

One of the most common means we utilize to communicate with our customers is our website at www.cvctx.com. If you haven't been there lately, we'd like to encourage you to take a look. The website has recently gone through a major overhaul and now has a brand new look. The home page features beautiful photographs taken by several of our employees. The site is pleasing to the eye as well as being more user friendly.

We've also added a number of new features such as a News and Events section, Live Chat Feature and Five Day Forecast. There's even a link to view road closures due to flooding and to see rainfall totals.

We hope that you will find our site helpful and use it often to find out what's going on in your community as well as at your Cooperative.



New Phone Book Available

The 2015 Colorado Valley Telephone Directory was distributed to all area businesses and residences in November.

Additional directories are available for pick up at our office in La Grange for any customer in need of more directories. Phone books are also available for pick up at the following locations: Columbus Chamber, *Fayetteville Bank (Fayetteville branch), Fayetteville Chamber, *Flatonia Chamber, Hallettsville Chamber, *La Grange Chamber, La Grange Visitor Center, Round Top Chamber, City of Round Top, *Schulenburg Chamber, and *Weimar Chamber.

The businesses marked with the * asterisk will also have a recycling bin for old directories to be placed into. We will maintain the recycling bins at these locations through January 29, 2016; thereafter, the only CVTC provided recycling bin will be located in our lobby.

Local folks who need additional directories are encouraged to pick them up at one of these locations in order to save on the high cost of postage. We will continue to mail directories to anyone out of the area or to home-bound customers.



Payment Options Make Paying Your Bill Quick and Easy

Several new payment options are available which will make paying your bill easier than ever! In addition, effective January 1, 2016, area banks will no longer collect walk-in payments for Colorado Valley Telephone Cooperative; therefore, we want our customers to be aware of all the payment options we offer.

- **Pay by Phone** - Available 24/7 by calling 979-247-9799 or 1-844-886-9799. Payments will be accepted using a credit card, debit card or check.
- **SmartHub** - Online review of your monthly billing statement and payment of your account is available via SmartHub. Please visit www.cvctx.com to set up an account. Paperless billing must be set up through SmartHub. The SmartHub app is also available in Apple's App Store, as well as on Android phones.
- **Pay Now** - Another online option available that does not require setting up an account. You will only need your CVTC account number and last name to access your account to make a payment. This option is available on our website at www.cvctx.com.
- **Business Office** - Payments are accepted at our business office which is open Monday through Friday from 8AM to 5PM. For your convenience, there is a drive-up window. Also, a night deposit box is located at the entrance to our main gate for after-business-hours payments.
- **Mail** - Please use the payment stub and return envelope provided in your monthly statement. Payments should be mailed to: Colorado Valley Telephone Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 130, La Grange, TX 78945
- **Direct Payment** - You may set up your account to automatically deduct from your checking account or charge to your credit card on or around the 10th of each month.

Please contact our office at 979-242-5911 or 800-242-5911 if you have questions or need assistance.

Tech Tips - Ways to Make Your Wi-Fi Faster

If you have a customer-owned Wi-Fi router and are experiencing slow Internet speeds, here are some tips that may help you get the speed you're paying for.

1. Choose the right channel and frequency. Routers have numerous channels and sometimes a simple change of the channel can make a big difference in your speed. Channel 6 is the default channel of most routers. We advise against using this channel as you run the highest risk of being congested. Try channels 1 or 11. If those don't work for you, switch to 2 or 10. Hunt and peck until you find the best channel for you.

Wi-Fi routers also broadcast in different frequencies. Generally, 2.4 GHz is best for larger homes with multiple floors because the signal travels farther and through walls. 5 GHz is great for smaller homes because it offers faster speed at a shorter range.

2. Move your router to its ideal position. Keep your router centrally located and keep it away from thick walls made of brick or concrete, water and windows. A tall shelf in the middle of a room is the best router location. If the router has antennas and the signal needs to go through a wall, position the antennas in straight angles so they go right through the wall. Signals travelling through walls at an angle can reduce Wi-Fi speeds.

3. Make sure your router is secure. Putting a password on your router or limiting which devices can access your network will keep others from using and/or slowing down the network; not to mention, keeping your network secure just makes good sense.

