

CLOSED FOR BUSINESS

Nov. 10 | Veterans Day

Nov. 23/24 | Thanksgiving

Dec. 25 | Christmas

Jan. 1 | New Year's

207 E Cedar Street,
Houston, MN 55943

BUSINESS HOURS/
LOBBY OPEN:
Monday - Friday 8:00am - 4:30pm



Inviting you inside to learn more

MINNESOTA/IOWA ISSUE

CUSTOMER NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2023



FIBER PROGRESS IN EITZEN, FORT ATKINSON AND HARPERS FERRY

At the end of May, our team began the fiber build in our Eitzen, Minnesota exchange, which includes Dorchester, Iowa. Today that build is complete. The work finished in late August, allowing all our customers in this area to be converted to fiber-fed services.

The crews worked diligently on this project, through the thick and hazy air and blistering hot temperatures. The AcenTek team, along with our partners, Central Cable Contractors, Inc. and Cooperative Network Services (CNS) made sure to stay on schedule with this build, delivering fiber to 215 locations.

Further south in Iowa, we are in the process of hooking up our customers in Fort Atkinson to fiber optics. The project began in May. The construction phase of the project finished up last month, with the help of West Union Trenching and CNS. Next, we will be hooking up the customers. We anticipate this phase being complete by year-end, providing fiber-fed services to 791 locations in our Fort Atkinson exchange.

In August, Phase 1 of our fiber build in Harpers Ferry kicked off. Construction should be complete by end of this year, allowing 247 homes to be hooked up to fiber. Phase 2 of the Harpers build will begin in 2024.



Progress on our fiber project in the Eitzen/Dorchester area. Hazy skies and very warm temperatures didn't prevent our partners, CNS and Central Cable, from keeping our project on schedule.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- ▶ UPDATE ON FIBER PROJECTS
- ▶ ACENTEK MYTV ON HORIZON
- ▶ REWARDING OUR FOLLOWERS
- ▶ SUN OUTAGES
- ▶ INTRODUCING MYHOME
- ▶ AVOID BEING HACKED
- ▶ THE FOUNDATION DETAILS
- ▶ NEW AREA CODE COMING TO MINNESOTA
- ▶ PHISHING: KEEPING YOU SAFE
- ▶ OUT IN OUR COMMUNITY
- ▶ STAFF UPDATES



ON THE HORIZON: ACENTEK MyTV

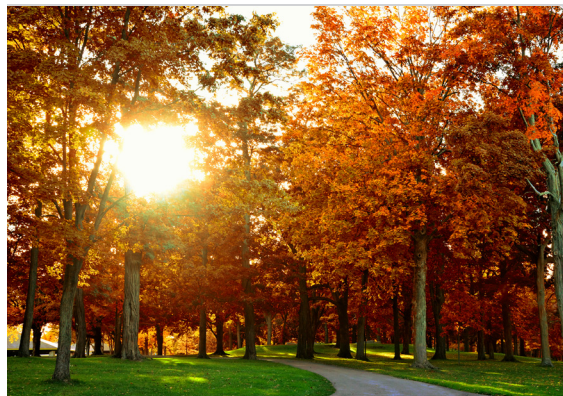
Exciting news is on the horizon for AcenTek video. Next year we will be rolling out a new video option, called AcenTek MyTV. This means our same video content will be available, with the option of combining it with your other streaming options. With one menu and one input, customers will be able to easily switch between watching video provided by AcenTek, and their favorite subscriptions to streaming services.

For customers who enjoy AcenTek video but also have other streaming services, this solution will allow for greater ease of use. Switching between the platforms will no longer require multiple technologies or locations. AcenTek MyTV will remove the limitations of where you watch scheduled programming. You will be able to watch on your laptop, TV or phone while being connected to AcenTek Wi-Fi. Our learning and development team is busy finalizing all the details of this solution. Watch for more information on this product coming soon.

WHEN THE SUN SHINES TOO BRIGHT

Did you know that the sun can disrupt the signal for your video service? Did you know there is nothing your provider can do to fix it? It's true.

