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# About Us

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## Our Mission:

United Communications is devoted to offering its customers cutting-edge technology, innovative entertainment and the best customer service - period.



## Our Promise:

Provide our customers with affordable options for internet, telephone and television solutions, resolve all inquiries to the best of our abilities and solve problems innovatively.

## Our History:

We are proud to say that we have provided outstanding service to our customers since 1951. Here's a brief look back at how it all started, and how we became the communications company we are today. In February of 1951, more than 400 farmers from Ramsey, Towner, Cavalier, Nelson and Benson counties met in Devils Lake, North Dakota to discuss the formation of a rural telephone cooperative. From that meeting, an 11-man organizing committee was elected, and United Telephone Cooperative was born.

During the next seven years, we made significant progress in the growth and success of the organization. We established our headquarters in Langdon, ND instead, changed our name to United Telephone Mutual Aid Corporation and elected our first Board of Directors. From 1955 to 1958, we made an important purchase of the exchange at Langdon from the North Dakota Telephone Company and also purchased the Osnabrock Telephone Company, the Milton Telephone Company, the Sarles Telephone Company, the Hannah Telephone Company and a total of 20 additional farmer-owned lines. It was shortly after that that the Langdon exchange became the first in our system to be cut over to modern dial service. During the next two years, dial exchanges at Sarles, Milton, Wales, Munich, Walhalla and Rock Lake were established, with the Egeland exchange being the last to be cut over in February of 1960.

In 1968, we installed direct dial equipment and began offering 1+ dialing. Now subscribers could make long-distance calls directly, without the intervention of an operator. This feature is virtually everywhere today.

In addition to upgrades to our system, such as burying all rural plant facilities and modernizing to single party lines, the 1970s was an exciting time for us. Most significantly, we worked with the U.S. Department of Defense to establish facilities for the anti-ballistic missile site being constructed at the Stanley R. Mickelson Safeguard Complex in Nekoma, ND. This site was designed to defend the offensive Minuteman missiles based at the Grand Forks Air Force Base in the event of a nuclear intercontinental ballistic missile attack by the Soviet Union or China. Additionally, during the mid 1970s, we installed a Motorola Improved Mobile Telephone System (IMTS) and a paging system, offering mobile telephone service to some of our subscribers.

Two decades later, in the 1990s, we brought TV service to rural northeastern North Dakota. We constructed two Multichannel Multipoint Distribution Service (MMDS) TV sites, one in Egeland and the other located in Milton. This new service allowed rural residents of northeastern North Dakota to receive a quality TV signal. At the same time, we also upgraded to an all-digital fiber-optic network and installed Stromberg Carlson DCO switches.

In 1991, we established the United Telephone Educational Foundation. This foundation provides financial assistance to high school seniors and other first-term college students throughout eastern and central North Dakota who wish to further their education. Since its establishment, the foundation has awarded nearly \$450,000 to graduating seniors.

## United Communications - About Us

Not long after in 1996, we teamed up with three other companies (North Dakota Telephone, Polar Communications, and Dakota Central), forming North Dakota Long Distance (NDLD) to provide long distance service to our customers. NDLD now provides long distance service to another six local telecommunications providers in North Dakota.

Along with establishing NDLD, Dakota Central, Polar Communications and United Communications formed ND Telecom, which specializes in special circuit engineering. We also partnered with Cass County Electric Cooperative in Kindred, ND to form a competitive local exchange carrier in the Fargo, ND area called IdeaOne. Furthermore, along with 14 other independent telecommunication companies, we formed Dakota Carrier Network (DCN), which provides a network to the state of North Dakota, enabling a statewide virtual private network. DCN also brings high-speed network technologies to school districts and governmental bodies throughout the state.

Since the early 1990s, we have made major strides in offering our subscribers new technology and communication amenities, including converting switches to System Signal 7, which allowed us to provide advanced calling features. Additionally, we have constructed cellular towers in the Langdon, Egeland and Rolla areas with Commnet Cellular to provide cellular communication service to many rural communities in eastern North Dakota.

In June 1996, we formed a wholly-owned subsidiary called Turtle Mountain Communications and purchased six exchanges and 3,300 access lines from U.S. West Communications. Then in March of 1998, Turtle Mountain Communications purchased another two exchanges and 4,700 more access lines from U.S. West Communications.

The beginning of the 21st century was a time of major advancement for us and a pivotal point in our existence, as we became connected with fiber-optic cable. Over the next nine years, we have installed more than 330 miles of fiber optics and created more than 3,600 drops to subscribers in Langdon, Bottineau, Walhalla, Rolla and Rolette. This included an 89-mile fiber-optic placement project to allow us to reroute calls in the event of a fiber cut, so that our subscribers would experience uninterrupted service during new fiber installations. Other recent milestones that have taken place include:

- **2001** – Constructed a tower in Rolla so Verizon Wireless could provide cellular service to that area.
- **2002** – Started providing wireless DSL to rural subscribers using our Multi-Channel Multi-point Distribution System (MMDS) at the Milton and Egeland tower sites.
- **2003** – Installed emergency alert notification equipment on the MMDS and cable TV systems.
- **2004** – Purchased the Olga radio tower site from American Towers to expand our future wireless technologies.
- **2005** – Installed a Coppercom soft switch that allows us to be CALEA compliant. We also installed an Innovative Solution system that allows us to provide voice mail, conference calling and Find Me features.
- **2006** – Constructed a tower in Bottineau to lease to Verizon Wireless.
- **2007** – Installed fiber to the home in the Langdon exchange and deployed IPTV.
- **2008** – Installed fiber to the home in the Bottineau and Walhalla exchanges and deployed IPTV.

As we look to the future, our goal is to provide the newest technology combined with the best service. It's one reason we officially changed our name to United Communications in 2008. As we developed from a small telephone cooperative to the full-service communications company we are today, our customers' satisfaction has remained our top priority. We are proud to say that throughout our history, we have always strived to provide one-of-a-kind, local service to communities across northeastern North Dakota.



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