

Wanna  
save  
\$150?

Sign Up &  
Get TWO Months  
FREE!

Sign up for 3 Rivers High Speed DSL Internet in September and we'll give you the first TWO months plus your modem for free! That's a \$150 value!

- Up to 1 Mb download speed
- No activation fee when you install it yourself (a \$49.95 value)
- Free SecureIT Plus Internet security software
- Always on connection
- Eliminate the need for a second phone line

After 2 months, cost is \$49.95 per month. Modem valued at \$49.95. SecureIT Plus is free for one computer; purchase for additional computers for \$3.95 per month. Download speeds are not guaranteed and vary by location. Actual download speeds depend on a variety of factors, including line conditions and distance from a 3 Rivers central office. DSL service is not available in all areas and is subject to qualification by 3 Rivers. Offer expires September 30, 2007.

### 3 RIVERS INFORMATION

#### Service Information

3 Rivers Communications Divisions  
3 Rivers Telephone, Internet and Long Distance  
Fairfield: 406.467.2535 or 800.796.4567  
Great Falls: 406.216.2535  
Conrad: 406.271.2535 Shelby: 406.424.8535  
Payments: P.O. Box 489, Fairfield, MT 59436-0489  
Correspondence: P.O. Box 429, Fairfield, MT 59436  
3 Rivers DBS - Satellite TV/Internet Services  
406.467.2535 or 800.796.4567  
P.O. Box 159, Fairfield, MT 59436-0159

Website: www.3rivers.net  
E-mail: 3rt@3rivers.net  
On-line Billing: https://ebill.3rivers.net

#### Board of Trustees

- Steve Krogue, Interim General Manager, 467.2535
- Harry R. Barnes, Browning, 338.3440
- Kirk Dige, Big Sky, 995.4769
- William Dringle, Ennis/Harrison, 682.7489
- Brian D. McCollom, Choteau/Pendroy/Dupuyer, Valier, 466.2443
- Keith Good, Carter/Highwood/Great Falls, 734.5371
- Howard Johnson, Brady/Conrad/Power East Conrad/Valier/Shelby, 627.2121
- Michael Johnson, Fairfield/Augusta/Ft. Shaw/Helena, 467.2350
- Mary Hill, Raynesford/Geyser/Neihart/Belt/Stockett, 738.4220
- Loren Tucker, Melrose/Sheridan/Twin Bridges Lima/Virgina City, 843.5566

### Take Your School Back In Time!



Come spend a day in Charlie's world with cowboys and Indians, roaming buffalo and settlers on the move.

This trip through time is brought to you by the CM Russell Museum where they offer free tours to school groups and in partnership with 3 Rivers Communications a free bus trip to get there. Through a grant from 3 Rivers the museum will reimburse each school district for their transportation costs.

What a great way to bring history to life for your students. Come explore the wonders of the West through Charlie's art. The museum offers guided tours and hands on activities for all ages.

To take advantage of this offer please contact the Education and Program Administrator at the CM Russell Museum at 406-727-8787 ext 147 for more information. ■

### NEW EMPLOYEES



Dusty  
Southern District Combination Technician



Ron  
Southern District Manager

#### Montana Homefront Contributors Acknowledgment

We'd like to acknowledge and thank the following individuals who contributed to the Montana Homefront this issue:  
Susan Wilson, Don Serido, Callie Moss, Janice Torgerson



# Montana homefront

New Rate Information  
Inside!

3 RIVERS COMMUNICATIONS NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2007

## Meet 3 Rivers' Network Department

"This isn't your grandma's phone company any more," declares Mike Henning, Facilities Manager at 3 Rivers Communications. "Once upon a time we were only responsible for plain ol' telephone service, now we provide data and soon we'll be providing video over our network. With everything that we have going on in this ever changing world of telecommunications we ask a lot of our Network folks and they deliver every time."

