

There is a hint of green and Spring-time blooming! As school comes to an end, and the promise of Summer begins, we wish you a sunny and fun-filled season!

Vistabeam turns 5!

May 2004 was a big month for me. My son Diego was born, my brother Lex got married (both on the same day!) and Vistabeam turned on its first customers. We have grown a lot in five years! After starting out on three towers in Gering, Minatare and Torrington, we now have 70 towers in Wyoming and Nebraska, covering about 45,000 square miles. It has been a true pleasure to be able to build a successful business in this area and provide a needed service to our friends and neighbors. Thank you for your support and we look forward to serving you in the future!

Tips for watching online video

Even the fastest broadband isn't well-suited for many streaming video services to play seamlessly. However, there is a way to help keep your video running smoothly. Click the play button on your video when it comes up, but then hit pause while you continue surfing in another tab, or do other things on your computer. In most cases, this will allow the video to load while you are doing other things. When you hit the play button later, your video will play smoothly for you without timing out.

One word of caution – streaming HD services such as those available from Netflix, Hulu and Blockbuster are notorious bandwidth hogs and consume more bandwidth than all but the very fastest connections can deliver. Downloading a large video file over a longer period of time should work well, but trying to watch and download at the same time is probably going to be a frustrating experience. Please keep this in mind if you choose to use these services.

Calling Vistabeam – A Change to our Phone System

If you need to get in touch with us via telephone, we now have a quick menu to speedily connect you with the person who can help you. Simply call into our offices (308) 635-9434 and you'll be prompted to select:

- #1 for Sales
- #2 for Billing
- #3 for Technical Support

From day one, we have always wanted to have a system where your call was answered by a person instead of a machine. It was not an easy decision to install an automated menu for our inbound calls. We spent a lot of time looking at our options and found that a very short menu that picks up immediately and directs calls to the correct person was much more effective than having the call go to the wrong person or not get answered. On average, calls are getting answered 30 to 60 seconds earlier, hold times are shorter and customers are spending less time on the phone. We hope that this proves to be a positive change for our customers. Please let us know if you have any feedback on this change.

Using Your Digits – All Ten of Them

We have had a few of our VOIP customers call with dialing problems on their phones. These problems can be resolved quickly by using ten digit dialing when you call any numbers – that means that you have to dial the area code at the beginning of the number. We will be disabling seven digit dialing due to the confusion that this has led to. Thank you to our VOIP customers who called us to let us know about this issue.

Licensed for Speed

For our customers west of Scottsbluff, we've installed the first of our licensed backbone links. What this means is that we've increased the bandwidth 4 times over what we had before and the signal for this link is not going to be interfered with by any other systems.. This is only the beginning of our planned network upgrades for customers across the network. As the summer progresses, we will be installing higher capacity backhauls, backup connections, upgraded battery backups and higher capacity customer radios. The technology for wireless broadband gets better all the time, and Vistabeam will continually work toward improving your service.

We're walking on sunshine

Our Internet service had some ups and downs recently in the grips of the severe Spring storms that hit our area – and some of our equipment. A bright note: As a result, we now have a solid fiber optic connection, more backup links and higher capacity radios on our main access points help prevent lightning and radio interference problems. Thank you for weathering the storm with us. Welcome sunshine and clear skies!

Finally, a not-so-shocking reminder

During a storm, please stay off the Internet and telephone. Even better, make sure your computer is off the Internet as well, by unplugging your POE (the little white box connecting your computer or router to your outdoor equipment) and powering off your electronic equipment. These simple measures will help protect your equipment in the event of a lightning strike. Just don't forget to plug it back in after the storm!

Be safe and thank you for being our customer!

Matt Larsen, Owner

Vistabeam

p.s. Check out our redesigned website, www.vistabeam.com – we appreciate your feedback!