

Harmony Telephone Company Demonstrated Experience

Harmony Telephone Company was a family owned and operated telecommunications company from 1950 until 2006. In 2006, two area telecommunications cooperatives, Mabel Cooperative Telephone Company and Spring Grove Communications formed the partnership MSG Tel, Inc. to purchase Harmony Telephone Company. In 2018, this partnership was expanded to include MiEnergy Cooperative. As a part of the partnership agreement, a Management and Services Agreement was signed by all parties bringing together the board of directors and management from all three ownership entities to oversee and manage Harmony Telephone Company.

Members of the management team from affiliated companies:

- Brian Krambeer, President/Chief Executive Officer, MiEnergy Cooperative; Board of Directors President for MSG Tel, Inc. and Harmony Telephone Company
- Jill Huffman, Chief Operating Officer, Harmony Telephone Company; Chief Executive Officer, Spring Grove Communications;
- Vassil Vutov, Vice President of Information Technology, MiEnergy Cooperative

In 2002, Harmony Telephone Company began providing broadband services utilizing copper plant facilities. Harmony Telephone Company also has experience upgrading infrastructure to include fiber-to-the-premise having been awarded a previous OCIO grant and two federal ReConnect awards.

Since Harmony Telephone Company shares resources with Spring Grove Communications (SGC), it is beneficial that SGC has had a 100% fiber network since 2009. This has been useful for our technicians and customer service representatives to share best practices and knowledge through this process.

Harmony Telephone Company and all our affiliates are in small rural, primarily agricultural areas. As a part of a rural community, we are all very familiar with our customers, their needs, and how our services directly impact their daily lives.

The team at Harmony Telephone Company has the experience and dedication to support the Eastern Winneshiek FTTP Project. This build will utilize a GPON network design and can offer speeds up to 1G symmetrical. We provide Calix equipment that provides customers network protection and the ability to prioritize devices, filter content per device – creating another layer of safety for families, and the ability to schedule times devices can access the internet. Harmony Telephone Company prides itself on 100% network availability. If the network goes down for an extended amount of time, the customer will be credited appropriately. The mission for Harmony Telephone Company is to provide broadband services where residents and businesses are currently unserved or underserved and the entire staff has a passion for helping consumers meet their broadband needs.

Chief Operating Officer, Jill Huffman – Jill began her career in telecommunications at Harmony Telephone Company in 2004 as an accountant and was subsequently promoted to Vice President of Operations. In 2018, Jill joined Spring Grove Communications as Chief Executive Officer and through a management agreement continues to serve as the Chief Operating Officer for Harmony Telephone Company.

Network Operations Manager, Barry Churchill – Barry also joined the Harmony Telephone Company team in 2004 as a Customer Networking and Central Office Technician. In 2020, Barry was promoted to Network Operations Manager and oversees all networks, installation and repair technicians and ensures the network performs at optimal capacity.

Customer Experience and Sales Supervisor, Alissa Stelpflug – With 13 years of experience at Harmony Telephone Company, Alissa is poised to handle all the customer service, sales and marketing tasks this project incorporates. Alissa has extensive knowledge of all customer support platforms in order to ensure compliance and that future customers will have a trouble free experience.

Accounting Manager, Marsha LaFreniere – Marsha's accounting position is shared across three broadband providers giving her excellent exposure to not only financial accounting but compliance with program grants and loans. As a controller with her previous company, Marsha has an in-depth understanding of the need for compliance with all grant and loan award terms as well as the compilation of data for reporting and financial statement completion.

Technical Staff – The technicians for Harmony Telephone Company have extensive knowledge and experience with central office, both company and customer networks, network and device troubleshooting, plant maintenance and inside wiring. These technicians have expertise with infrastructure consisting of fiber optics, copper, fixed wireless and coax. Our company culture revolves around a total customer experience for optimal broadband service. We assist customers with all their needs from the core network to all connected devices within the home.

Customer Experience – Our customer experience representatives are trained not only in traditional customer service duties but also serve as help desk representatives for technical support. They are extremely knowledgeable in all of our customer management platforms and are well versed in ongoing service support and can assist subscribers with all of their broadband inquiries. These representatives understand it's not enough to provide a connection to a customer. We must be able to help our customers fully utilize their broadband connection.

