

# The Communicator

News from your local coop to keep you connected.

July 2017

## Want to lower your telephone bill?

Spring Grove Communications offers both state and federal telephone discounts to those who qualify.

**LIFELINE:** A federal program that provides a discount on your monthly bill.

**TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE PLAN (TAP):** A state program that provides a discount on your monthly landline telephone bill.

To qualify for discounts, telephone service must be in your name and you must participate in one or more qualifying assistance programs or have income at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines.

1. Qualifying assistance programs include:
  - a. Medicaid/Medical Assistance
  - b. Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
  - c. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
  - d. Federal Public Housing Assistance
  - e. Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit Programs
2. Qualifying income at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines: Family of 2 = \$21,924; family of 4 = \$33,210

For an application or more information:

- Contact Spring Grove Communications at 507-498-3456.
- Visit [www.mn.gov/puc](http://www.mn.gov/puc) or [www.lifeline.gov](http://www.lifeline.gov)
- Call the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission at 651-296-0406 or 800-657-3782.
- E-mail [consumer.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:consumer.puc@state.mn.us)

## How Devices Affect Performance

Did you know the average US household has 8 Internet connected devices? This includes computers, tablets, smartphones, gaming systems, and video streaming boxes like Roku and Apple. Each uses a portion of the available Internet capacity in your home.

Think of your Internet connection as a freeway. If you have 5Mbps think of it like a 5 lane freeway. If one person is watching Netflix, they are using at least 3 lanes of your Internet freeway, leaving 2 lanes free for others users, functions or devices. But if you have two devices watching Netflix at the same time, they require 6 lanes of Internet freeway. But you only subscribe to 5. This means that one or more devices will have to switch off "sharing" lanes, causing conflict and congestion and ultimately slowing the Internet speed for everyone on that connection. Keep the number of devices used simultaneously in mind when choosing your Internet speed.

If you are wondering if you need to add more lanes to your Internet freeway, give us a call and we can help you evaluate what speed you need to get the most out of your Internet service.



**We will be closed Tuesday, July 4th**  
**If you need to report an outage**  
**please call 498-3456**



**Your Local Technology Headquarters**  
507-498-3456 • [sgc@springgrove.coop](mailto:sgc@springgrove.coop) • [www.yourlocal.coop](http://www.yourlocal.coop)

# Can You Hear Me?

The “can you hear me” scams are real. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is asking consumers to be on the lookout for scam callers seeking to get you to say the word “YES” during a call. The scammer is recording the conversation and can later use the recorded response to authorize unwanted charges on your credit card account. According to the complaints received by the FCC the fraudulent callers impersonate representatives from organizations that provide a service you may be familiar with such as a mortgage lender.

If you receive this type of call, immediately hang up. If you have already responded to this type of call, review all of your statements such as those from your bank and credit card companies for any unauthorized charges. If you notice charges that you did not authorize, contact your bank or credit card company immediately.

You should always be alert for telephone scams. The following items can help ward off unwanted calls and scams:

- Don't answer calls from unknown numbers – let them go to voicemail.
- If you answer and the caller (often a recording) asks you to hit a button to stop receiving calls, just hang up. Scammers often use these tricks to identify, and then target, live respondents.

- If you receive a scam call, write down the number and file a complaint with the FCC so they can help identify and appropriate action to help consumers targeted by illegal callers.
- Have Telemarketer Call Screening added to your telephone line. Spring Grove Communications offers Telemarketer Call Screening for only \$2.50 per month.
- Register your telephone number with the National Do Not Call Registry at 1-888-382-1222. Registration is free and your number will stay in the registry until you remove it.

Telemarketer Call Screening offered by Spring Grove Communications gives you the ability to add the last caller to your blocked number list and to your allowed number list using a series of codes entered on your phone. Customers also have the option of using the web portal to maintain the blocked and allowed number list. When you use the web portal you will also see the statistics of the number of callers that received the announcement, number of callers that disconnected, number of callers that were blocked and the number of callers that dialed through. These statistics will show you how well the service is working for you.

Adding Telemarketer Call Screening to your line is FREE. The monthly fee is only \$2.50 per month.

**Call today to sign up -  
It's that simple!**

## Helpful Links

**To view your Spring Grove Communications bill online or pay it online.**

Go to [www.yourlocal.coop](http://www.yourlocal.coop) and click on the SmartHub icon.

**Test your Internet speed.**

Go to [www.yourlocal.coop](http://www.yourlocal.coop) and click on Support then click on Test Your Speed.

**Movie listing for Spring Grove Cinema.**

Go to [www.sgmovietheater.com](http://www.sgmovietheater.com)

**To learn about Internet safety tips and advice.**

Go to [www.connectsafely.org](http://www.connectsafely.org)

**Locate utilities on your property before a project**

Go to [www.gopherstateonecall.org](http://www.gopherstateonecall.org) if in Minnesota. In Iowa go to [www.iowaonecall.com](http://www.iowaonecall.com) or call 811 from either state.