

THE CVT CONNECTION



SIXTY YEARS IN REVIEW

In 2021 Copper Valley Telecom celebrated sixty years of keeping the communities we serve connected through developing technologies and the Alaskan spirit of perseverance.

What started in 1961 as ten incorporators seeking to offer telephone services to their community has grown into a flourishing cooperative that continues to provide essential state-of-the-art communication services (telephone, long distance, internet, wireless & Small Business

IT Solutions) in Valdez, Glennallen, Cordova, and in between.

That same dedication and spirit of perseverance continue to drive us into the future as we work to bring you even greater advancements. So as we launch into our sixty-first year of keeping you connected, this publication will be changing its name from *The Copper Wire* to *The CVT Connection*; because we know that now and always, and especially in Alaska, connections matter.

THE 2021 ANNUAL MEETINGS

The 2021 Annual Meetings of the Members were held live and in person. While the meetings were unable to formally take place due to a lack of quorum, the Board of Directors was able to announce election results, and members were able to ask questions and hear updates about the cooperative, including the busy construction season. Congratulations to Odis "Scott" Brawner Jr., Mike Rego, and Trish Stowe. Thank you for serving our CVTC members as representatives on the Board of Directors.



GIG-CERTIFIED PROVIDER



In September, Copper Valley Telecom announced the new AURORA Wi-Fi service. With AURORA Wi-Fi, customers receive an enhanced approach to leasing your internet equipment, including professional installation for optimal Wi-Fi mapping and equipment placement, the CVT Connect app access, and Wi-Fi management through 24/7 remote assistance and troubleshooting. All of these incredible benefits are only \$8 a month, with the first FOUR months on us!

Technology moves fast, and modems, routers, and gateways are no exception to the rule and, on average, need to be replaced every 3 to 5 years. With AURORA Wi-Fi equipment leasing, Copper Valley Telecom provides you with our top-of-line gateway, the AURORA Tower. This powerful gateway (A device that combines the functions of a modem and a router) is equipped with Wi-Fi 6 technology and provides an average of 3x more coverage. The AURORA Tower uses multi-user, multi-input, and multi-output technologies to allow more data streams to flow simultaneously and up to 4x faster. It also automatically updates its software to ensure that you always have the most up-to-date security for your network. And when the time comes to upgrade your gateway, Copper Valley Telecom has you covered and will replace the unit at no additional cost to you.

CVT recommends switching your gateway as soon as possible as the Smart RG gateways reached their end-of-support on December 31st, 2021. This means that should you have internet troubles, our technicians now need to replace the equipment before we can troubleshoot the service. December 31st, 2022, will mark end-of-life for all Smart RG units, and those gateways will need to be replaced before that date to avoid a loss of service.

Please reach out to our customer service department at 800.235.5414 and sign-up and book your appointment today to start experiencing internet at northern light speed!

RISING STARS IN THE COMMUNITY

Copper Valley Telecom proudly donated more than \$20,000 in scholarships to local graduating high school seniors. The 2021 Scholarships were available to graduating seniors whose parents/guardians are CVT members (or wireless customers in some service areas).

Our scholarship winners are outstanding students meticulously chosen by CVT's Scholarship Committee based on the merits of their applications. We offer our heartfelt thanks to the Committee

for their time and dedication to this program.

Congratulations to CVT's 2021 scholarship recipients; (A)Kelsie Friendshuh, (B) Chase Randall, (C) Josephine Beauchamp, (D) Jessica Hale, (E) Cherubim Palomar, (F) William Matthews, (G) Taylor Dolge, (H) Reese King, (I) Emerson Seifert, (J) Samantha Benda, (K) Kael Gerlach, (L) Ayla Cummings, (M) David Scott, and (N)Hayden Howard. We wish them all the best of luck in all their future endeavors.



WE VOLUNTEER TOGETHER!



Above: Volunteers and Participants at CVT's 24th Annual Hi-Five Triathlon

Copper Valley Telecom sponsors community events throughout the service area every year, and members of our staff volunteer to help these functions succeed. Whether it's processing recycling for Glennallen's R.O.A.R. Program, picking up trash on the side of the highway, or handing out water to participants of CVT's High-Five Triathlon, Copper Valley Telecom's volunteers show up time and again. These events wouldn't be possible without help from our amazing volunteers. So, we'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank every volunteer who has helped during the 2021 year. Thank you so very much for all that you do!

CVT TAKES ON THE TAXES

Here, at Copper Valley Telecom, we care deeply about our customers, and so when you asked for lower prices and simpler bills, we listened. For over a year now, CVT has taken on an estimated **\$1.25 million** worth of annual State and Federal taxes on behalf of our customers. Visit our website at www.cvtc.org/taxes-fees to see the complete list of state and federal taxes that we've absorbed.

THE LIFE-SAVING ABILITIES OF 10-DIGIT DIALING

In the summer of 2020, the FCC announced order 20-100, which requires all carriers to implement 10-digit dialing (meaning you would need to dial the 907 area code plus the 7-digit phone number when making local and in-state calls) by October 2021. Copper Valley Telecom worked to ensure a smooth transition by implementing brief recordings before 7-digit calls during the transition period.

The reason behind this change is to prepare for the 3-digit abbreviation 988, to reach the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline beginning on July 16th, 2022*. In response to a growing number of suicides and mental health crises across the nation, the FCC designated 988 as a 3-digit mental health crisis hotline number. The introduction of the 988 number will allow millions of Americans to seek help from the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline fast as 911 does for rescue emergencies.

The FCC order states that all area codes that currently have 7-digit dialing and have a 988 prefix within that area code transition to 10-digit dialing to prevent problems when callers are trying to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. All Alaskan wireless and landline users will be making this transition due to a 988 prefix in the 907 area code. Visit our website at cvtc.org/10digit to learn more.

