

NOVEMBER 2021

## Michigan Issue

6568 Lake Michigan Drive, Allendale, MI

5351 North M-37, Mesick, MI



Inviting you inside to learn more



# Giving Back to our Community

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## Closed for business

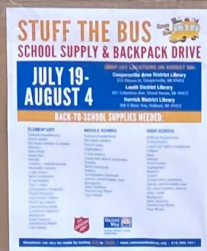
VETERANS DAY | Nov 11

THANKSGIVING | Nov 25, 26

CHRISTMAS | Dec 24

NEW YEAR'S | Dec 31

Allendale office staff pose with donation for the "Stuff the Bus" campaign. Pictured, from left to right: Shari Brookhouse, Amy Hehl and Lisa Phillips.







## Supply Chain Issues Touch AcenTek

The National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA) reported widespread delays in getting communications equipment of all kinds, according to an article published by Cable Tech last summer. Everything from routers to customer premise equipment seems to be impacted by the delays that have only escalated since the pandemic began more than a year and a half ago.

AcenTek is one of many communications companies who are facing delays in getting in materials and experiencing shortages of needed supplies. Broadband providers all over the United States are facing the same challenges and trying to figure out a solution. The purchasing team reports bigger challenges than ever before with getting needed supplies in house, sharing that there are delays on nearly everything they purchase. When asked about what these difficulties mean for our customers, Kendra Eide, Purchasing Coordinator, replied, "We have been planning ahead as much as possible, using alternate sources when available and trying to stay up to speed with any plans the company has made. So far, our customers are not feeling this. We are trying our best to keep it that way. It just becomes more of a challenge with each new day."

Keith Vonderohe, Purchasing Coordinator at AcenTek reports, "What used to take us

days or weeks to get in, now is taking us months or even up to a year to receive. It's also interesting because we never know for sure what is coming on our order. Our suppliers are only able to confirm what they know. If they can't get confirmation from their manufacturer on when more product will be available, they can't tell us."

Projecting future needs and ordering in advance works for some of the needs for the company, however, it isn't feasible for others. "Materials are being ordered now for both the 2022 and 2023 fiber builds. That will help to secure what's needed so deadlines can be met for bringing fiber to the communities we had planned to. But when it comes to other supplies, like technology for our Video customers. Technology is always changing and AcenTek believes in providing the best. Having a large inventory of equipment that could quickly become outdated is a move that we are hesitant to make," Vonderohe explains.

On top of supply issues and delays in deliveries, there is also the compounding news of rising rates. A combination of many factors is likely to blame. First, the shutdown which

slowed or (temporarily) stopped manufacturing. Stopping, then slowing imports at the border also affected the availability of product. The labor shortage is another adverse factor. Manufacturers have had to limit their output due to insufficient resources and delivery services are now limiting the number of packages they handle daily, due to limited staff and equipment needed. All these factors are contributors in the supply challenges.

**Phone books also fell victim to supply issues. Printing was pushed back, citing "paper supply issues" as the reason. This caused our voice customers to receive their phone books about a month later than originally planned.**

Todd Roesler, CEO, gives credit to his team when asked about our customers being relatively unaffected thus far. "We continue to wrestle with the supply challenges, as so many other companies are. However, to this point, our customers' have been largely unaffected. I credit that to our purchasing team. They are working hard, getting creative, and planning ahead. Communication is crucial to help our purchasing team stay on top of things."



## Giving Back



► Pictured, Allendale office staff, from left to right: Shari Brookhouse, Amy Hehl and Lisa Phillips.

In August, staff in our Allendale office used employee donations to help out local charities. Along with a \$600 donation, employees purchased school items to give to the United Way Stuff the Bus Campaign.

The team also donated \$600 to the Outdoor Discovery Center, in memory of Dylan Compagner, son of Corey Compagner (Assistant Operations Manager at AcenTek). The funds were collected by staff and then matched by the company's board of directors. Staff at our Allendale office expressed profound gratitude to the board for matching funds, which allow them to continue to make meaningful donations to these worthy charities.