Every fall and spring there is a time when the sun aligns perfectly with our satellites and the energy it is emitting can cause a brief signal outage. You might see a change in the picture quality, or possibly, the picture will go out momentarily. These sun outages typically occur sporadically for about a week. AcenTek wants to make you aware of this. Follow our Facebook page for updates on when the greatest chance for sun outages to occur.



REWARDING OUR FOLLOWERS

One of our favorite things to do is to reward you, our customers. In June, we did our annual Summer Give Away on Facebook. The winners received an adventure pack, complete with a Carhartt backpack/cooler, a 32 oz. AcenTek water bottle, a blanket, an umbrella, and a waterproof pouch to keep your phone and wallet dry. Three lucky winners enjoyed this gift, valued at \$150.

October was National Co-Op Month and so again, we used this as an opportunity to reward our Facebook followers. This time, the winner enjoyed a 60' x 85' ultra plush gray blanket, an AcenTek tote, a rechargeable flashlight/lantern, an umbrella, an insulated tumbler and a \$50 gift card for gas. This \$200 bundle could be enjoyed by anyone, whether used in your home or left in your trunk as an emergency car kit for winter travel. We love rewarding our followers and this was one more opportunity for us to do just that.

If you don't already, follow us on Facebook. Stay up to date on what's going on at AcenTek, be made aware of news related to our services and never miss an opportunity to win one of our giveaways.

FOLLOW ALONG.



Facebook/GoAcenTek



Twitter/GoAcenTek

CONNECTED & PROTECTED THIS HOLIDAY SEASON WITH ACENTEK MYHOME

With the increase of smart devices in your home, you are likely concerned with keeping your family safe. But how? How do you stop your children from seeing content they shouldn't? How do you prevent hackers from getting in? And with the internet so available to them, how is it possible to control how long your kids are online or exactly what they are looking at?

AcenTek can help. We are now offering an app that puts you back in control. If you are an AcenTek Wi-Fi customer with a Gigaspire, you have access to our new app, AcenTek **MyHOME**. You can download the AcenTek **MyHOME** app from the App Store or Google Play for free. With this app, you will have the ability to schedule offline times for each device in your home, edit your Wi-Fi password and even create a guest network, all at no cost.

Are you interested in having even more parental control, like the ability to block harmful websites, set time limits per application, per day, see usage per device or prioritize one device over another? Again, AcenTek can help. You can easily upgrade to **ExperienceIQ** to enjoy even greater control of your Wi-Fi. If you work from home, **ExperienceIQ** will allow you to easily set your laptop as the priority. This ensures that other devices in use in your home do not use the bandwidth that work tasks require.

We also offer **ProtectIQ**, which is exactly what it sounds like – a way to protect your family. If you are concerned about hackers, **ProtectIQ** will ease your mind. It is like locking the doors to your network. **ProtectIQ** monitors incoming traffic to all devices and blocks anything suspicious. It blocks any attempt from the devices in your home from unknowingly trying to visit a harmful website. It will alert you to potential threats and viruses detected. **ProtectIQ** uses Intrusion Protection Settings (IPS) to monitor, notify and protect hackers from getting in. This works not only on your laptops and smartphones, but also on devices that we overlook, like smart thermostats and video doorbells. These devices are also gateways for malicious activity. **ProtectIQ** makes it easy to protect your entire home.

If you are interested in upgrading from the free **MyHOME** app to **ExperienceIQ** or **ProtectIQ** simply give us a call. Customers with a Gigaspire who subscribe to Optimum or Maximum Velocity Internet can have **ExperienceIQ** and **ProtectIQ** added to their account at no additional cost. Check out our website for instructions on getting started. Visit: AcenTek.net/acentek-myhome-experience-protect





TWO-STEP: THE STEP TO TAKE TO HELP AVOID BEING HACKED

In life what is the most important thing for you to keep safe? After family, money is the most popular answer to that question. This makes sense – most everything takes money. You work hard for it, and you want to keep it safe. You bank with an establishment you trust. If you have a safe, you lock it. You don't want to risk your money ending up in someone else's hands.

Do you think about keeping your money safe when you are online? In the modern world, bank robbers have been replaced with online hackers. They can 'break in' and take what is yours before you even know what happened. But did you know there are easy ways for you to prevent this from happening? Taking one simpler step when you are online can be the difference between keeping your money safe and potentially becoming a victim.