"I remember the old mechanical switches from when I first started," noted Jerry Emerson the Network Supervisor. "Back then you could see the relays shift and hear the clicking and clacking as the call moved through the office." After more than 30 years in the business the biggest change he has seen at 3 Rivers is the evolution from mechanical switches to digital switches and now a soft switch. What once took up half a city block of equipment to connect us to the world is now done in a soft switch which is basically a computer about the size of a dorm refrigerator. "Through these changes in technology we can provide our customers more calling features, faster Internet speeds and ultimately the triple play of voice, video and data all over one connection. That's a long way from where I started," he laughed.

In addition to monitoring and maintaining the infrastructure of our system the Network Department is accountable for the initial programming and translation of our databases, responds 24 hours a day to any alarms within the system, installs DSL and business phone systems, and works in the field repairing cut cable or upgrading and maintaining connections.



Jerry is quick to point out that it takes a team to get calls from here to there and to stay on top of all the new equipment and ever changing technology for which the department is responsible. In the Network Department there are 15 employees in the Fairfield office, two located in Ennis and two in Big Sky. He went on to add that their goal is "to have things fixed before the customer even knows there is an issue."

Moving into this new frontier where we're not just the phone company any more, Stephen, a Network Technician commented, "My job is always changing, there's always new things to learn. And the pace of change is remarkable; we're trying to stay ahead of what the customer wants. It's not just maintaining a top notch voice system like we've always done but now we expect that same degree of expertise in our Internet system and we'll expect it in our video product."

continued inside on page 2...

## Upcoming Events

Do you have an event you would like to include in the 3 Rivers Upcoming events column?

The event must be a community sponsored event and be open to all community members. Space permitting, we will run the name of your event, the date, time and location.

If you have questions or event information please send to: [susan.wilson@3rivers.coop](mailto:susan.wilson@3rivers.coop) ■

....continued from front  
 "Meet 3 Rivers' Network Department"

To tie all the components of this new type of phone company together takes another group of network technicians. Jeff has been with 3 Rivers for over 13 years and been in the business for longer than that. Harking back to the good ol' days of the clicking switches and maybe as far back as Ethel the Party Line Operator, he said, "The scope of change from single wires on poles to using fiber optics straight to the home for phone calls, Internet and soon TV is mind boggling." He went on to add, "My job, like all of us in Network, is basically to make sure it all works. That when you pick up your phone you get a dial tone and when you turn on your computer you get a connection to the Internet."

Jake has been involved in the phone business for over 30 years. As a Network Technician he is involved in monitoring our alarm system, working with long distance carriers, setting up private line circuits and providing data connections between geographically separated offices such as banks, medical facilities or schools. He too notes the changes that we're not just a phone company any more, "I'm no longer surprised by the never-ending changes in the industry but I notice that the change is happening faster and faster." He echoes the sentiments of several co-workers by saying, "it takes all of us in this department to make our service better for our customers."

There's over 250 years of experience in the Network Department, so even though it's not the phone company your grandma would recognize it's the company that is bringing you the latest technology and will keep investing in the future so that it will be your granddaughter's communications company one day. ■

## Charity Golf Scramble Held in Ennis

3 Rivers Communications held its annual Charity Golf Tournament on July 14 in Ennis at the Madison Meadows Golf Course. This was the 7<sup>th</sup> year in a row that 3 Rivers has held a charity scramble. Each year a local charity or cause is selected to receive all funds raised through sponsor and team entry fees. 3 Rivers absorbs the cost of the tournament itself. This year, 3 Rivers will present a check for \$3,000 to the Twin Bridges library. ■



1st Place Team: Ted Wood, Darrell South, Jason Moyer & Cole Bennett



2nd Place Team: BJ Veis, Brad Veis, Dana Walker & Jason Petrillo



3rd Place Team: Kevin Helling, Dan Dedman, Paul Pernak & Jordan Hildebrandt

## Over 100 Attend Neihart Picnic

3 Rivers held a Customer Appreciation Picnic for customers in our northern exchanges on June 16<sup>th</sup> in Neihart. Over 100 people were treated to a live band, great food and good company on a beautiful day. To show appreciation for customers in our southern exchanges, 3 Rivers sponsored Jack Gladstone's performance at the Lima Historical Society Living History Festival on August 11. ■



Is your current Internet security software subscription running out? 3 Rivers' SecureIT Plus software is a great option and it's FREE for DSL customers. Call us today!

