



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



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.

CAPITAL CREDITS

Question about capital credits? We are happy to help! Give us a call and our capital credits specialist will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

OTHER QUESTIONS

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



A Wireless Masterpiece: Rushford-Peterson Schools

Back on August 19, 2017 the Rushford-Peterson community opened the doors to their brand new school. This building had been imagined and dreamed about for years prior. Everyone involved had the same goal: the new building needed to be a 21st century learning facility, complete with broadband access throughout. The district wanted to institute a 1:1 program, meaning each student would have their own device for learning. With that kind of demand, the school would need reliable internet that could handle the capacity of students and staff working concurrently online. The school had been a long-time customer of ours and so the conversation began about how AcenTek could address their needs.



We worked with Corey Mattson, Technology Director for Rushford-Peterson Schools, helping develop a plan that addressed the connectivity needs of the school. We did many site visits to the old building, to understand and develop the best wireless network option for the new facility. We worked with Corey designing, implementing and installing the wireless network to ensure it met all the demands that the new building had to satisfy.

When the pandemic hit, Rushford-Peterson Schools were already prepared. The infrastructure was in place so they did not face the same challenges as neighboring communities with their internet needs. They did face challenges outside of their building, however, that impacted them. Some families in the school district did not have internet in their home. AcenTek ran an education discount to families in this situation, offering free broadband and Wi-Fi (March through June), with no installation fee. Dean Kerrigan and Jamie Meldahl (Business Services Consultants at AcenTek) worked with Corey and the school's social worker to educate families in need about the offer. Soon many of them were no longer without the learning tool their family needed. The families, as well as Rushford-Peterson Schools, were very grateful for the help during such a challenging time.

The Rushford-Peterson athletic complex was also designed with Wi-Fi capabilities. We plowed fiber to the press box and put in three access points in the building. This allowed Rushford-Peterson Schools to livestream events from the baseball and football fields. Over the past year, this has been especially essential as many members of the community could not (or preferred not to) attend the events in person. This was a way for the school to allow and encourage the community to still be part of sporting events. The technology that Rushford-Peterson Schools built into their plan when construction was underway years ago allowed for this livestreaming to be possible.

Rushford-Peterson Schools has trusted AcenTek as their service provider for over 30 years. When Corey was asked about the experience working with us to upgrade the technology available at the school, he said, "Our reps have been with us every step of the way. I know, by name, many of the AcenTek employees I have worked with throughout all of this. The biggest difference they have made for Rushford-Peterson Schools is that our network has been rock solid. And if I need anything, I have a company just 11 miles away, always willing to help me out."

Thank you, Rushford-Peterson Schools, for trusting AcenTek to be your provider. We are excited we were able to help you accomplish all you did, both inside and outside your building. We look forward to helping you with all your technology needs in the years to come.



Fire Departments Awarded Donations:

MINNESOTA

- Caledonia
- Canton
- Dakota
- Eitzen
- Hokah
- Houston
- La Crescent
- Lanesboro
- Nodine
- Ridgeway
- Rushford

IOWA

- Clermont
- Fort Atkinson
- Harpers Ferry
- Ossian
- New Albin
- Waterville

Finding A Way When There Was Nothing Left to Give

Giving back is part of the culture in our office, and not just at a company level. Many times, our staff donates personally to support a cause they believe in. It is so rewarding to give back to the communities we serve, and last December, we did it again. Seventeen area fire departments received donations from AcenTek. But this donation was different.

Working from home meant we were not collecting donations to dress casually at work. The transition from working in the office to remote work had everyone focused on the immediate needs of their role and adjusting to working from home. No one really thought about the ripple effect that not collecting donations would cause. Upon realizing the funds were depleted, it was obvious that donations to the area fire departments would not be happening in 2020. What terrible timing.

We would not be donating in a year when town festivals and other fundraising efforts had been canceled. Without these fundraisers, fire departments were left concerned about their own financial future. We knew that, yet there was nothing in our fund to give.