Two-Step Verification: Many popular websites, like Amazon for example, offer a layer of protection to keep your personal and financial information safe. However, most of these protection options are usually turned off by default. These sites desire your shopping experience to be as convenient as possible, so you return and shop there again. They do not want to force you to take any extra steps, even if those steps offer greater security. We all like to be able to log in and purchase what we need as quickly as possible, but with that ease of use comes sacrificed security. So do you have the extra minute it will take to verify who you are to reduce the risk of being hacked?" If you answered that question with a simple "Yes," keep reading to learn how.

Most legitimate websites have 2-Step Verification (also known as Multi-Factor Verification or 2-Factor Authentication) available when you create an account. This is simply a second step to the log-in process, where you enter a rotating code that is provided using a trusted application or provided to you using a text message or phone call. While 2-Step Verification is available on many websites, you do have to take action in your settings and turn it on. Consider this like adding a second lock to your account. Next, simply follow the steps given on screen to complete the process. You may be asked to download an authenticator app, such as Google or Microsoft Authenticator if you don't already have one. These apps can be found in your device's app store; it's that easy. Although using an authenticator app is the best method to turn on this feature, some services may not offer this but instead provide a code in a text message or phone call. Either way, turning on any form of 2-Step verification when offered is always better than not enabling it at all. Keep what matters most to you safe by turning on 2-Step Verification today.

THE ACENTEK FOUNDATION

At a time when education has faced new challenges and economic growth has been curtailed for so many communities, AcenTek feels passionately about giving back.

In 2012, the AcenTek Foundation was created to handle donation requests from non-profit, tax-exempt organizations. The funds available through the foundation are to be used by the recipients for education, teaching and/or the promotion of economic development. Three times per year, a committee reviews the submitted applications and awards organizations in the area. Now, more than ever, AcenTek wants to make sure you are aware of the foundation and our desire to help.

If you are interested in applying to the AcenTek Foundation for a donation to help your non-profit, visit **AcenTek.net/donations** and fill out the application.

OPEN

DIRECTOR
SEAT

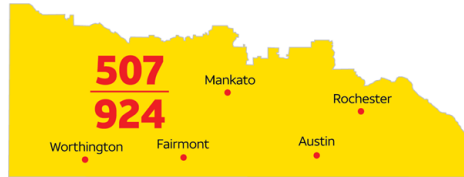
are you
interested?

**Are you a member who is interested in being
on the Board of Directors at AcenTek?**

**If you are interested in running for an open
director seat for Fillmore County, Houston County
or the Iowa area, we want to hear from you.
Call for more information by December 8th.**

CALL 507.896.6207

NEW AREA CODE COMING TO MINNESOTA



Forecasts suggest that the 507 area code will be completely exhausted by early 2025. To make sure new telephone numbers are available, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission approved the addition of the new 924 area code to the 507 area code region. This process is known as an area code overlay.

Adding the 924 area code will not require you to change area codes, but you will be required to dial the area code + phone number when calling local numbers.

Even though ten-digit dialing will not be mandatory until July 30, 2024, we encourage you to begin dialing in this manner, so it becomes habit before the mandatory change goes into effect. You may begin dialing 10-digits in February 2024. Telephone carriers may begin assigning telephone numbers in the new 924 area code starting August 30th of next year.

This additional area code will impact not only AcenTek customers in the 507 geographic area, but also customers of other providers. All telecommunication companies with customers in this area will be communicating these changes to their customers to prepare them for this change. We encourage all customers in this area to prepare for this change by updating any automatic dialing equipment (fax machines, burglar alarms, speed dials, call forward settings, etc.) to include 10-digit numbers.

If you have any questions regarding information provided in this notice, please give us a call or access the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission website at: <https://mn.gov/puc/>. Expect further communication about this as the implementation time approaches.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can easily rate AcenTek.
We'd love to hear what you think.

Leave us a review on
Facebook or on Google



AcenTek has great customer service from the technicians to those in the office! The internet connection rarely falters even in a very rural area!



We absolutely love AcenTek. Locally owned company, affordable rates, local technicians, and great internet strength.



