Trends in Technology

CTC recently attended the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, NV. Internet usage is growing at an astonishing pace, which was very evident from findings at the show -- smart homes, connected TVs, wearables, and the list goes on. Learn more on page 2.

Also in this issue:

FIBER CONSTRUCTION (pg. 7) | MANAGED WI-FI (pg. 5) | TV EVERYWHERE (pg. 8)
Happy spring to everyone! The snow disappeared early this year and CTC hit the ground running – it’s the earliest we’ve ever started our fiber construction!

FIBER OPTIC PROJECT UPDATE
The early snow melt is fantastic for our customers, as we have resumed construction in Freedhem, Leader, and Rural Randall. While not all homes in this area will have service by the end of 2016, all construction will be completed.

It was 2009 when CTC began fiber construction. This hugely successful project was expected to take ten or more years to complete but we are happy to say that all construction to the original ten service areas (Leader, Pillager, Motley, Lincoln, Randall, Freedhem, Sullivan Lake, Nokay Lake, Mission, and Outing) will be finished by the end of 2016, with all members hooked up by year-end 2017.

FIBER EXPANSION In other exciting news, at the end of 2015, CTC was awarded another Border-to-Border Broadband Grant through the Department of Economic Development (DEED). This will allow us to provide fiber Internet in Fort Ripley, just south of Brainerd on 371, towards Little Falls. Construction in this area will be completed by the end of 2016, with service installations sometime after.

ARROWHEAD PARTNERSHIP CTC’s partnership with Arrowhead Electric in Lutsen, MN continues to grow at a staggering pace. There are currently more than 2,000 customers since its inception and that number continues to grow. Not only does CTC provide much needed fiber Internet to the region, we also provide a number of other services including consulting, engineering, provisioning, sales, marketing and more.

CROSSLAKE COMMUNICATIONS Since 2014, CTC has been working with the City of Crosslake to manage the growth and development of Crosslake Communications. Currently we are updating equipment and hope to have this project completed by mid-summer. As you may have heard, the City of Crosslake has put Crosslake Communications up for sale. CTC is interested and will be submitting a bid to purchase Crosslake Communications with the support of our Board of Directors.

CTC AT CES Earlier this year, three CTC employees had an opportunity to visit the ever popular Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, NV. The employees were selected through an application process with the main objective of the trip to come back with a full report on where technology is headed, and how it will affect CTC customers in the future.

CTC collaborated with the Brainerd Dispatch to put out daily updates live from CES, but also used social media and blog posts to share new information. The group saw hundreds of items including automated appliances, 8K TVs, human sized drones, hundreds of items including automated appliances, 8K TVs, human sized drones, and cars that drove themselves, just to name a few.

The overall feeling was that the Internet will rule the technology scene for many years to come with connected homes, telhealth, virtual reality, and more.

CTC provides high-speed Internet to these areas (Leader, Pillager, Motley, Lincoln, Randall, Freedhem, Sullivan Lake, Nokay Lake, Mission, and Outing) as well as the City of Crosslake.

CTC provides fiber Internet in homes and businesses in the following areas:
- Lutsen
- Brainerd
- Crosslake
- Two Harbors
- Brainerd Lakes area
- Pine River area

CTC also provides fiber Internet service in rural areas.

Q&A with S.A.T.
Wireless Routers

Q: What is a Wi-Fi network?
A: A facility allowing computers, smartphones, or other devices to connect to the Internet or communicate with one another wirelessly within a particular area.

Q: What are the most common trouble calls for Wi-Fi?
A: Typically we get calls regarding slow speeds wirelessly, Internet connection dropping, or if people are having trouble getting connected.

Q: Where is the best place in the home to place a Wi-Fi router?
A: The router should generally be placed in a centralized location. The main floor of the house where Wi-Fi will be used the most typically is best.

Q: Are there differences between routers?
A: Yes, many routers offer different features. Some of the main features you will want to look for if you have a high-speed Internet package is a 5 GHz network, and gigabit Ethernet ports. By having those two features, it will allow you to take full advantage of your high-speed Internet. When CTC installs your Internet, they will ensure you have the proper equipment.

Q: How do I access my CTC Wi-Fi?
A: Open the network settings on your wireless device or computer and make sure you know the name of the wireless network. Then, you would enter the Wi-Fi password given at time of install or if you have forgotten your password for CTC wireless give our helpdesk a call, we are happy to help!

Q: Do you use mobile data when connected to Wi-Fi?
A: No, not usually unless your phone has the Wi-Fi assist feature turned on (iPhone), or Smart network switch (Samsung). It will automatically switch to cellular data on a poor or weak Wi-Fi connection.

For more information on how you can obtain wireless routers through CTC - stop in, call, or visit our website today!
Get to Know...