### 3 RIVERS NEWS

## New Rates, Additional Basic Features, Price Cut

3 Rivers is making a change to residential and business basic service rates beginning October 1, 2007. The cost of your basic service will be increased by \$5, with an additional increase of \$5 scheduled for July 1, 2008, for a \$10 total increase over your previous rate. This is 3 Rivers' first rate increase in 8 years, despite increased costs and service upgrades in the interim. The rate increase does not include Conrad, Shelby, Great Falls and Helena.

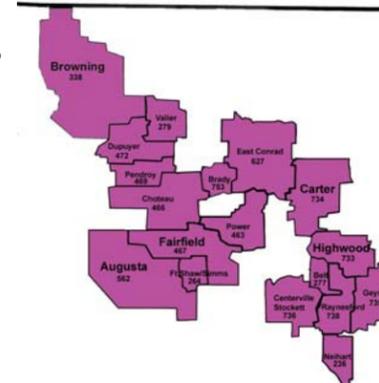
Simultaneously, 3 Rivers' basic service will be expanded to include new features, plus there will be a reduction in price on an existing feature. As part of our basic service, we will ensure that you always have one working telephone jack (per access line) without paying extra to have a service technician make necessary repairs. A similar service was previously sold to co-op members for \$2 per month for the first line, \$1 for each additional line. This service is being discontinued. We are also adding Extended Area Service (EAS), which expands your local calling area to include all 3 Rivers' exchanges (with the exception of calls made to or from Conrad, Shelby, Great Falls and Helena). For most members, this should mean lower toll charges on your bill. At the same time, we are reducing the cost of our Unlimited Long Distance plan by \$3 with the exception of customers in Conrad, Shelby, Great Falls and Helena. Co-op members who have signed up for Unlimited Long Distance, either in a package or as a standalone, will see a \$3 per month price decrease in their bill.

Regulatory changes resulting from competition are forcing 3 Rivers to change how it does business. To compete, we must either lower costs and lower service levels accordingly, or raise revenue to cover increased costs of keeping our service at its present level and while maintaining the ability to upgrade service in the future. The 3 Rivers' Board of Trustees and management believe the latter strategy is the best long-term solution.

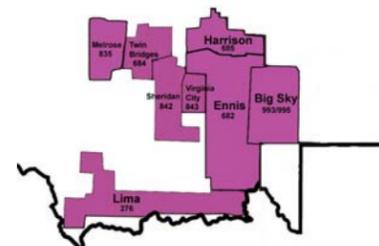
We have traditionally gained substantial revenue from regional and national carriers, which pay to originate and terminate communications traffic over the 3 Rivers' network. These dollars offset the high cost of delivering telecommunications service to our mostly rural customers. The existing basic rates are far below the cost of actually providing the service. Long distance, wireless and other communications carriers are exerting pressure on federal regulators to lower the amount paid for access to local networks.

Decades ago the federal government set up complex support arrangements, including the Universal Service Fund, to ensure that rural Americans have access to affordable basic communications services, just as urban citizens do. These arrangements will continue to undergo changes in the coming years further reducing 3 Rivers' annual revenue and threatening our ability to provide leading technology at competitive prices.

We welcome you to call or come by our office to discuss any concerns or questions regarding these changes. ■



Areas shown in purple are included in EAS and are accessible without toll charges.



## 2007-2008 North Directory

The new 3 Rivers 2007-2008 North Telephone Directory has been mailed to all of our northern subscribers and should be in your mailbox. If you have not received a copy, please give us a call.

3 Rivers makes every effort to assure our customers will be in the white pages. Occasionally we miss some people, so please let us know if you have been missed.

Please note the following:

338-2388 Butterfly, Carmelita, Browning  
 264 5888 Evans, Lewis M, Simms

Please clip these numbers out and include them with your new directory. If we have overlooked anyone else, please contact us so we can include your phone number in the next newsletter. Again, we apologize for these errors. ■



Visit [www.3rivers.net](http://www.3rivers.net) for up to date pricing and information on all 3 Rivers services.