The following references are a testament to the commitment Harmony Telephone Company brings to providing broadband services in the rural area we serve. We strive to work with our customers and communities to understand their needs, obstacles they may face and assisting with developing solutions to resolve these.

July 2021

Office of the Chief Information Officer of the State of Iowa
200 E. Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50309

RE: Empower Rural Iowa, Emergency Broadband Grant Program – NOFA #006

To whom it may concern,

This Letter is a recommendation for Harmony Telephone services.

I started with Harmony telephone many years ago by allowing Harmony telephone to put a repeater on my grain leg. At that time I was super impressed with the communication with the company during this install.

I immediately switched my business service to Harmony.

This company is on their game to move forward with service to customers in the future.

From their office staff, tech's and equipment , they are always on top of things to satisfy their customers.

An Example - Most companies in any business wait for customers to call with a problem, not Harmony. When , which is few and far between, if they have service issues due to equipment issues or storm damage to equipment all customers get a voice message letting us know there is an issue and as soon as they have us back on line we get an immediate voicemail again letting us know they are up and running. VERY professional.

I also was a project manager on a 9 building subdivisions where we had to install equipment in all buildings. They always answer the phone, make a schedule and keep you posted daily on the schedule.

I highly recommend and see a big future in Broadband communication with Harmony Telephone Services.

Thank you for considering Harmony Telephone Company.

Sincerely,

K. Rodney Beers
Beers Farm's L.L.C.

July 15, 2021

Office of the Chief Information Officer of the State of Iowa
200 E. Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50309

RE: Empower Rural Iowa, Emergency Broadband Grant Program – NOFA #006

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to give my recommendation for Harmony Telephone Company (HTC) services. They have a successful history of providing quality broadband speeds, as well as a strong reputation that includes reliability, excellent customer service, and a dedicated community commitment. I am confident in their capabilities of expanding their remarkable services.

Customer service and tech support is a priority for each customer interaction with HTC. Their employees take the time to find out the root of the challenge and not just find a temporary solution, but the best solution for the long term. They value the relationship with all customers and are willing to go above and beyond especially in installation, reliable connections, and in home products.

My husband and I have been receiving internet service from HTC since their first year of offered internet service coming on as customer #15! Providers in our area were limited to either satellite, which proved extremely expensive, or through cell phone hotspot, which is still completely unreliable in our location. HTC has always gone above and beyond in providing us with reliable internet connection, open communication, and quick support! This is why we recommend their service and want them to offer expanded service opportunities.

Thank you for considering Harmony Telephone Company.

Sincerely,

Carrie Mathison
21975 140th Street
Preston, MN 55965
501-272-5270

July 2021

Office of the Chief Information Officer of the State of Iowa
200 E. Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50309

RE: Empower Rural Iowa, Emergency Broadband Grant Program – NOFA #006

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to inform you of my recommendation for Harmony Telephone Company services. In September of 2015 I switched services to Harmony Telephone Company as they were competitive with their pricing. What I did not realize was that their customer service was outstanding.

I am a telephonic triage nurse and work from home, I need reliable, dependable service.

If there is an outage they give me an estimated time of repair or text me when the service is up and running. (Which has happened once in almost 6 years.)

If I call the receptionist, they are able to assist me in looking at my bandwidth to see if they can troubleshoot and if they cannot, they get a technician on it immediately.

When I call, having possible slow downs or hesitations they do follow up calls to confirm the issue is resolved, no matter if it is due to my work server or the internet. They have wonderful follow through.

They have a successful history of providing state of the art broadband speeds, as well as a strong reputation for reliability, excellent customer service, and a dedicated community commitment. I am confident in their capabilities of expanding their remarkable services.

Customer service and tech support is a priority for each customer interaction. Their employees take the time to find out the root of the challenge and not just find a temporary solution, but the best solution. They value the relationship with all customers.

Thank you for considering Harmony Telephone Company.

Sincerely, Halley Wise