



the talk of Bloomer

I hope you had a great Holiday Season! As I reflect back on 2007, what an exciting year for Bloomer Telephone Company. Our employees visited every home in the City of Bloomer to determine how our fiber network would connect to each house. In the meantime construction crews placed the fiber optic cable throughout town. In August the electronics for the network was delivered. Our first customer was converted to fiber in September. What a milestone!

We will spend the next several months converting all of our city customers to the fiber network. One of the exciting new applications that we can do on our fiber optic network is to provide television. We have applied for a cable franchise from the city and expect to offer television sometime during this quarter.

As a thank you to our Internet customers for your cooperation during the construction of the network, we will be offering existing high-speed Internet customers within the city of Bloomer six months of our new 15 megabit service at no additional charge. Details will follow as we complete the final hook ups to your home.

We will have the NFL Network and the Big Ten Channel along with numerous high definition channels. You will be able to see who is calling you right from your television and also access your email. These are just a few of the exciting new features that will be available.

Most important is to continue providing the best local service we can. We look forward to meeting and hopefully, exceeding your expectations during 2008.



Jim Smart,
General Manager



On November 13th, Bloomer Telephone held a ribbon cutting ceremony and demonstration of the new fiber network. From left to right: David Olson, President, Bloomer Community Visitor Center; Michele Eberle, President, Bloomer Chamber of Commerce; Janet Thur, Mayor of Bloomer; Jim Smart, General Manager Bloomer Telephone; Bruce Barlow, President, Bloomer Industrial Development Corp. Photo courtesy of Bloomer Advance.

2008 Directory Cover Challenge

Thank you to all of our customers who participated in our 2008 Directory Cover Challenge. Between our Bloomer Telephone entries and Citizens Telephone Cooperative, Inc. customers' entries, we had over 180 photographs entered for our contest! Special thanks to Barry Hoff, Editor of the Bloomer Advance, for helping the Directory Challenge Committee choose the final four winners. The 1st Place photograph is featured on the cover of the 2008 Blue Diamond Regional Directory.

Congratulations to our "Final Four" 2008 Directory Cover Challenge Winners:

- 1st Place: Clare Hewitt, New Auburn — VTech 5.8 Ghz Three Handset Cordless Phone System
- 2nd Place: Brenda Randall, Bloomer — VTech 6.0 Cordless Phone
- 3rd Place: Jerry Iverson, Bloomer — VTech 6.0 Cordless Phone
- 4th Place: Ben & Kathy Brandstatter, New Auburn — VTech 6.0 Cordless Phone

All Bloomer Residents should have received their new Telephone Directory in December 2007.

Inside:

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- 3 How to Put iPod Songs in Library Format
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New Computer?

Computer Security Protection with Managed Installation and Support

We are pleased to offer a new robust security tool, SecureIT Plus, for business and consumers. Your time is valuable and so is the data on your computer. But if you're like many of us, you may not be a computer security expert. Even if you choose a software security tool for your computer, configuring these programs can require security expertise. SecureIT Plus provides computer security with the added benefit of personal support that is not available from most software security solutions on the market today. You get personalized technical support for your installation— plus a service guarantee.

Do you find yourself engaging in any of the following activities on your computer or while using the Internet?

- ✓ Storing sensitive or private information on your computers such as financial software (Quicken, Money Central, QuickBooks to name only a few) and business information.
- ✓ Frequently shopping and purchasing online.
- ✓ Frequently browsing the Internet.
- ✓ Frequently using search engines to locate general information.
- ✓ Downloading Internet programs such as instant messaging, weather trackers, and other freeware utilities.
- ✓ Wanting and expecting a high level of performance from your computer.
- ✓ Managing your kids' use of the Internet and attempting to repair your computer when something becomes corrupt.
- ✓ Purchasing a new computer only to watch it get slower and slower since plugging into the Internet.

If you answered yes to any of the activities listed above, then SecureIT Plus can help ensure that your computer is optimized and secure.

SecureIT Plus provides fully automated protection and removal of viruses, spyware, adware, automated installation of tested Microsoft patches, and monthly e-mail reporting. It also provides comprehensive security protection to stop viruses and worms from invading your computer, and/or sending out e-mails on its behalf, and potentially stopping the computer from functioning. Best of all you receive free professional installation, technical support, and guaranteed protection for this service – **all for just \$4.95 per month** on your monthly Bloomer Telephone bill.

These services are guaranteed and are updated automatically. If you do have problems with an Internet-delivered issue while using SecureIT Plus services, your computer will be repaired by SecureIT's technical support team at no charge. At just \$4.95 per month, you'll find your computing and Internet experience much more fun and productive. Please call our office today and get started immediately with this great new service.

Bloomer Affiliated Data Storage Site Will Offer Customers Back Up Solutions

Wisconsin Independent Network (WIN) and its sister company, Airstream Communications, are the backbone providers of Internet services to 100,000 customers in Wisconsin including our Bloomer Internet service. Bloomer Telephone is part owner of WIN and Airstream. WIN is an integral part of our link to the information superhighway carrying voice and data communications to the Internet and the public network over fiber. Soon, through WIN and its new secure data center, we will begin offering new services to our customers.

Specifically, we will be offering secure data back-up for your PCs or business workstations and servers. This is an ideal, local solution for those of you looking for a back-up storage solution.

WIN has a new 4,200 square feet data center in Eau Claire. This new facility is state-of-the-art. It is designed with advanced information security systems, power-saving data storage arrays, and a redundant electrical supply, with a back-up generator, which can automatically switch to "back-up mode" without power interruption. All these features ensure that data is always available and will not be lost.