**Jeremy Member Services Technician 1**

Jeremy recently joined the CTC team full-time, in the Member Services Technician (MST) I position. He has been in the communications industry for more than 8 years working with Broadband Solutions, Inc. He was previously employed as a Field Supervisor, overseeing all aspects of the Brainerd operation and working an on-call rotation supervising all areas covered by BSI within Minnesota. During that time, he was fortunate enough to contract with several different companies exposing himself to a multitude of different services provided by each. He’s also currently serving in the Army Reserve with 11 years served as of 11/2015.

Most of Jeremy’s free time is spent outdoors, whether it’s out on the lakes fishing, sitting in the woods hunting, or just hanging around a bonfire. His family keeps him busy during any downtime he may have, while watching his children growing and learning keeps him entertained.

Jeremy’s favorite thing about working at CTC is how he enjoys being able to provide all of the different products and services to so many families. Getting out and about, meeting different people daily is awesome! He feels that every employee at CTC is great and he always feels welcome, no matter what the situation may be.

**Lauren Account Executive**

Lauren’s career at CTC began at the start of 2016. Prior to joining the CTC team, she was employed for over seven years at AT&T Mobility working in Business & Consumer Sales. Before that, she was a Sales and Marketing Intern here at CTC.

Lauren earned her Bachelor’s degree in Marketing from The College of St. Scholastica, she was an Undergraduate at St. Cloud State University, and also holds an Associate of Arts Degree from Central Lakes College.

Lauren is married and has one daughter. In her free time, she loves being with her family and friends, golfing, biking, roller blading, and utilizing the Paul Bunyan Trail to connect herself and her family to different adventures in the Brainerd Lakes area. She’s also very passionate about interior decorating and making her home “holiday ready”!

What she truly loves about working at CTC is that everyone who works here really seems to embody the concept of TEAM and personal growth. She believes the amount of passion and enthusiasm that CTC employees have for this company is contagious and it really reflects in the way that they treat each other and their members.

Condolences

**Kris Nelson (6/22/1952 - 4/20/2016) CTC Retiree**

Kris Nelson proudly and passionately worked for Consolidated Telecommunications Company (CTC) as the Director of Human Resources. After 37-years of dedicated service, she made the decision to retire. She blessed many people with long lasting careers by making hiring decisions for CTC. In her HR position she was a tough interviewer, a policy perfectionist and an intense listener. She made an impact that will last a lifetime at CTC and in the HR profession.

Kris battled and fought cancer with extreme courage, exactly what you would expect from her.

Thank you, Kris, for your leadership, mentorship, professionalism and passion. Rest in eternal peace, friend.

Wellness News

Health and wellness is such an important part of our culture here at CTC, and our Wellness Committee has been busy offering numerous events to promote this. We have multiple speakers in for Lunch and Learns to educate us on topics ranging from exercise and nutrition, to ergonomics and the benefits of essential oils. We also learned how to apply the 7 dimensions of wellness for a more balanced life.

There are abundant community wellness events which CTC sponsors including the Lakes Country Triathlon, Brainerd Jaycees Run for the Lakes, Fit City Glow Run, Baxter PTO Family Fun Color Run, Walk to End Alzheimer’s, and the Warrior Homecoming Run.

Not only do CTC employees like to stay fit, they also like to eat healthy! About one year ago, our committee coordinated the Healthy Vending Initiative as a way to provide affordable, healthy snack options for employees. It utilizes existing refrigerator space in both the Brainerd and Baxter offices. One committee member from each location manages the program and continually adds or removes items based on employee feedback. CTC worked with their community partner, Crow Wing Energized, on this initiative and also received a grant from them to help get it off the ground. So far this program has been a great success and has been able to sustain financially. One of our committee members is also on the Workplace Wellness Committee for Crow Wing Energized so we continually exchange fresh ideas with this community partner.

To obtain an overall wellness approach, CTC provides incentives for employees to have yearly physicals and biometric screenings. We also provide a wrist blood pressure monitor at each office so employees can periodically track their blood pressure readings.

As you can see, we take our health and wellness seriously and are fortunate that we have 100% backing from our Management Team. Not only do they support our ideas, they also are right there beside us participating – eating, exercising and becoming educated.

Managed Wi-Fi Business Solution

A Message from Eryk & Lauren

Managed Wi-Fi is an expandable, wireless networking solution that provides businesses with high-quality Wi-Fi Internet access virtually anywhere across the company.

CTC provides and manages the Wi-Fi network. This ensures that the hardware is providing you Wi-Fi access, coincides with the speed of our network, thus enabling you to take full advantage of the bandwidth you have. If you ever need support, CTC has the ability to offer full resolution from a troubleshooting perspective. Having managed Wi-Fi also saves the legwork of customers having to shop for equipment or deal with old routers -- our equipment is tested, used and managed by people that do this at least 40 hours per week. Plus, having managed Wi-Fi through CTC ensures you have the safest network available.

