

# INSIDE AcenTek

*Inviting you inside to learn more*

JUNE 2021



Our goal is to provide you with unparalleled connections and experiences. Whether we are in the office or working from home, our goal has not changed.

## Still Working For You

### Michigan Issue

6568 Lake Michigan Drive, Allendale, MI

5351 North M-37, Mesick, MI



## Serving You, No Matter Where We Are

We love to interact with our customers in person. And hopefully, we'll be able to do that again soon. But as far as what you need our help with, it makes absolutely no difference if our lobby is open or not. We can still serve all your needs.

Our lobby has been closed for over a year. This decision is reviewed regularly to continually ask ourselves two questions: Are we doing all we can to keep our community and our staff safe? And are we able to serve all of our customers' needs? Last March we knew the right decision was to close the lobby for the safety of everyone. Plans were developed to make sure we could still serve you. We made sure that you could do everything you used to do in our lobby, right from the comfort of your home. And as time passed, we saw proof that you can save yourself the trip and still receive everything you need from AcenTek.

While our lobby being closed and most office staff working from home is uncommon, our company continues to operate largely under normal procedures. Technicians work diligently to make sure that our customers are served. Our engineering and construction teams also continue their work in the field, ensuring that projects continue as planned. For these team members, working from home was never an option. Their work could only be accomplished on site.

The work that takes place in our lobby, however, is slightly different. All services we offer in our lobby can be accomplished without the face-to-face encounter. Because of this, the decision was made that our lobby remain closed for now.

Please follow AcenTek on our social media pages (Facebook and Twitter) to stay up to date with any changes to our plan. While we look forward to seeing you again, please remember that no matter where we are working from, we can still provide for all your communication needs.

Save the trip!  
We can serve you,  
no matter where  
we are working from.

### **MAKE PAYMENT**

Want to make a payment? Use our drop box (located outside our office), pay by mail, by phone or make a payment online.

### **NEED A NEW REMOTE**

Just let us know and we will get that sent to you.

### **ADD SOMEONE TO ACCOUNT**

Want to add an authorized user to your account? Give us a call and we will send you the form you need to make this happen.

### **TROUBLE WITH SERVICES**

We will make sure you are put directly in touch with our Support team. They are the experts at trouble shooting and they are anxious to resolve any issue you are having.

### **OTHER QUESTIONS**

Other needs? We can help! Simply give us a call at 888.404.4940. We look forward to continuing to serve you.



## 10-Digit Local Dialing Required

Voice customers with a 616 area code will soon be experiencing a change when dialing local numbers. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) recently 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.

For now, you are allowed to dial locally using either seven or ten digits. However, starting on October 24th, AcenTek, along with every other carrier serving the 616 area, will require 10-digit dialing for local calls. After that date, dialing a number with the “988” prefix would conflict with the new 988 hotline.

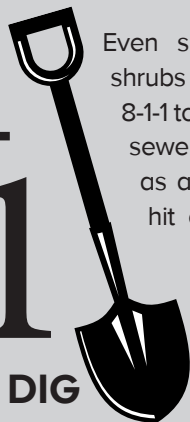
We encourage AcenTek Voice customers to begin using 10-digit dialing immediately. This will allow you time to get used to this change before the deadline in October. After the deadline, 7-digit calls may not be completed as dialed.

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.

CALL  
811  
BEFORE YOU DIG



Even small digging projects, like planting trees, shrubs or installing a new mailbox, require you to call 8-1-1 to get utilities (gas, electric, phone, cable, water, sewer) marked. Some utilities are located as little as a few inches below ground. You could easily hit one while doing even the smallest project.

**These repairs are at the customer's expense.**

Calling in advance helps you dig safely and avoid the costs of repairing underground facilities.



## Congratulations to this year's scholarship winners!

### MICHIGAN:

- **Lindsey O'Donnell**, Homeschool Partnership with Sacred Heart Academy, Allendale
- **Sophie Vermilya**, Buckley High School

### IOWA:

- **Denzel Decker**, Waukon High School
- **Hannah Franzen**, South Winneshiek High School
- **Brynn Gamm**, North Fayette Valley High School
- **Ali Hoffert**, Turkey Valley High School

### MINNESOTA:

- **Anthony Alioto**, La Crescent High School
- **Lola Baudek**, La Crescent High School
- **Mason Bills**, La Crescent High School
- **Madeline Danielson**, La Crescent High School
- **Emma Forsyth**, Houston High School
- **Jake Gathje**, Lanesboro High School
- **Lyza Hoscheit**, Caledonia High School
- **Ashley Laschenski**, Houston High School
- **Aaron Lynch**, Houston High School
- **Emma Schuster**, Rushford-Peterson High School
- **Emma Siegersma**, La Crescent High School
- **Benjamin Snyder**, Lanesboro High School
- **Paige Twite**, Houston High School
- **Lauren Wyffels**, Mabel-Canton High School



## AcenTek Scholarship

In 2000, AcenTek established a college scholarship fund with the purpose of awarding \$1,000 scholarships to 20 high school seniors in our serving areas who plan to continue their education. Eligible participants are graduating seniors who have been accepted to a college or university and have AcenTek phone or broadband service in Minnesota, Iowa or Michigan. Over the past 20 years AcenTek has awarded \$385,000 to deserving young adults.

