

## Annual Meeting 2011

Over 250 dedicated members filled the Ballard High School gymnasium on the evening of March 24, 2011. Those in attendance were treated to a wonderful meal catered by Comfort Food Catering of Huxley and the amazing talents of the Ballard High School Jazz Ensemble. There were also presentations made by General Manager, Gary Clark, and President of the Board of Directors, Scott DeTar.

The announcement of membership reward checks was a pleasant surprise at this year's annual meeting. Although the cooperative did not make a profit in 2010, the corporation, which has cellular interests, did. The Board of Directors voted to disburse membership reward checks to any current member who had phone or internet service in 2010 and met pre-established criteria. The amount each qualifying member received was based upon a calculation of the amount of phone and internet business that was done in the year 2010.

If you have not received your membership reward check and you think you may qualify, please stop by our office. If you have any questions regarding the membership reward checks or the services you receive, please call our office at 515-597-2281.



*Top: Members enjoying the meal catered by Comfort Foods of Huxley*  
*Bottom Left: Ryan Terrones, Tiffany Kuiper, and Kenton Anderson of Huxley Communications distributing Member Appreciation Checks*  
*Bottom Right: Ballard Jazz Ensemble students performing during dinner*

## HUXLEY HAPPENINGS



**Monday, May 30, Memorial Day**  
 Huxley Communications office closed

**Friday, June 10 & Saturday, June 11**  
 Cambridge Jubilee Days

**Monday, July 4, Independence Day**  
 Huxley Communications office closed

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**Huxley Communications**  
 P.O. Box 36 • Huxley, IA 50124  
 515-597-2281 or 800-231-4922  
[www.huxcomm.net](http://www.huxcomm.net)  
[huxtel@huxcomm.net](mailto:huxtel@huxcomm.net)

**Free Internet Tech Support**  
 515-597-HELP (4357) • Available 24/7

**Report an Outage**  
 515-597-2281

**Call Before You Dig**  
 Iowa One Call • 800-292-8989

**Gary Clark**  
 General Manager

**Connie Patrick**  
 Business Office Manager

**Terry Ferguson**  
 Director of Operations

**Brant Strumpfer**  
 Plant Manager

## SPRING 2011



Layne Lettow

## Legislative Update – Wireless Needs Wires

America's rural communications providers have long demonstrated their commitment to providing landline services to rural consumers by investing heavily in an array of fiber and cable facilities. Nearly 60 percent of the members of National Telephone Cooperative Association (NTCA) offer some form of wireless service, including both mobile and fixed voice, broadband data, and texting. Yet doing so has never been easy, and still today, face many barriers. (Huxley Communications has been a partner in a cellular operation for many years.)

A common misconception is that WIRELESS can exist without landline. This is definitely not true. Of course, wireless carriers will try to toot their horns on what they offer, but they need the independent phone companies to carry their signals from one source to another. The calls, cellular data, or text message come from a cellphone radio device which is picked up by the cellular tower. The wire or fiber-optic line carries the call or data to a wireless access point. If

that call does not have the fiber provided by MANY independents, including Huxley Communications, the call or data cannot be completed or sent. All consumers need to realize that for Huxley Communications to continue, we need support in many forms to complete these calls.

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The first form of support is our low rate from our subscribers. The next is support from the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) and USF (Universal Service Fund) and rates we charge to the interexchange carriers for USING our



Gary Clark, General Manager,  
Huxley Communications

local lines to transport their customer (including you) for long distance. These long distance calls have been declining due to cellphones recently, but we would support all members who CONTINUE to use their landline for long distance.

In summary, we need our members to understand the many realities of communications. Please call us at 515-597-2281 or 800-231-4922 if you have ANY questions.

# Dangers of Multitasking While Driving

When cars were first invented, drivers expected just one thing—to get from point A to point B. Today’s drivers also have the ability to listen to music, talk on the phone, exchange text messages and emails, watch movies, and even surf the internet. But what price do we pay for this convenience?

