



March 31, 2020

Dear 3 Rivers Cooperative Member,

3 Rivers remains focused on our critical mission of keeping everyone connected during the COVID-19 pandemic, while still protecting the health of our members and our staff. We are providing this update so all of you know what we have done and what you might expect in the future.

First, we're closely monitoring reports and recommendations from federal, state, and local agencies so we can align our actions with the recommendations of these authorities, which includes our County Health Departments, the Governor's Office, and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

As you know, 3 Rivers postponed our Annual Meeting that was scheduled for March 16, 2020. An abbreviated version of the 2020 Annual Meeting will be scheduled when conditions allow, in order to complete the trustee election. Also on March 16, we announced the closure of all our business offices, including RadioShack in Browning, to walk-in customers. We have suspended disconnections for non-payment until further notice to support our members who may be unable to make timely payments because of the office closures or other pandemic related reasons. We will also waive late fees during this time. Please call us or visit 3rivers.net for payment options.

To limit contact between employees, all of our Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) are working from home. They have been outfitted with everything they need to answer phones, process service orders and dispatch technicians from home. We appreciate your understanding if you hear a dog barking in the background or grain trucks rumbling by. Also, please be aware that a CSR may ask health-related questions regarding those in your home or business before dispatching a technician. The questions might seem a bit intrusive, but they are for your and our technician's protection.

Please note that under Montana's shelter in place order, 3 Rivers is considered an essential service and our workers are exempt. Our technicians will still be out and about as needed to keep our network running and our members connected. Most techs are being dispatched from home to minimize contacts with other employees. We are still comfortable sending technicians into homes, following best practices for proper hygiene and social distancing, so long as both the technician and customer feel safe. At this time, we are still doing new service installations but have discontinued all non-essential work, including Fiber-to-the-Home conversions -- which will resume as soon as possible.

We want you to know that we are making every effort to support students who are affected by school closures. 3 Rivers is coordinating with all our schools to identify students whose families do not have Internet service. If we are capable of doing so, we are providing free Internet service to these homes until at least the end of the school year so that students can access on-line learning materials. To date we have provided new broadband connections to about 100 of these families.

You should also know that the 3 Rivers fiber network we have built over the past decade is very robust. We will be able to handle any increase in bandwidth usage due to more members working from home, on-line learning needs, or folks simply staying home and watching more Internet video. However, some streaming video providers such as YouTube and Netflix are limiting (or considering limiting) video quality to conserve Internet bandwidth. If you see a reduction in the quality when streaming video it's likely due to limits on the content providers' part, not 3 Rivers.

Conditions may change rapidly, including the possibility that there may come a time when we can't have our technicians enter customers' homes. If we have important information regarding anything that may affect your telephone or Internet service, we will immediately post it on 3rivers.net in the News section and follow-up with email, social media postings and/or letters as the situation warrants. Also feel free to call our office if you have any questions during this time.

Please stay safe and healthy,

Your 3 Rivers Team

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