## Progress on Fiber Projects

Our goal is to provide our customers with unparalleled connections and experiences. That means we must provide the very best. The very best is Internet is served by fiber. Constructing fiber to every customer takes time. This year marked the completion of our fiber project in our Old Mission service area. With this last phase of construction, another 250 customers will enjoy the benefits of services fed by fiber.

As part of our Southern Michigan area, we completed a section of fiber build in the rural Coopersville area, allowing fiber service to another 90 home sites.

As the year winds down, our focus becomes Phase 1 of construction for the Mesick fiber project. Construction will begin as early as the weather permits. Included in Phase 1 is the town of Mesick and areas south and west of the village. We are excited about the progress we continue to make on our goal of bringing fiber to every customer.

## 10-Digit Dialing Begins for 616 Area Code

Earlier this year, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) approved "988" as the new, nationwide, 3-digit phone number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Since "988" numbers are local calls for some of our customers, dialing only seven digits will no longer be an option.

You may have already noticed a change in local calling due to the mandatory 10-digit dialing requirement put in effect on October 24th. Some carriers have already implemented their changes. Work has begun at AcenTek to comply with this FCC requirement, and we will be completely transitioned to 10-digit local calling on November 20th.

After this date, AcenTek voice customers in the 616-area code must dial ten digits when making a local call.

If you are an AcenTek business customer, this change may have a greater impact

on you. If you have phone systems, fax machines or alarm systems, they may need to be re-programmed to accommodate this change in dialing. Customers using call-forwarding or that have speed-dial keys on their equipment will also need to update numbers to include the area code.

This change will impact anyone in the 616, 810, 906 and 989 area codes. However, of those area codes, AcenTek only serves customers in the 616-area code.

The 988 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline will not be available for dialing until July 16, 2022. All providers, including AcenTek, are required to switch our customers over to 10-digit local dialing as a prerequisite to the changes the FCC will make for the 3-digit hotline to work.





## One (Simple) Way to Prevent Being Hacked

*Keeping your accounts safe is becoming harder and harder. It may be hard to know what to do to keep your information safe. Our best suggestion for keeping you safe, is multi-factor authentication.*

### What is multi-factor authentication?

Every time you log in or sign in, you are proving to that device that you are who you say you are. Normally that requires a username and password. These are both rather easy to access. Usernames are often email addresses and because we have a hard time remembering all our passwords, often our passwords are too simple. The simpler they are, the easier they are for someone to guess.

Multi-factor authentication is a way to keep your accounts safe. With this, when you sign into an account for the first time

from a device, you will need more than just your username and password. You will need another factor to prove who you are. An example of that additional factor is a code that gets sent to your smartphone. You will then be asked to enter that on the site. If someone else tries to login to your account, they may know your username and password, but they will not have your phone with the necessary code on it. If that happens, the site then recognizes that the person trying to log in is not you and they are denied access.

If you are concerned about the extra time and effort it will take to login using multi-factor authentication, don't. You will not have to do the second step every time you sign in. The first time you do it from each unique device it will require you to take the second step, but after that, your device will be recognized, and it will not ask you for anything other than your username and password. And the benefits far outweigh the amount of time it takes to plug in your second factor that first time from a new device. Having multi-factor authentication will protect you if your password gets stolen. Passwords are often easy to guess and can get picked up by a hacker when you enter them while on public Wi-Fi. Multi-factor authentication ensures that even if your password is compromised, the hacker will not be able to gain access to your account.



## New Password Requirements

AcenTek will be implementing new password requirements for email customers, to increase security. For any new customers creating an email account with us, you will be asked to follow the following rules:

- ✓ Must be at least 12 characters
- ✓ Must contain at least 1 alpha character
- ✓ Must contain at least 1 upper-case alpha character
- ✓ Must contain at least 1 special character (\* \$ #)
- ✓ Must contain at least 1 numeric character
- ✓ Password cannot contain username

This change goes into effect on December 1st and will only be a requirement for **new** email accounts or any customers who wish to change their password. Existing accounts are grandfathered in with their current passwords, but we do encourage ALL customers to update passwords to follow the new recipe, for increased security of your account(s).