Thousands of people die in the United States each year in crashes caused by drivers who are distracted by texting and other activities, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation. Half a million more suffer injuries in distraction-related crashes. These statistics are a stark reminder of the dangers of multitasking while driving, and Huxley Communications encourages our customers to keep your focus on driving when you get behind the wheel.

The risks of multitasking are especially high for teen drivers, who are already the most crash-prone drivers due to inexperience. Consider this:

- Texting drivers are 23 times more dangerous than attentive drivers.
- Texting while driving is about six times more likely to result in an accident than driving while intoxicated.
- For every six seconds of drive time, a driver sending or receiving a text message spends nearly five of those seconds with his or her eyes off the road. This makes texting the most distracting of all cellphone tasks.
- 51 percent of teens say they text while driving.
- Teen drivers are four times more likely than adults to get into car crashes or near crash events directly related to talking on a cellphone or texting.

There is no doubt that devices such as cellphones, smartphones, laptops, and netbooks can make our lives easier. For safety’s sake, however, the issue for all of us to think about is the “when and where” of their use. Doesn’t driving deserve our full concentration? Couldn’t we wait a few minutes to make that phone call or send that text? Do the teens in our lives understand the potential dangers? Technology is wonderful, but only if used responsibly.



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## Before, During, and After Storms

With spring storms in full swing, Huxley Communications would like to remind you that lightning strikes can travel through the telephone line and electric energy could possibly be transferred. This can affect any piece of electronic equipment that is plugged into a telephone jack. Please keep in mind these simple steps of what to do before, during, and after a storm:

**Before:** Unplug your electronic equipment if possible. Surge protectors cannot guarantee 100 percent protection.

**During:** Stay off the telephone unless you need to make an emergency call. Lightning does strike telephone lines and there is a chance you could be hurt if you are on a call.

**After:** If you have no dial tone, please check each device in your home that is plugged into a telephone jack. Unplug each device from the jack and electrical outlet, one at a time. After all devices are unplugged from the jack and electrical outlet, begin plugging in each device, one at a time, checking each time for a dial tone. If you still do not have a dial tone, report your trouble to our service department by calling 515-597-2281.



## Phone Discounts for Low-Income Users

Many low-income families qualify for assistance with phone charges, but don't realize that this help is available to them. If you're experiencing financial difficulties, or have a friend or family member in this situation, Huxley Communications encourages you to look into these programs:

**Lifeline** – Lifeline is a plan that assists qualified low-income Iowans by providing a monthly reduction on their telephone bill. This reduction varies by service provider and can range up to \$10.

**Link-Up** – Link-Up is a plan that assists qualified low-income Iowans in obtaining basic telephone service by providing reduced connection charges for basic phone service by 50 percent or \$30, whichever is less, and deferred payment of connection charges, without interest.

To be eligible for assistance in either or both programs, you must meet income-based criterion currently defined as at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines OR participate in at least one of the following:

- Medicaid
- Food Stamps
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- National School Lunch Program (NSL)
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program (TANF)

To learn more about Lifeline and Link-Up, visit the Universal Service Administrative Company's website at [www.lifelinesupport.org](http://www.lifelinesupport.org). Or simply give us a call at 515-597-2281 for further details, and to determine whether or not you qualify.

## Help Keep Our Technicians Safe

Approximately 4.7 million Americans are bitten by a dog each year and more than 50 percent of these bites occur on the dog owner's property. If you own a dog, we need your help to keep Huxley Communications' technicians safe when they visit your home to install telephone, internet, or TV services.

Alarmed by an unfamiliar person, dogs sometimes attempt to bite our technicians. Please follow these simple tips to reduce the likelihood of bites:

- Check your yard before letting your dog out to make sure our technician isn't on your property.
- When one of our technicians comes to your home, keep your dog inside and away from the door, either in another room or on a leash. Allow a safe path for this person to access your telephone, computer, and/or television.
- Make sure your dog remains restrained until our technician leaves the area.
- Don't let your child get close to our technician in the presence of your dog. A dog's instinct is to protect family members from strangers.

Thanks for your cooperation with this important safety issue.

