



Connected



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South Dakota PUC Warns Utility Customers to Beware Scams

Utility customers are targeted by utility scams on nearly a daily basis. Scammers use phone, in-person, and online tactics to target customers. In many cases, the caller will pose as utility company personnel and issue false threats .

“Scammers posing as utility company personnel typically threaten service disconnection or a financial penalty hoping to make the target panic and react in haste. That’s why we tell South Dakotans to identify threatening language and an urgent need for action as warning signs,” said PUC Chairman Gary Hanson. “The way a payment is requested can be another red flag. No legitimate utility company will insist on...payment specifically through pre-paid debit cards or other untraceable methods,” he continued.

When it came to scam calls in the past, the most vulnerable groups were older and known to be less tech-savvy. While these groups are still vulnerable, the development of new, more sophisticated scams have changed the risk outlook in recent years. According to the Federal Trade Com-

mission, in 2019, millennials in their 20s and 30s were 25% more likely to report losing money to fraud than those 40 or older.

“The PUC wants to help South Dakotans protect their information, assets and identities. Learning to identify signs of a scam call and react appropriately are the first two steps to ensuring that you and your loved ones don’t fall victim to scammers. If you receive a suspicious phone call, hang up and contact your utility company using the phone number found on your utility bill. The company can verify if the call was legitimate and advise other customers not to fall for the same scheme,” stated Vice Chairman Chris Nelson.

Callers may pose as tech support, claim you’ve overpaid your utility bill, offer to restore service more quickly following an outage or send you text messages you never signed up for...these are all common scams to be aware of.

“Telephone scammers are criminals who want to defraud and trick consumers. Unfortunately, they’re also very difficult to catch. That’s why, when it comes to avoiding scams, knowledge is power. Educating yourself about scam calls happening in your area, identifying resources available to you, and understanding how you should respond to a call if you receive one are great steps to take now,” said Commissioner Kristie Fiegen.

Find more information at www.puc.sd.gov/scamcalls.



PO Box 67, Woonsocket, SD 57385

Office Hours: 8am-5pm Mon-Fri

www.santel.coop

Email: info@santel.coop 796-4411

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Congratulations to John & KaeLynn Culver of Alpena
 The Culver's were the winners of our October Wi-Fi special and they received a \$50 gift certificate to the area restaurant of their choice



Directory Additions

ALPENA

Fetzer, Dennis 849-5895

Krueger, Greg & Sonja 849-3451

LETCHER

Bratland, Cal & Lori 248-4332

WOONSOCKET

Hollingsworth, Seth & Shawna
 796-2323

Linke, Jonathan & Jeanette
 796-4557

TV Rate Increase in 2021

As we explained in the November newsletter, we are currently negotiating with several of the broadcast networks as well as a few of the cable TV programmers. We work hard to negotiate the best deals possible for our member/customers because those rates directly affect the cost of your monthly bill.

The new TV prices will take affect with the January 2021 billing. Prices will not be increasing for telephone or broadband services. TV customers will see a bill message on their December and January bills that explains the exact change for their specific TV package. It's important to note that the Network Rebroadcast Fee is a direct pass-through of the charges related to KELO, KDLT, KSFY and KTTW and that fee makes up the majority of the increase. Because those negotiations are incomplete, it is possible that the fee could be adjusted again in early 2021.



When you can't be together in person this holiday season, gather virtually instead. With our high-speed internet, group video calls will go more smoothly and feel more festive. You'll also enjoy merrier online shopping, gaming, learning, streaming, and more.

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The 2020 PRCA National Finals Rodeo is moving to The Cowboy Channel. Find all 10 days of action on Santel TV Channel 178.