**Please note that while the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available anytime at 1-800-273-8255 (TALK), 988 will not be available until after July 16, 2022.*

CVT CONNECTS WITH EBB AND ACP

For over a year, Copper Valley Telecom has proudly been a participating provider for the Emergency Broadband Benefits (EBB) Program launched by the Federal Communications Commission. This temporary program provides financial assistance to families struggling to afford internet during the COVID-19 pandemic. EBB subsidizes up to \$75 a month for household internet services in Alaska. Customers who qualify for both EBB and Lifeline can even combine those programs for added savings.

Since the launch of the EBB program, the FCC has recognized a need for a long-term solution for affordable internet access and developed the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). ACP eligibility requirements are broader than those of the EBB program, allowing subsidies for more people who need it. As with the EBB program, qualifying customers can also utilize the new Affordable Connectivity Program with the Lifeline program to receive additional subsidies.

Prior to the implementation of ACP in March 2022, there will be a 60-day transition period to migrate customers who are currently

HERE'S THE DIRT ON CONSTRUCTION



In the summer of 2016, the FCC adopted the Alaska Plan, which provides funding to drastically improve and expand broadband and wireless services throughout our state. Copper Valley Telecom is proud to be not only meeting but exceeding the goals outlined in this ten-year program.

As part of this project, CVT undertook an unprecedented number of new Fiber to the Home builds this last year. With Fiber-to-the-Home construction throughout the service area, we laid the groundwork to bring fiber internet to over 1300 new households and businesses!

To reach all of those new fiber drops, we laid a monumental 133.3 miles of new fiber lines across the rugged Alaskan wilderness. The enormity of the task isn't just in the distance covered by the project, but the complexity as CVT needed to utilize directional drilling to cross a combined 17,568 feet of streams, rivers, and highways.

The construction that was completed in 2021 will allow for in-home installations this summer, and our staff will contact current customers when installation becomes available in their area.

We aren't ready to slow down anytime soon, though, and this summer, you can expect to see Copper Valley Telecom's outstanding teams of contractors and employees alongside the road system again as we bring fiber internet to even more communities in our area. Give us a call at 800.235.5414 or visit cvtc.org/construction to learn more about this exciting project.

receiving EBB benefits. Once eligible customers begin receiving ACP subsidies, they will need to recertify their eligibility annually.

To learn more about and apply for the EBB and ACP programs, visit www.getemergencybroadband.org, or give us a call at 800.235.5414, and our Customer Service Department will be happy to assist you.

Are you eligible for the Affordable Connectivity Program? The answer is yes if your household has an income at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines or if any member of the household meets one of the requirements below:

- Qualifies for the Lifeline program; or
- Has been approved to receive school lunch benefits under the free and reduced-price lunch program or the school breakfast program; or
- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year; or
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income program (subject to approval by the FCC); or
- Received assistance through the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

UNLIMITED DATA IS HERE!

Starting as low as \$30 a month* there is a new unlimited plan for everyone, and every budget. Call 800.235.5414 to talk to a Customer Service Representative about how switching to Unlimited can save you money and provide peace of mind, today!

*Prices vary depending on line count. See store for details.



🍏 iPad 🍏 iPad Pro 🍏 iPad *mini*

EXPANDING OUR APPLE SELECTION

In 2021 Copper Valley Telecom was thrilled to expand upon our Apple product selection by launching a rollout of iPad, iPad Pro, and iPad mini. With the new A15 Bionic chip iPad mini is just as powerful as it is portable, and iPad Pro now offers a breakthrough Apple-designed M1 chip for a massive leap in performance, support for Thunderbolt and USB 4, and much more. All of these powerful devices are now available, and backed by the incredible coverage of Copper Valley Telecom's LTE network.

WHAT'S UP WITH WIRELESS

Living and working in our beautiful and remote corner of Alaska means that you don't just want the best wireless service; you need it. Over a year ago, Copper Valley Telecom switched to a VoLTE (voice over LTE) network that provides you with a stronger and clearer cellular signal. Since then, we have continued expanding our VoLTE network, and we are happy to announce that eight new cell sites located at Mendeltna, Midway, Paxson, Gulkana Creek, Chitina Airport, Rendezvous, Aurora, and the Valdez Airport were established in 2021!

Even with all these new sites, Copper Valley Telecom has no intentions of slowing down anytime soon, and five more cell sites are planned for 2022! Information on these sites and more will be available soon at cvtc.org/construction.

As new cell sites go up, so must some come down. The sun continues to set on CDMA networks, and CVT plans to fully retire the CDMA network by the end of the first quarter.

Unfortunately, not all cellular devices are VoLTE capable. If you have been notified that you need to upgrade and have not yet done so, please reach out to our customer service department at 800.235.5414 or visit cvtc.org/VoLTE to learn more about upgrading a VoLTE capable device as soon as possible.

We are here to make this transition as simple as possible for you, and we are proud to bring you this more powerful network. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call us. It is our pleasure to serve you as we welcome the rise of VoLTE together.

The CVT Connection Quiz

Enter to Win a \$50 Account Credit

January 2022

Answer all three questions below correctly, tear off, then mail or drop off at the Glennallen or Valdez business office. Return by the 10th of the month to ensure your entry is included in the monthly drawing. Congratulations to the last issue's winners, **Jeff Yarman** (Glennallen) and **Kenneth Watson** (Valdez). **REMEMBER TO FILL IN YOUR NAME!**

1. What is the 3-digit abbreviation, to reach the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline? _____
2. How many miles of new fiber line did CVT lay in 2021? _____
3. Have you made the switch to an Unlimited Data plan? _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____