## In Our Community

In August, AcenTek participated in the Back-To-School Fair, organized by the Allendale Chamber of Commerce. The event took place in the park, giving those new to the area a chance to get to meet local businesses/organizations in a fun, school-themed atmosphere. Allendale has seen a lot of growth in the past year so this was an excellent opportunity for AcenTek to introduce ourselves to anyone who wasn't familiar with who we are or the services we provide. The event was successful, with an estimated 1,100 people attending, according to the chamber. Forty-seven businesses/organizations participated in the fair.

Hilda Wittingen and Joel Roelofs represented AcenTek at our booth. An AcenTek drawstring sports sack was handed out to those visiting the booth, along with information about our products and services. We added some excitement to the booth by asking The Balloon Guy to join our booth to provide balloon creations for the children as they passed by. AcenTek has participated in this event every time it has been held since 2016.



In early May, AcenTek participated in the Mushroom Fest parade in Mesick. This parade was a welcome opportunity for us to get out in our communities. Special thanks to our staff, Daniel Cochrane, Jacob Wiggins and Denise Cooley (pictured above), for representing AcenTek in the parade. Also pictured is Brooke Milutin, Denise's granddaughter.

## Lifeline

Lifeline, a program that helps low-income customers pay for internet and telephone service, is available through AcenTek.\* Residents in any state may qualify. The customer must participate in one of the following programs in order to qualify: Federal Public Housing Assistance, Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, Veterans Pension Survivors Benefit or their income must be below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

To apply for Lifeline, visit [www.checklifeline.org](http://www.checklifeline.org). You can also learn more about the Lifeline program by visiting [www.AcenTek.net](http://www.AcenTek.net) and clicking on Internet or Voice. Both web pages have a link for Low Income Assistance. Click the link to read all the information about this program. If you have further questions about Lifeline, please feel free to give our team at AcenTek a call.

\*The Lifeline program may not be available in all areas served by AcenTek.





**HONOR A PET  
WHO IS NO LONGER  
WITH YOU, WHO YOU  
MISS DEARLY.**



**700 seats  
in heaven.  
Your seat is the  
last 3 digits of  
your phone  
number. What  
seat do you get?**

**Date yourself  
by naming one  
concert you  
have attended.**

**Repost and a  
miracle will come your  
way today.**



360K 4.9M Comment 67.1K Shares



**I think you're in this video?  
<https://urlwee.com/hbwbor>**

## Sharing ≠ Caring on Social Media

Scrolling through Facebook, you come across one of those posts that get your attention. It's a fun quiz that invites you to share something about yourself. "Honor a pet who is no longer with you by commenting their name below." Without giving it a second thought, you type in your pet's name.

Did you know that the most common passwords include your name, birth date, hometown, or a pet's name? Do you see the connection? It is easy to be fooled into giving out personal information and it is easier than ever for those with malicious intent to gain that information. Portals like Facebook are helping criminals to get this information more than ever before.

Social media platforms can cause us to let our guard down, thinking we are sharing information only with our friends who would never use it against us. Be aware that these quizzes or cleverly worded posts which cause you to engage by sharing personal details of your personal life are, often, meant to harm.

Social engineering is the act of manipulating people, so they give up confidential information. These social media quizzes or question posts make you a target. Each comes with inherent risk. These bits of information are often the answers to account validation questions. For example, if you have an online account, in addition to entering your password, you could be asked a question so the site to verify it is really you. Many times, these questions ask the name of a favorite pet, a high school mascot or street name. By sharing this information on social media, you are making it easier for someone to gain access to your online accounts.

So how do you protect yourself? It is best not to disclose personal information online. Keep phone numbers, addresses, pet's names, and birthdays to yourself. Be careful what you post and know who to trust. Just because you are on Facebook with many of your friends, not everything you see in your feed is trustworthy.

You should also be hesitant to engage with another type of post. These do not ask you to share personal information that may be used to guess passwords. Rather, they are targeting by gaining access to you via Messenger. Do you ever see posts encouraging you to participate by sharing the post? "Share this post and a miracle will happen to you today." You quickly share the post, thinking "What do I have to lose?" The person who originally posted that now has gained access to you via Messenger since you have connected through Facebook.