## Financial Help for Those Struggling with Internet Needs

Low-income families can now receive financial assistance to get the internet services and devices they need but are unable to afford. This program is made possible due to congress recently appropriating \$3.2 billion to the Federal Communications Commission to help low-income households afford the broadband services and internet devices they and their family needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) will allow qualifying low-income households to receive up to \$50 per month discount on one internet service. They are also eligible for a one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, desktop computer or tablet, if purchased through a participating provider (customer co-pay of more than \$10 or less than \$50 required).

To learn if you qualify for this program visit [GetEmergencyBroadband.org](https://www.getemergencybroadband.org) and click on the *Do I Qualify* link at the top of the page. All the details about this program can be found on the site listed above. This is a temporary program. The EBB program will end when funds are exhausted or 6 months after the Department of Health and Human Services declares an end of the Covid-19 health emergency, whichever is sooner.

AcenTek is a provider offering the monthly service discount. Since we do not sell devices, the one-time discount on a device is not available through AcenTek. To learn more about applying for this assistance, visit [www.AcenTek.net/Internet-EBB](https://www.AcenTek.net/Internet-EBB). If you have questions about this program, please give us a call at 888.404.4940.





## AcenTek Helps Area Food Banks

Giving back is part of our culture at AcenTek. Recently, staff at both our Allendale and Mesick offices made donations to area food banks, recognizing a growing need in the community and wanting to help.

Our Allendale office made donations of \$600 to Love INC and Coopersville Cares for their food banks. Love INC and Coopersville Cares are both charity agencies that help people and families having many different needs. They provide financial assistance (everything from finding a job to help with how to handle money), clothing, food, furniture, and so much more.

In addition, AcenTek's Allendale office made a donation of \$60 to a local charity called the Porch Pantry. The Porch Pantry was started by an Allendale woman in December of 2017, who simply felt the desire to help. She wanted to provide food items to those in need, who perhaps were not able to get to the food shelves during their hours of service. So, she turned her porch into a shop for anyone to get access to needed food items at any time. The cupboard, which stands on her porch, was overflowing with food and so recently, a bigger cupboard was installed to house all the donations. She welcomes anyone in need to visit her porch, stating she just wants to "offer a little help."

Our Mesick office also wanted to help those in need. Donations were made to two area food banks, plus a backpack program. Buckley Gospel Tabernacle (food pantry), the Mesick Community Food Pantry and the First Baptist Church Backpack Program each received donations of \$600.

These donations are made possible by AcenTek and the staff. Office employees pay to dress casual and then those funds are matched by the company to be donated to local non-profit organizations in the communities we serve. The staff decides where to give those dollars to. Giving back to the communities we live in and work is our way of showing how much we care.

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

Visit  
**WWW.ACEN TEK.NET**  
to learn more

**REFER-A-FRIEND PROGRAM**



## Why Choose Our Managed Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is an essential tool for the modern home. It is a tool for emergencies, and a way to link all the software in your home to the internet. Thermostats, light bulbs, surveillance, electronics, the list goes on. A wireless network allows multiple devices to connect to the same network, through a router, in a fraction of seconds. Wi-Fi allows smartphone online access with no need to use cellular data. Did you know that connecting your smartphone to Wi-Fi drains less battery life than connecting to your mobile network? It's true. The connection typically happens faster so things like downloads take far less time (thus battery life) to accomplish.

With all the benefits of Wi-Fi, it seems every home has it. People rarely even think about their Wi-Fi service, unless it is not working. That is the exact moment when our customers are grateful to have AcenTek Managed Wi-Fi.

Unlike our customers, some people choose to purchase their own router. But not all routers are the same. A router that meets the highest wireless standards can cost up to \$400. Cheaper ones are available and often people buy them to save money. But, in the end, they get what they pay for. They are unable to enjoy their full bandwidth because their router isn't up to date.

When you subscribe to AcenTek's Managed Wi-Fi, we will supply the router. You will have a router that meets the highest wireless standards, plus, we include support for the service. If there are ever any issues with your Wi-Fi service, we'll take care of it for you.

With AcenTek's Managed Wi-Fi, we can quickly diagnose and find the solution. If you have purchased your own router, we are limited in what we can do to assist you.

Save the expense of your own router and pay less than \$5 per month. Not only will you save money, but you will save the headache of trying to fix issues you have if the service isn't working. We want to address the Wi-Fi needs of your family. We have options for expanding your Wi-Fi coverage, beyond your main living area, by adding access points in different areas of your home. If you are interested in AcenTek's Managed Wi-Fi, give our office a call today.