Knowing how important donations are to the fire departments, our staff was reluctant to let this be the end of the story. There had to be a way. Staff approached the board of directors to explain the dilemma and to ask for their help. Due to the generosity of our board, all 17 fire departments, in the communities we serve, received a \$600 donation. The board had always matched the Casual Day funds to help us give a larger donation, but this time, instead of just matching, they generously contributed the entire \$600 for each department.

The Minnesota fire departments who received donations from AcenTek include Caledonia, Eitzen, Canton, Hokah, Houston, Rushford, Lanesboro, La Crescent, Dakota, Nodine, and Ridgeway. In Iowa, the Clermont, Ossian, Fort Atkinson, Harpers Ferry, Waterville and New Albin fire departments were awarded donations. We were unable to meet with each department to personally give them our donation and so phone calls were made instead. We enjoy speaking with the volunteers at each fire department to express our gratitude for their admirable service. Each fireman we spoke to expressed thanks and shared their thoughts on how the funds might be used. Purchasing items such as a special washing machine to wash the gear, personal protective equipment, air packs, hoses, updated gear, more/better equipment to address land fires and even a new truck were on their list of needs.

At the start of 2021, with much of the staff still working from home, concerns resurfaced about the Casual Day Fund and the ability to donate going forward. The decision was made to continue the voluntary collection for dressing down, even though many employees were not even reporting to the office. Area non-profits that we give to (fire departments, local EMS and libraries) are some of the most important parts of our community and we feel strongly about supporting them. We are proud to have a plan to help them with donations, regardless of where our staff is working from.



Congratulations to this year's scholarship winners!

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

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

MICHIGAN:

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



Awarded Best Place To Work

We are excited to share that AcenTek was recently recognized as one of the “Best Places to Work” in Southeast Minnesota. Each company in the area was asked to complete an extensive survey that allowed their employment practices to be analyzed. AcenTek was one of 5 mid-size employers chosen to receive the award. Criteria for the award included such factors as turnover, rate of growth, promotion rates, percentage of employees injured, benefits offered, and paid days off, just to name a few.

The “Best Places to Work” awards program was a commissioned study by Workforce Development, Inc. The purpose of the program is to recognize some of the best employers in the area. A secondary purpose is to provide information back to employers about the practices they use to attract and retain employees. Every participating company received a detailed report back, along with the complete results of the survey.

Workforce Development recognized fifteen companies, in Southeast Minnesota, from nine different counties. Businesses were divided into three categories: Small, mid-size and large. AcenTek was named one of five best places to work in the mid-size category. We are truly grateful to have received this award and consider this recognition a huge honor.

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. If you have questions about this program, please give us a call at 888.404.4940.



Update on Fiber Projects

Building out our fiber network continues to be a priority at AcenTek. Last year we made progress on two fiber build projects, one in Iowa and one in Minnesota. And the momentum from the Waterville and rural Houston fiber projects continues into 2021.

Last September, work began on the Waterville fiber project. Phase 1, which included customers within the city limits and roughly 2 miles surrounding the city, was completed earlier this year. Customers in the city of Waterville are now enjoying the benefits of a fiber connection. Phase 2 is scheduled to begin in late August or early September. This phase includes the southern part of rural Waterville. Splicing is expected to be complete by the end of the year, meaning customers could have services converted to fiber as early as January of 2022.

In Houston, construction recently began on the final phase of our fiber project. This phase will complete the goal of bringing fiber to all customers in the Houston exchange. The estimated timeline to have construction complete is Labor Day. Customers in this last phase of this build, could begin having their services converted to fiber as early as October, as splicing is completed at their home. All splicing is estimated to be finished by mid-December.

With the challenges of the last year, we are thrilled that we have been able to continue work on the fiber projects, as scheduled. We are very excited that our customers in Waterville and Houston will be able to enjoy the benefits that fiber has to offer. Planning ahead with the fiber projects has seemed to help us avoid any supply issues with materials needed. This was a key contributor to helping us stay on task with these important projects.





71st Annual Meeting, in Review

On April 20th, AcenTek held the 71st Annual Meeting of the Members online. This is the second time we held our annual meeting virtually, for safety reasons. While the climate that encouraged the decision was not what anyone wanted, it is promising to see the positives that came from this alternate venue.