For more information on Managed Wi-Fi and how it can work with your business, contact Lauren: (218) 454-1237.

Congratulations

Position Change

**Lori**

Channel Partner Executive
Operation Sandwich

During the holiday season, CTC employees donated food items to Operation Sandwich, an organization which provides meals to kids and families when school is not in session. A total of 767 pounds were donated and used to give 250 families in the Brainerd Lakes area a brighter Christmas.

2016 Annual Meeting

Please join CTC for our Annual Meeting and Community Picnic on Wednesday, June 1st, at the Crow Wing County Fairgrounds. Our Annual Meeting will begin at 11:00 am followed immediately by the Community Picnic at noon. Two seats in District 2 (Freedhem, Nokay Lake, Sullivan Lake, Pierz) are up for election, and there will also be changes to the by-laws. Parking and admission to the event will be on the South side of the fairgrounds.

Do Not Call Registry

The National Do Not Call Registry gives you a choice about whether to receive telemarketing calls at home. You can register your home phone number by going online at www.donotcall.gov or by calling (888) 382-1222.

Fiber Information

CTC is still working on construction in some of our service areas. To help understand some of the questions you may have with our fiber optic construction efforts, we have posted these facts:

Our planned sequence of events during the fiber project is as follows:

1. SITE SURVEY - CTC will be calling to schedule a visit to your residence. This visit is anticipated to be 15-30 minutes in duration.
2. BURYING OF FIBER-OPTIC CABLE - The construction of burying cable will happen in two phases: DISTRIBUTION - You will see cable boring equipment in your neighborhood as well as pedestal and cabinet installation activities. DROP - The fiber-optic cable will require a drop from the distribution at the road directly to your home.
3. INSTALLATION OF CABLE AND EQUIPMENT AT YOUR HOME - The fiber-optic cable will be installed to your home and hooked up to a fiber-optic terminal.
4. CUT-OVER OF EXISTING SERVICES - Your existing telephone, Internet, and TV services will be switched over from the current copper lines to the new fiber-optic lines.
5. INSTALLATION OF NEW SERVICES - You will have an opportunity to add digital TV service to multiple TVs, High Definition TV service, home automation devices, and faster Internet.

Phone Directory

Review your info

CTC is beginning to prepare for the upcoming 2016-17 directory. Please review your current directory information and verify all information is correct. Any changes, corrections, or additions are needed by June 15, 2016. Call CTC at (218) 454-1234 or (800) 753-9104 for more information.

If your business is interested in advertising in the CTC Directory Yellow Pages, please contact Ethan Rogers at 218-766-6697.

Call Before You Dig

Important to know

If you plan on doing any digging, you will first need to have the area located:
1. Mark the digging area with white stakes or white spray paint.
2. Notify Gopher State One Call by dialing 811 two business days before digging. After each utility company marks the site, hand dig carefully within two feet on either side of the utility marking.
3. Report any and all damages to the affected utility immediately. All damages including nicks and dents in cables can eventually cause the utility to fail.

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Watch TV Wherever You Go!

Take your TV on the go with TV Everywhere. Now, you can access CTC programming from your PC, laptop, tablet, or mobile phone. TV Everywhere offers over 70 free channels to CTC TV customers who have our Entertainment Lineup, Big Value Tier, or Music Choice Packages.

The Watch TV Everywhere service provides CTC customers access to live and previously-aired programming from the provider’s streaming video websites.

To register for the service, you will need to be subscribed to one or more of the packages listed above, have your account number from your bill available, and the exact spelling of the last name of the account holder.

HERE’S HOW TO SIGN UP:

1. Go to www.WatchTVEverywhere.com
2. Select CTC-Brainerd, MN from the drop down menu as your provider
3. Click on Register
   a. You will need your CTC Account Number and last name from your CTC Statement.
   b. Fill-out the New User Information form and remember your password, your e-mail address will be used as your user name.
4. Click on Create Account
5. An e-mail will be mailed to you
6. Go to your e-mail account and click the link that was emailed to you to verify your account.
7. You are now registered to Watch TV Everywhere!

NOTE:

- You must subscribe to a level of TV services that includes the TV network you want to watch using TV Everywhere.
- Watch TV Everywhere uses a lot of data, you may need to increase your Internet speed or watch your wireless data plan.
- Picture quality will depend upon the speed of your connection.
- If you would like to view channels on a mobile device such as an iPad or iPhone, a separate app may need to be downloaded to view videos.

Alternatively, you may go directly to the provider’s site and register with Watch TV Everywhere directly from the sites Account Login area, selecting New User Registration, selecting CTC - Brainerd, MN as the provider, and completing the registration process.

TV Everywhere may be accessed from computers or mobile devices. You can register for the service on your mobile devices web browser or through the provider app.

Direct link to tutorial video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xmmK6i3-jo