

♥ Happy Valentine's Day!



KEEPING YOU...



In Touch

February 2021 ■ Volume 45 ■ Number 487

2020 Venture *Service Awards!*

Each year Venture recognizes employees and directors for their years of service with Venture Communications. In addition, those who have served the industry for 20 or more years (including years outside of Venture) are honored with an NTCA industry award. Our "Sincere Thanks" to the following employees and directors for their many years of dedicated service to Venture Communications and the telecom industry.

25 years!



Karla Hyde
Accounting Support
NTCA Industry Award

25 years!



Kay Burnham
Customer Advocate
NTCA Industry Award

20 years!



Ryan Spilde
COE Tech

25 years!



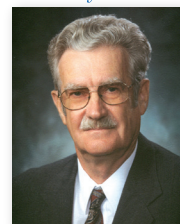
Diane Dean
Accounting Support
NTCA Industry Award

25 years!



Amy Hoffman
Customer Advocate
NTCA Industry Award

20 years!



Chuck Birkholt
Director

20 years!



Brian Steichen
IR Tech

20 years!



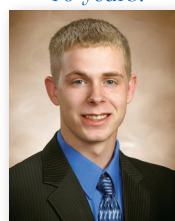
John Langer
Director

15 years!



Ron Simonson
Director

10 years!



Justin Bowman
COE Tech

10 years!



Marilyn Krick
Custodian

5 years!



Dwight Wookey
Director

Scholarship News!

High school seniors interested in applying for the Venture Communications Citizenship and Community Service Scholarship and whose parent or legal guardian are an active subscriber of Venture Communications, are reminded that applications are due in the Venture Communications office no later than March 5, 2021.

The scholarship opportunity through the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) in conjunction with Venture Communications needs to be submitted to the FRS website by March 5, 2021.

Both scholarship applications and information are available from the local high school counselors or at www.venturecomm.net.

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January 2021 New Directory Listings:

Highmore

Willow Creek Steakhouse 852-2889



State High School Basketball Tournament on *Venture Digital TV*

Venture Communications, in cooperation with South Dakota Public TV (SDPB) and SDN Communications is again partnering to bring you coverage of the following tournaments:

- Class B Girls Tournament
– March 11-13 ... Channel 399
- Class A Girls Tournament
– March 11-13 ... Channel 400
- Class AA Girls Tournament
– March 11-13 ... Channel 401
- Class B Boys Tournament
– March 18-20 ... Channel 399
- Class A Boys Tournament
– March 18-20 ... Channel 400
- Class AA Boys Tournament
– March 18-20 ... Channel 401

To access additional game times and team standings throughout the day, go to **sports.sdpb.org**.

Calendar Notes:

- Our office is closed on Monday, February 15th for President's Day.
- Turn clocks ahead one hour on Sunday, March 14th for Daylight Savings Time.
- St. Patrick's Day is Wed., March 17th
- 1st day of Spring is Sat., March 20th

211 Helpline *Launches* New App!

Struggling to pay rent this month? Want to donate household goods? Not sure where to get tested for Covid-19? Want to know if you qualify for food assistance programs or where you can volunteer for the holidays? The 211 Helpline Center can help answer all these questions – and more for people by simply dialing 2-1-1. The program that's often considered the "front door" of the social services system is now available to all South Dakotans thanks to the 2020 Legislative Session.

The 211 service is one of three main components of the Helpline Center in Sioux Falls. It also offers suicide prevention and crisis support as well as volunteer connections. The center manages a robust database of more than 5,000 programs and serves as a local and a national point-of-contact for disaster response and recovery efforts. In the past, it's assisted with local flooding disasters and the September 2019 tornadic event in Sioux Falls, to name a few, and will work hand-in-hand with law enforcement as needed. Helpline staff are professionally trained to answer questions 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Their job is to listen and connect people to services, eliminating confusion and providing efficiency with detailed information about programs, resources and processes.

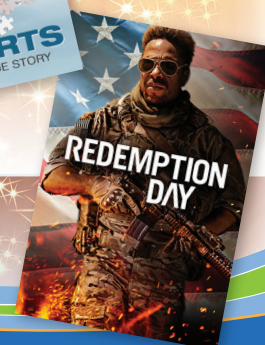
A 2019 Legislative Task Force saw value in making that kind of service available to the rest of the state. One of its goals was to better use existing systems to provide access to mental health resources. At that time, 34 of the state's 66 counties had access to 211. In March 2020, lawmakers approved and the governor signed Senate Bill 2, which fully-funded the service statewide. Just weeks earlier, state health officials had reported the state's first probable cases of COVID-19 and since that time, Helpline Center Executive Director Janet Kittams says call volume has increased by 94 percent. Kittams said the first increase in calls was about COVID-19. About six weeks later, they saw the impact of the illness as callers sought help with rent, food or utility assistance. These were people who were new to needing help, she said.

Between March 10th, when state health officials announced the first probable case, through October 21st, 211 received 72,596 calls/texts/emails with 78,796 "needs" identified – some had more than one need. "We're here for the people regardless of their situation. When they call, they'll get a caring person on the other end of the line to talk to," Kittams said. A recently released 211 Helpline app is also available on the App Store or Google Play. Users can explore categories such as food, employment assistance, healthcare, volunteer/donate as well as contact information for those resources.

From SDN Blog, Amy Bennett Smolik
sdncommunications.com/blog/211-helpline-available-state-wide-launches-new-app

New VOD Releases!

VIDEO ON DEMAND



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Venture Communications is an
equal opportunity provider and employer.

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Office Hours: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. ■ Monday - Friday