The first positive coming from this change of venue is participation. Our meeting attendance more than doubled, with an impressive 431 people tuning in. Our in-person meetings, held in recent years at the Houston High School, had brought in an average crowd of just over 200 people. With no need to travel, we suspect that the online format encouraged attendance for some customers who live a distance from Houston. The day and time also may be a contributing factors. Our in-person meetings had always taken place on a Saturday, a popular day for outdoor tasks, children's events or family functions. Choosing a weeknight and minimizing the time commitment needed to attend may have helped encourage attendance. Thank you to all our loyal members who attended this year's meeting.

A substantial increase in number of votes is also a positive that resulted from having a virtual meeting. In recent years, we averaged 191 votes cast per election for the board of directors. This year we had 1,423 valid ballots submitted. Perhaps this increase is because of the convenience of being able to simply mail in the ballot, versus having to vote in person.

At our meeting, election results were announced for the board of directors. Congratulations to our new board members: Bobbie Hillery (Fillmore County), Gene Henderson, incumbent (Houston County), and Barry Fruechte, incumbent (the portion of Iowa, served by the Association). Special thanks to Bluff Country Financial Services for securely handling the ballots and tallying the results. We also want to thank all members who took time to vote.

Our annual meeting has always been the ideal time to reward our members, showing our gratitude for allowing us to serve them. This meeting was no different. All who attended the meeting were given a \$10 credit on their AcenTek account. In addition, winners were randomly chosen from those who voted and a second drawing was done from the group of people who attended the meeting. Winners were contacted and awarded the gift card of choice.

Congratulations Winners!

\$50 Gift Card Winners:

- Vern & Mary Bunke (Rushford, MN) – Kwik Trip
- Neal Holhaus (Festina, IA) - Target
- Gerado J Aponte-Safe (La Crescent, MN) - Walmart
- Jana Beckman (Houston, MN) - Walmart
- Brad & Lorraine Williams (Houston, MN) - Walmart
- Cornelia Kryzer (Lewiston, MN) - Kwik Trip
- LaVern & Annette Twite (Houston, MN) - Kwik Trip
- Troy & Theresa Kubitz (Houston, MN) - Target
- Mark Staven (Caledonia, MN) - Walmart
- Linda Danielson (Chatfield, MN) - Kwik Trip
- Verian Craig (Hokah, MN) - Quillin's

\$100 Gift Card Winners:

- Lynn Sturm (La Crescent, MN) – Kwik Trip
- Jack & Judy Horton (Houston, MN) – Target
- Thomas Wiese (La Crescent, MN) – Walmart
- Jerome Knudsen (Houston, MN) – Walmart
- Arlene Grimes (Peterson, MN) – Walmart

\$250 Gift Card Winners:

- Lyle Meldahl (Lanesboro, MN) – Kwik Trip
- Roger Holland (La Crescent, MN) – Kwik Trip
- Roger Ericson (Lansing, IA) – Kwik Trip

\$500 Gift Card Winners:

- Rachel Hershberger (Rushford, MN) – Walmart
- William Stoen (Decorah, IA) – Walmart



207 E Cedar Street
PO Box 360
Houston, MN 55943

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

- Wendy Boelter, Provisioning
- Corey Gantenbein & Josh Meldahl, Combination Technicians

Bottom, from left to right

- Jeremy Peterson, IT Data Center
- Lori Mann, Human Resources

Congrats on your retirement!



DEAN EICKELBERG

After 22 years of service, Dean Eickelberg retired from AcenTek in April. He was hired in January of 1999 as a Central Office Technician, serving our Iowa territories. His dedication to a job well done was admired by many. Thank you for your service, Dean. May your retirement be filled with nothing but the joy and fulfillment you so greatly deserve!

Welcome to the team!



COHL LEE

Cohl Lee, from Spring Grove, MN, joined our team in March. Cohl was hired as a Network Operations Specialist. We are excited to have him on board. Welcome Cohl!

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