AcenTek is reasonably priced and though the internet has gone out a handful of times in 4 years, it wasn't much and it was for obvious reasons (storms). We live on a bluff and had good coverage and good speed. Never had to call them because of speed (we have had to do that with companies we have had in the past). Customer service is great!



Love my internet service and it's affordable



so glad I have the fiber optic internet so I can work from home and still do zoom meetings without freezing.

SAVE UP TO
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NEW AND EXISTING CUSTOMERS

Affordable Connectivity Program
Find out if your eligible at AcenTek.net/ACP

AcenTek
Ascending Technology

PHISHING: DON'T BECOME A VICTIM

Phishing is when scammers use email or text messages to trick you into giving them personal or financial information. They are often after your passwords, account number or your Social Security number among other personal information. By obtaining this info they can easily access your email, your bank account or other personal accounts. Scammers are smart and keep changing their tactics to keep up with you. This is why we want to inform you of some simple ways to protect yourself from phishing attempts.

RECOGNIZE THE SCAM:

These attempts want you to open an attachment or click a link. They use tactics to make it seem like the message is from a trusted source and it is an urgent matter. Some examples of this are:

- A message saying there has been suspicious activity or log-in attempts
- A message that claims there is a problem with your account or payment info
- A message wanting you to confirm personal or financial information
- A message that includes an invoice you don't recognize

These messages often look real, but this is a disguise.

The scammer is hoping that you are not smart enough to investigate the message before you do anything.

They are often trying to invoke your human emotions by calling out something urgent and personal.

Here's what to look for to help you identify the message as fake:

The infographic features a central image of a phishing email from 'YourCEO@yourorganization.com' to 'You@yourorganization.com' dated Monday, December 12, 2016, at 3:00 pm. The subject is 'My money got stolen'. The body text describes a stolen bag and a request for \$300 via Bank of America, with a suspicious link to 'http://www.bankofamerica.com'. The email is signed 'Your CEO' and includes an attachment icon. Surrounding this central image are seven red flag categories, each with a red flag icon and a list of warning signs:

- FROM**
 - I don't recognize the sender's email address as someone I ordinarily communicate with.
 - This email is from **someone outside my organization** and it's not related to my job responsibilities.
 - This email was sent from **someone inside the organization** or from a customer, vendor, or partner and is **very unusual or out of character**.
 - Is the sender's email address from a **suspicious domain** (like micorsoft-support.com)?
 - I **don't know the sender personally** and they were not vouched for by someone I trust.
 - I **don't have a business relationship** nor any past communications with the sender.
 - This is an **unexpected or unusual email** with an **embedded hyperlink or an attachment** from someone I haven't communicated with recently.
- TO**
 - I was cc'd on an email sent to one or more people, but I **don't personally know** the other people it was sent to.
 - I received an email that was also sent to an **unusual mix of people**. For instance, it might be sent to a random group of people at my organization whose last names start with the same letter, or a whole list of unrelated addresses.
- HYPERLINKS**
 - I hover my mouse over a hyperlink that's displayed in the email message, but the **link-to address is for a different website**. (This is a **big red flag**.)
 - I received an email that only has **long hyperlinks with no further information**, and the rest of the email is completely blank.
 - I received an email with a **hyperlink that is a misspelling** of a known web site. For instance, www.bankofamerica.com — the "m" is really two characters — "r" and "n."
- DATE**
 - Did I receive an email that I normally would get during regular business hours, but it was **sent at an unusual time** like 3 a.m.?
- SUBJECT**
 - Did I get an email with a subject line that is **irrelevant or does not match** the message content?
 - Is the email message a reply to something I **never sent or requested**?
- ATTACHMENTS**
 - The sender included an email attachment that I **was not expecting** or that **makes no sense** in relation to the email message. (This sender doesn't ordinarily send me this type of attachment.)
 - I see an attachment with a possibly **dangerous file type**. The only file type that is **always safe to click on is a .txt file**.
- CONTENT**
 - Is the sender asking me to click on a link or open an attachment to **avoid a negative consequence** or to **gain something of value**?
 - Is the email **out of the ordinary**, or does it have **bad grammar or spelling errors**?
 - Is the sender asking me to click a link or open up an attachment that **seems odd or illogical**?
 - Do I have an **uncomfortable gut feeling** about the sender's request to open an attachment or click a link?
 - Is the email asking me to look at a **compromising or embarrassing picture** of myself or someone I know?