Messenger is a tool that hackers have used, sending out an enticing invite for you to click a link. The message appears to have come from a friend and so you think it is legit. Many times, the message implies you are part of a video or something similar. This might tempt you to click the link to see. But be careful what you click. These short messages that give very little context and include a link often are malicious.

Clickbait quizzes are an easy way for scammers to gain user data, since most passwords include a pet's name or a street name, paired with a set of numbers like your birth date. These can be socially engineered attacks, targeted to get your personal information to use to hack into your accounts.



# Mission (Statement) Complete

Earlier this year AcenTek created a new vision and mission statement. The reason why companies like us create vision and mission statements is to improve productivity and efficiency. We also did it to help provide focus on our goal. Todd Roesler, CEO explains, "The year 2020 gave us a great opportunity to take a closer look at our business and rediscover our why, to redefine our purpose. Having a vision statement will greatly benefit not only the company, but the individual employees. They will have a clearer understanding of why we are here."

A vision statement is created to define what a company aspires to do. Our vision is to create unparalleled connections and experiences. What does that mean? Simply stated, it means we strive to provide a product and experience that is better than any other provider can give.



Our goal is not just simply providing fiber to our customers. And our goal is not merely to gain new customers. We want to provide our customers with services and experiences they cannot get elsewhere. From the first phone call to the tech installing services, to the care we give the community, every experience matters. This is how we plan to stand apart.

After our vision statement was developed, our mission statement came next. Roesler explains the difference between the two, "While our vision statement describes our long-term goal, the mission statement is like a road map of how we plan to achieve our vision."

By summarizing how we plan to provide the best experience, our mission statement (or road map) began to be clear. First, we considered who we are here for: our customers, our employees, and our communities. Then we asked, how do we plan to serve them? We want to enhance our customers' lives by offering the best service around, we want to empower our employees by providing a workplace that encourages growth and celebrates achievement, and we want to support our communities. We also thought about what makes us different or sets us apart. We provide world-class networks and service, even to those small, rural communities that the big providers overlook. We feel honored to be their first choice when considering a provider.

Those answers made our path clear. Our mission is to be the first-choice provider by enhancing our customers' lives with world-class networks and services, empowering our employees, and enriching our communities, large and small.

So what does this mean for you, our customer? And future customers?

## OUR MISSION

To be the first-choice provider by

**ENHANCING**  
our customers' lives with world-class services

**EMPOWERING**  
our employees

**ENRICHING**  
our communities, large and small.

This statement will serve as our guide in day-to-day decisions made in every department at AcenTek. With the continual reminder of our goal, we will work harder to be even more motivated to improve your life through technology. The new mission statement is a reminder of our commitment to community. We want to support area efforts, show we care by bringing the best technology to small, rural communities and to encourage our employees to give back to these special places we call home. We want our customers to know (and feel) the commitment we have to them and their community.





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#### VISIT US

AcenTek.net



#### CALL US

888.404.4940



### Spread the Word!

If you know a high school Senior planning to continue their education after graduation, tell them about the AcenTek scholarship. Deadline for application is March 1, 2022.

Visit [AcenTek.net/Scholarship](https://AcenTek.net/Scholarship) to learn more.

## WELCOME ABOARD!



#### DANIELLE OTTENBACHER

In September, Danielle joined our team in Mesick, as a Customer Service Representative. Danielle attended Western Michigan University and, prior to joining AcenTek, worked at Crystal Mountain. She and her husband, Nate, live in Brethren, MI, with their 1-year-old, Baker. Danielle enjoys softball, hiking and baking and is a member of the Spirit of the Woods Conservation Club. Welcome to the team, Danielle!



Refer a friend to AcenTek and you both earn a \$50 credit on your account when they become our customer.

## REFER-A-FRIEND PROGRAM

Visit [WWW.ACEN TEK.NET](https://WWW.ACEN TEK.NET) to learn more