



JANUARY 2009

POTS



PLAIN OLD TELEPHONE SERVICE

POTS — or Plain old telephone service is the voice-grade telephone service that remains the basic form of residential and small business service connection to the telephone network in most parts of the world. The name is a reflection of the telephone service still available after the advent of more advanced forms of telephony such as ISDN, mobile phones and VoIP. It has been available almost since the introduction of the public telephone system in the late 19th century, in a form mostly unchanged to the normal user despite the introduction of touch-tone dialing, electronic exchanges and fiber-optic communication into the public switched telephone network (PSTN).

Basically, it's a good idea to make sure somewhere in the house, there's a corded telephone attached to a wall or sitting on a desk. A lot of people enjoy modern conveniences, like cordless telephones and making phone calls through their computer. However, they can also leave people without phone service when the power goes out if there isn't at least one corded phone plugged into a phone outlet somewhere in the house. Most cordless phones or computers require another power source to work. These corded phones that are plugged into a wall have their own power system that retains power despite power outages. ATC Communications as a company strives to have a quick response with generators that will run on diesel fuel, natural gas or propane to ensure that the phone service will remain. The recent ice storms in Nebraska affected many customers whom did not realize that their cordless phones would not work due to the power being out whereas, a corded phone would work. The vast majority of telephone lines are buried underground which helps to ensure that the phone service remains on despite the weather.

SIX TOP REASONS TO KEEP A LANDLINE

With times being difficult and the economic stability in question, it is time to decide where you can cut back on expenses. Your landline telephone is not necessarily the place to cut back. With cell phones becoming ever more popular it is easy to think that it may be all you need. There are a few things that you should consider before you make that decision.

- 1 If electricity is cut off due to weather or technical problems, do you have a way to charge your cell phone?
- 2 What if the tower that your cell reception comes off of is damaged.
- 3 For those of you that have young children, do you have a way that they can call 911 if you are not home?
- 4 What if your children try to call you and the reception is bad? Not just your cell phone but the one they are trying to call from?
- 5 If you have a babysitter while you go out, is there a phone at home they can use in emergencies?
- 6 Remember a land line is hardwired into your house, even if the electricity shuts down your landline phone will still work as long as you have a regular corded phone.

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THE BACKBONE OF ALL TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The universal service policy (NUSF) has served Nebraskans well for decades and should not be lightly cast aside. Significant changes should not be made without a full understanding of how the network works. It is important to note that while wireless (cell phone) service has spread, that technology is still dependent upon the land-line (or hard wire) communications network. Virtually all broadband Internet, cable, Wi-Fi, cell phone and land-line telecommunications service must reach a land-line local service provider in order to complete a connection. This means that virtually ALL of the “new” modes of telecommunications must still travel over the tried and true land-line network that the private telecommunications companies invest in and continually upgrade. This state-of-the-art “backbone” is the infrastructure that keeps all forms of telecommunications up and running.

Some may ask whether it’s more cost effective to just build cell towers in rural areas with USF dollars. But when you realize that a cell call in all areas of the state, including rural areas often travels to a tower, then underground and moves through a local network to complete phone calls, you begin to understand how critical it is for our regulatory and legislative officials to recognize the value of maintaining a solid land-line telecommunications backbone for all Nebraskans.

Perhaps the best explanation of the land-line provider’s role in this telecommunications network is this: the land-line backbone network is like our own Interstate 80. We can go faster on the Interstate than on any other road. And, there are “feeder” highways, blacktop and county roads that all get us to that main pipeline that is I-80. The fact is, privately owned land-line telecommunications companies built that “interstate”, and the road, that transports virtually every phone call, cell call, business transaction, Ebay transaction, and any other electronic information transfer. No matter whether we’re driving an eighteen wheel diesel or an electric hybrid we still have to travel the same road to get where we’re going; and in the case of telecommunications infrastructure, that road is built and maintained by private land-line telecommunications companies in Nebraska.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!
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