

COOPERATIVE CONNECTION

Summer 2020 Newsletter

Here for You

Our 68th Annual Meeting was cancelled to ensure the safety and well-being of our member-owners, community partners and employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. The cancellation was a great disappointment to all of us and we look forward to our next meeting scheduled for April 17, 2021 with extra enthusiasm. Read our member report on line: [Blackfoot.com/AnnualMeeting](https://blackfoot.com/AnnualMeeting)

In these challenging times we recognize the critical role our telecommunication industry plays in the world is more vital now than ever before. At Blackfoot, we take our role seriously as we continue to deliver essential services, products, 24/7 technical support and high quality infrastructure. We are also deeply aware that many of our community members are struggling with the effects of the pandemic on our economy and we are focused on helping those most in need including local food agencies.

We are witnessing what will undoubtedly be remembered as a historic deployment of remote work and digital access to services across every industry, including medicine, education, government, entertainment and more. Your Cooperative has been hard at work staying on track with our fiber deployment plan and also working with our schools to enable technology solutions for those students and teachers without broadband access. We have also worked alongside our customers to deliver a new level of virtual access and functionality to ensure business continuity.

We are constantly leading and partnering in many ways to ensure broadband access to everybody who needs it. That includes working with local and national governments to help ensure employee safety while allowing our critical operations to continue.

It's important now more than ever to confirm our strong commitment to all of you during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Thank you for your confidence in Blackfoot.

Don't wait for the next meeting to connect with us! Here are a few ways to stay in touch with us year-round.

Sign up for our monthly email: [Blackfoot.com/Subscribe](https://blackfoot.com/Subscribe)

Connect with us on Facebook: Facebook.com/GoBlackfoot.com

Let us know how we are doing: customerservice@blackfoot.com

Connect with your local trustee: boardoftrustees@blackfoot.com



Tech Tip:

Be Cybersecure

Phishing scams come in the form of fake emails, text messages or copycat websites. Scammers are good at spoofing a valid company or a familiar person, to give you a false sense of security. Here are some tips to protect your personal information.

- **Click Carefully:** When opening emails, look at the sender to ensure it's someone you know. When visiting websites, be wary of links that you click on. (TIP: beware of sensational headlines as they are often click-bait)
- **Make a call:** If you receive an email from a company you do business with that is asking for personal or financial information, pick up the phone and call to verify its legitimacy. Look up the phone number instead of dialing any provided in the email!
- **Use unique passwords:** Don't use the same password for all of your accounts and don't use obvious personal information in your password.
- **Stay up-to-date:** Maintain a strong firewall and current antivirus software to be secure.
- **Backup your files regularly:** To protect yourself against ransomware or viruses, back up your important files to an alternative location on a regular basis.

Need Help: We're here 24/7.

Blackfoot's Technical Support Team 1-877-881-1155

Your Cooperative at Work!

2019 Stats: Follow our progress at blackfoot.com/networkupgrades



\$9.7M

capital investments



533

construction projects
completed



118

miles of fiber installed



Fiber installation team



*Kris Sweeney,
your business account Executive*

Here For You



94

percent of customers who rated us
highly trustworthy in our 2019
satisfaction survey

As your local service provider, we understand how critical it is to stay up to date for your home and business. You can count on Blackfoot for our expertise whether it's a question about adding bandwidth for homework this summer, onsite sales expertise or upfront network analysis. We are here for you and eager to help make your experience with technology enjoyable, seamless and cost-effective.

Here are just a few of our services recently trending:

- **Robocall Blocker:** A free home service that blocks annoying calls that originate from computerized auto-dialers also known as spammers, fraud calls and telemarketers.
- **Tech Home:** The very best security for all your home devices. Plan options include online file backup, firewall protection, password management, parental tools, anti-virus software and 24/7 premium support.
- **Ergo Hosted IP Phone:** Our office communications system has no upfront cost and is perfect for all business sizes. Stay current with the latest technology and let us handle the upgrades and maintenance.
- **Business Ethernet:** Custom engineered to meet your unique business needs with dedicated bandwidth and 24 hour network monitoring.
- **Managed Firewall:** Premier network security with zero upfront investment, affordable monthly payments and dedicated account management.

Connect with the Blackfoot team today to learn how we can help your unique needs.

MISSION

*We connect people,
businesses and communities*



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Learn more about our community support program

Blackfoot.com/Community

A Message From Jason Williams

Blackfoot Chief Executive Officer



Dear Cooperative Member,

I hope this newsletter finds all of you safe and healthy. During times like these, I am grateful to be living in Western Montana, where we have plenty of wide open spaces!

Over the last several months as people have been working from home and students were engaged in remote learning, we saw a significant increase in broadband and voice traffic across our network. Because of careful design and operation by our employees, Blackfoot's network remained up and running despite this spike in traffic. We are proud that you put your trust in Blackfoot to keep you connected to the world!

We continue to go full-steam-ahead with our fiber-to-the-premises project, focusing on the Thompson Falls and Trout Creek area this summer. In addition, we continue to add dozens of new fiber-based customers every month in and around St. Ignatius. The COVID-19 pandemic has shined a light on how important reliable, high-speed connectivity is for the economy, education and our general livelihood. That is why we will continue to invest as much as financially possible in new fiber infrastructure every year for the foreseeable future.

Sadly, this summer is not going to be the same as many community events, festivals, rodeos, and fairs have been cancelled. Helping celebrate with the communities we serve is something we cherish at Blackfoot, but keeping those communities healthy and virus-free is a priority. We look forward to seeing you out and about at future community events, but please keep in touch and let us know if there is anything Blackfoot can do to help your community. We are all in this together!