

Harmony Telephone Company Demonstrated Experience

Harmony Telephone Company (HTC) 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 a partnership 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 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 USDA 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 our fiber deployments.

Harmony Telephone Company and all our affiliates are in 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 and improve their daily lives.

The team at Harmony Telephone Company has the experience and dedication to support the Rural Howard FTTP Project. This build will utilize a GPON network design and can offer speeds up to 1G symmetrical speeds. We provide Calix equipment that provides customers network protection and the ability to prioritize devices, filter content per device – creating another layer of security for households, and the ability to schedule times devices can access the internet. Harmony Telephone Company prides itself on 100% network availability. If there is a network outage for an extended amount of time, the customer will be credited appropriately. Harmony Telephone participates in the Federal Lifeline Program and Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, offering support for low-income households to stay connected.

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 Manager, 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. Our technicians are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, providing our customers reliable, rapid service.

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 references listed 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 any issues. Our goal is to improve the lives of the customers we serve.