4. Get a new router. Many consumers don't realize how many devices they are actually trying to run on a home network. For example, while there may only be three people in the home, if each person has a computer, cell phone and tablet (or gaming station), an entry level router's capacity will be exceeded. New routers have smart technology that can send signals directly to devices, rather than beaming signals randomly around. These newer routers offer faster speeds, multiple frequencies, and smart home technologies that know which of your connected devices to give priority to.

5. Buy a network extender. Network extenders can boost a signal in those hard-to-reach areas of your home. Should you purchase a new router, you can use the old one as a network extender.

Colorado Valley Communications offers Wi-Fi routers for \$2 per month with most plans. A few of our plans include the Wi-Fi router at no additional cost. Give us a call at 979-247-8885 for more information.

Scholarship Possibilities for Right Individuals

Colorado Valley Telephone Cooperative has put together a new scholarship opportunity which is available to qualifying students planning to pursue a career in the telecommunications industry. This year, we are looking for students obtaining degrees in Telecommunications Technology or Computer Networking & Systems Administration at TSTC, or Computer Information Systems - Networking at Victoria College.

Students receiving this particular scholarship will be awarded up to \$10,000 to help defray their college expenses. Requirements of the scholarship include: maintaining a 2.5 or greater GPA, obtaining a degree in one of the specified fields, making a commitment to work for CVTC for 3 years upon graduation, and being a Texas resident.

Colorado Valley Telephone Cooperative offers competitive wages and benefits. If you know a 2016 high school graduate that meets these qualifications, please have them call our office at 979-242-5911 to receive more information.

Another scholarship program is available to students whose parents are Cooperative members. This program awards a \$2,000 scholarship to approximately 10 high school seniors. The application for this scholarship can be downloaded at www.cvctx.com and will also be available through the high school counselors. Deadline for submission will be April 1, 2016.

Employees Busy with Community Functions

Colorado Valley Telephone Cooperative employees have been keeping very busy (even on nights and weekends) representing the Cooperative in many community events. Participation in the local parades is one of the highlights that employees enjoy volunteering for.

This year, we rode in the Weimar Gedenke Parade on May 9th, Ellinger's May Festival Parade on May 31st and the 4th of July Parade in Round Top. We helped Schulenburg celebrate their festival by riding in their parade on August 2nd, commemorated ZZ Top in the Fayette County Fair Parade on September 5th and paraded in Columbus for the Colorado County Fair on September 26th. Winding down the year we went to Fayetteville for the Licksillet Parade on October 18th. Unfortunately, cold and rainy weather kept us away from the Flatonia Czhilispiel parade this year. The final parade for this season was on December 4th in La Grange to celebrate Schmeckenfest. It's always great fun to see our customers while riding in the parades.

Colorado Valley employees also participated in Career Night in La Grange on Monday, October 12th. Here, high school students and their families had the opportunity to obtain college, military, and job related information to help them in pursuing their future. Representative from CVTC spoke to a number of students who are interested in a career in the telecommunications industry.

Back in May, we participated in the La Grange Middle School Career Day. During this event, each classroom was given a presentation on the many different career options at CVTC. Each class was shown how to write and record a radio ad. One lucky class had their recording included in an ad for the La Grange High School Lady Leps softball team.

These are just a few of the community events in which Colorado Valley employees participated on behalf of the company. Many employees are involved in other activities which help keep our communities strong and vital.



CVTC employees participated in the Round Top 4th of July parade where they met one of several Elvis impersonators. At the Fayette County Fair Parade in September, a couple of ZZ Top look-a-likes joined in on the fun.

Lending a Helping Hand this Holiday

Colorado Valley is collecting food items and monetary donations to benefit the La Grange Area Ministry for Emergency Needs (AMEN). The AMEN Food Pantry has given us the following list of items they need:

Canned Tuna and/or similar processed canned meats, **Cereals** (all kinds), **Powdered Milk**, **Noodles** and **Spaghetti products**, **Canned Juices** in large containers, **Chili** - with or without meat, **Rice**, **Beans** in bag (example Pinto), **Ravioli**, **Soups** of all types - canned or powdered, **Mixed Vegetables** in can, **Juice Box Drinks** for kids, **Oatmeal**, **Tomatoes** in a can.

If you would like to contribute to this organization, we would happily accept your donations and get them to the AMEN Food Pantry.

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