Data centers are needed to store large amounts of critical information. New regulations are requiring businesses such as financial and health care organizations to store information in geographically separate locations, ensuring that a disaster does not destroy the data.

Any type of business, farm, or individual can benefit from using the service. If you ever have lost valuable information when a hard drive crashed in the past, this new service will provide you with peace of mind ensuring that you can recover your valuable files, photos and documents quickly and easily with this new service. Watch our web site and the mail for more details in coming months.

How to Put iPod Songs in Library Format in 3 Simple Steps

Working with an iPod for the very first time can be a little intimidating. But with some basic instructions you can be a pro in minutes. One of the most important things to learn is how to put iPod songs in library format.

Making sure you know how to put MP3 songs into the library format will help you keep track of purchases and enable you to create special play lists for different days of the week or moods or whatever the occasion.

To get started in learning how to put in the MP3 library, you'll first need to select a Web site from which to purchase your songs. Most people initially use Apple's site, iTunes, to learn how to put iPod songs into the MP3 library, but others are available. (See our chart on this page.) Each site offers instructions on how to store iPod songs.

After selecting a site, create an account and begin purchasing songs. Most sites will offer you access to the store, or available songs, and then will let you buy the titles or full albums to begin learning how to store iPod or MP3 files in a digital library.

Once you have made a purchase, the songs you've bought should appear in your purchases' list. From here you can store and manage digital MP3 files for your iPod by following the prompts to create your own play lists. These lists can be organized any way you like, with your purchases showing up on more than one of your play lists.

After your play lists are made, you can store MP3 songs on your actual portable device by simply downloading or syncing the play lists to your iPod. Because you've created a master list on

your computer before downloading, your songs will appear in the same order for playing on the iPod itself.

Once you learn how to put iPod songs in library format, you'll find managing your music is much easier. An iPod can only hold a certain amount of songs, so learning how to store and manage these MP3 and digital files can give you the freedom to enjoy the songs you want when you want and then remove them temporarily for an entirely new mix.

To learn more about how an iPod works, how to transfer music, videos, and library lists go to <http://www.ipodaudiosgold.com/how-to-put-ipod-songs-in-library-format/>

Well Known Music Download Sites

The following Music Download Comparison Chart was taken from ConsumerSearch.com

| Model (file format) | Estimated price |
|---|---|
| Napster (WMA) | 99¢ per track, \$10 monthly subscription, \$15 monthly Napster To Go, free limited PC streaming |
| Rhapsody (WMA) | 89¢ or 99¢ per track, \$13 monthly PC streaming, \$15 monthly Rhapsody To Go |
| iTunes (AAC) | 99¢ per track |
| Yahoo! Music Unlimited/ MusicMatch (WMA) | 99¢ per track (subscribers pay 79¢), \$72 yearly PC streaming, \$144 yearly Yahoo! Unlimited To Go subscription |
| Wal-Mart (WMA) | 88¢ per track for WMA files, 94¢ per track for MP3 files, albums in WMA and MP3 format available (price varies by number of tracks) |
| eMusic (MP3) | \$10 monthly for 30 tracks, \$15 monthly for 50 tracks, \$20 monthly for 75 tracks |



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How to Find Some of the Best Free Digital Photo Editing Software

for Your New Digital Camera by Gregg Hall

A good editing software can greatly improve the look and quality of the pictures you take on your digital camera.

We wanted to make you aware of some free photo editing tools available on the Internet:

Kodak EasyShare Freeware. *This may be the most well known type of software it is easy to use for people who have just bought a new camera.*

Infran View. *With this specific type of software you can change the tone of the graphics as well as the way the picture was taken and you can crop the shot how you like it. All these features come in one simple and free software program which is easy to use.*

Image Force. *This is another type of free editing software to edit your photos. This software has a tool that will let you transfer pictures from the digital camera to scanners. This software is also made for modifying your photos and enhancing the looks of the photos.*

VCW Photo Editor. *This free editing software allows you to enhance looks and modify graphics on the photos which you are editing.*

PhotoFilter. *This is a simple software program. Though it has limited features, it has a user interface and many image adjustments buttons, effects and filters.*

Picture Shark. *This free editing program will allow you to write on the photo which you are editing. That's right, you can actually write on the photo. This is very nice if you want to add something like an autograph look to a picture.*

Picasa. *This is a freeware from Google. Picasa allows you to name your photos and categorize each according to size. The program simplifies locating the picture when you need to edit them. You simply take the pictures that are saved on your computer and start editing them with Picasa by just dropping them in the editing area of the software.*

Serif Photo Plus. *This editing software allows you to crop, enhance the graphics, slice, and much more.*

ADG Panorama Version 5.0. *Like most other editing programs, this program allows you to share your photos as well as edit them. You can edit 360 degrees around the photo to which you are editing.*

These are just a few of the editing tools you can buy and download to edit your photos. So download your free software and get to editing those pictures today.

CPNI (Customer Proprietary Network Information) Rules Now In Effect

We've been communicating with you regarding some new FCC (Federal Communications Commission) rules on disclosing your proprietary network information and protecting your privacy. These rules went in to effect on December 8, 2007 for all telecommunications companies across the country.

This is just a reminder that when you contact us regarding your services we are now required to authenticate your identity.

- 1) Over the phone, we will need to establish/verify your identity by asking you for a password.
- 2) In person, we are now required to ask you for a photo ID.

We know these rules may seem cumbersome, but we must follow them thoroughly. We will do everything possible to ensure your requests are handled as efficiently as possible. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.