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YOUR REACTION:

Be cautious when going through your inbox or reading your text messages. Whenever you find reason to be suspicious, don't do anything. Don't click. Don't open. Don't respond. It is best to contact the recipient directly by a known and trusted phone number to inform them of the message you received. Note: Don't ever call or use a phone number or email address that is provided within the suspected message itself. A fake phone number is another tricky tactic scammers like to use.



Rushford Days Parade, July 15th
 PICTURED: Sheri Wilkemeyer (Executive Assistant), Lisa Kleist (Customer Service Rep), Sharlene Schobert (Marketing Specialist), Jamie Meldahl (Business Sales Consultant) and Julie (Jamie's wife).



Buffalo Bill Days Parade in Lanesboro, August 6th.
 PICTURED: Jamie Meldahl (Business Sales Consultant) and Julie (Jamie's wife), Teri Vatland (Marketing Specialist) with her sons, Tucker (left) and Trevor (right), Sheri Wilkemeyer (Executive Assistant), Melissa Brennan (Accountant) with Evi (Melissa's daughter).



In office trick or treating, Houston

OUT IN OUR COMMUNITY

Did you see us? We were out and about visiting several town festivals this past summer. It has been wonderful to join in the fun and see so many of our customers at the area parades. AcenTek was at the 4th of July parade in Eitzen, the Houston Hoedown parade, Rushford Days parade, Buffalo Bill Days in Lanesboro and the Applefest parade in La Crescent.

We also had some fun with the little ones, treating them during the Business Trick or Treat in Houston just last month. These small-town events provide great opportunities for us to see you, our customers and remind you that we care about these communities. AcenTek is the local provider you can trust.



2nd Place, Commercial Division, Applefest Parade



REFER A FRIEND

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

Visit ACENTEK.NET to learn more

WELCOME ABOARD!



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SPECIALIST



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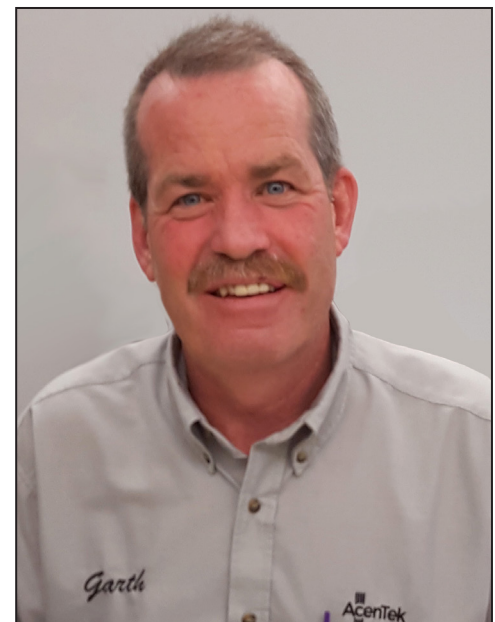
CUSTOMER NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2023

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR RETIREMENT

After more than 26 years, Garth Edwards, Warehouse/Maintenance Supervisor, retired from AcenTek. Garth was hired as a Temporary Cable Locator in 1997 and just a few months later became a Seasonal Cable Locator. In August of '99 he became the Supervisor of Warehouse and Maintenance, the position he held until his retirement this fall.

Garth made an impression on everyone he worked with, whether inside the company, or those doing business with us. He was an incredible worker and someone we all could rely on. He not only was a hard worker, but he took great pride in a job well done. He carried himself with great integrity, setting an example to all around him. There wasn't much that slowed him down. If there was work to do, Garth was eager to do it. He was an incredible asset to our team and more importantly, a friend to many who worked with him. Happy retirement, to a guy who made a big impact on our company, and even bigger one on those he worked with. We wish you the very best, Garth. You will be missed.



GARTH EDWARDS

WAREHOUSE/MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DID FOR US.

BEST WISHES, GARTH!