## Common Password Mistakes:

### ❌ "I make my passwords short and memorable."

Using your pet's name or your birth date is a mistake. If it's obvious, it's weak. Birth dates, kids names, your name... these are all commonly used ingredients and hackers know it. Avoid using these in your password.

### ❌ "Since I have so many to remember, I reuse the same password."

Vital error. Not all websites have the same security precautions in place. For example, if an account you use for entertainment has the same password as your bank account, attackers may breach the entertainment account and simply reuse the password to gain access to your bank.

### ❌ "I include numbers in my password by replacing the letter 'o' for the number zero."

While you should include numbers and symbols in your password, changing the letter "o" to zero and the "e" are common substitutions. Attackers use automated tools to check thousands of passwords per minute. Common substitutions are first on their list and do not provide any additional security.

# PASSWORD

\*\*\*\*\*

## Avoid Getting Hacked

You are a target. No matter how safe you think you are, someone out there is trying to steal your personal information. Attacks are often automated and happen often without you knowing. Passwords are sometimes the only thing stopping hackers from accessing your data. Since passwords are needed for nearly everything online, relying on a weak password is extremely dangerous. Consider all of the services you use online and the sensitive data contained in these accounts. From credit card and banking information to health and medical information to family photos, you have valuable data worth protecting! You do not want this information to fall into the hands of someone with bad intentions. Even if money is not stolen from you directly, thieves will sell your accounts or information on the dark web to turn a profit or use your computer or email account to launch other attacks. A strong password is an excellent defense against hackers. But what makes up a strong password?

### A strong password should...

- ▶ **HAVE AT LEAST 12 CHARACTERS.** The length of the password is more important than its complexity.
- ▶ **CONTAIN SEVERAL WORDS OR A SHORT PHRASE.** Using your middle name and birth date is too obvious. Instead, string together words that make your password longer, more complex and less likely to be guessed. *Example: StarboardEstablishHazelnut*
- ▶ **INCLUDE SYMBOLS AND NUMBERS.** These elements will make it more difficult for a hacker to guess your password. Be careful not to simply replace the letter “o” with the number zero. These are obvious replacements and can be easily guessed. *Example: Starboard8#Establish\$Hazelnut3*
- ▶ **INCLUDE UPPER AND LOWERCASE.** Using both will increase the strength of your password.
- ▶ **AVOID OBVIOUS INFORMATION.** Stay away from using your birthday, kids or pets’ names, or your last name in your password. This info can easily be gathered from public records or social media and used to guess passwords.
- ▶ **USE UNCOMMON OR NONSENSE WORDS.** Common words and phrases are susceptible to dictionary attacks. Use uncommon words or nonsense words to increase the difficult of a password. *Example: We\_uz@Fiber\_iNET4Work.*

## Can't Remember Them All? Use a Password Manager

**What is a password manager?** Basically, it's a safe place for all your passwords. This is a tool that remembers all your passwords for you, by locking them in an encrypted vault. You only need to remember one password to unlock the vault and gain access to all of your passwords.

**Are they safe?** Yes! Password managers use advanced encryption and many other security features to ensure your passwords can only be accessed by you. As long as your master password is secure, your passwords are safe!

**Why do I need one?** So you don't have to remember all your passwords! Simply remember one master password and you can get at any password you need, from any device, anytime. It's easier to remember one really good password than hundreds.

**How do I get a password manager?** Password managers are available online at low or no cost. There are many to choose from. LastPass, BitWarden, 1Password, and Dashlane are all cloud-based password managers with apps for all mobile devices, desktops, and browsers.



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**ACENTEK OFFICES CLOSED:**

JULY 5: Independence Day  
SEPT 6: Labor Day

**COVER:**

Most of the AcenTek office staff are working from home while our technicians and construction crew have never stopped working in the field. Regardless of where they are working from, our entire staff is still working for you. That will not change.

**FEATURED EMPLOYEES**

*Top, from left to right*

- Tina Swanson, Customer Service Supervisor [Mesick]
- Jerry VanderMeulen & Ron Aten, Combination Technicians [Allendale]

*Bottom, from left to right*

- Joel Roelofs, Facilities Engineer, [Allendale]
- MaryJo Knill, Customer Support Supervisor [Allendale]

## Congrats on your retirement!



### TRENT THOMAS

Trent Thomas, Facilities Engineering in our Mesick office, retired in April after 28 years of service. Trent began as a seasonal hire in '87 and was hired as a full time Combination Technician in '93. In 2005, he switched to engineering. His attention to detail and strong work ethic made him a value to our team. Congratulations on your retirement and thank you for all you have done for our company.

## Welcome to the team!



### JAMES PECK • GABRIEL TERRY

In March, our team welcomed two new members to the Network Ops department in our Allendale office. Both James and Gabriel fill the role of Network Operations Specialists. As our need grows, we are excited to add more talent to our team. Welcome to the team, James and Gabriel!



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