

WTS CONNECTION/Friona/Bovina

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System gets \$500,000 upgrade

**By Amy Linzey
Chief Executive Officer
and General Manager**

We wanted to make you aware that we have spent approximately a half million dollars recently to upgrade our systems. This upgrade includes a new Metaswitch in Hereford, a Minerva System Upgrade, an INCA system and we will be installing a new billing system in the next few months. The Minerva and INCA system upgrades are necessary to support our IPTV system. The billing system will give us capabilities that have not been available previously. An example is On-line bill pay. In addition to our fiber-to-the-premise (FTTP) network, these systems upgrades are to ensure that we continue to provide the best service available to our customers. Hereford and Bushland are now Smart Communities as a result of our installation of FTTP. Coupled with these systems upgrades, our video service is up-to-date-state-of-the-art. If you need a GIG of Bandwidth, we have you covered.

We are working on placing infrastructure in Friona and Bovina to allow us to send the IPTV feed from Hereford to their area. This will allow us to offer more channels and High Def Channels to

our Friona and Bovina customers. We will also be able to extend this service to our customers residing in the service area of West Texas Rural Telephone Cooperative where we have installed fiber.

Like every video provider in the world, we receive some of our content over satellite. We broadcast what we receive. Even though we make every effort to ensure our content is "crystal clear", atmospheric conditions do create pixilation and at times freezing. I moved 4 times in 4.5 years and have had Time Warner, Suddenlink, AT&T Universe, and Dish. I can assure you that this occurs with all providers at some point. We all receive some of our programming feed the same way, via satellite.

With our sophisticated technologies, we are most often able to detect problems with our systems and facilities as we monitor these systems constantly. Our Systems and Facilities Team members receive "alerts" and can remotely log in with their computers to the system to determine what is occurring and repair the problem. This often occurs without you being aware that a problem has even occurred.

During normal business hours (8 am to 5:30 pm),

our Operations Center Team is available to work with you to resolve any problems you may be experiencing. If they are unable to resolve the issue remotely, they will send a Repair Team member to your home or business.

Our Installation and Repair Team members are available between 8 am and 8 pm to assist you in the event you have a problem with your service. Please note that we extended the time to 8 pm from 6pm approximately three years ago to allow time for you to return home from work and if there is a problem you can call us and we will have time to work with you to resolve the issue that evening.

Between 8 pm and 8 am, our On-call Repair Team member will assist our customers over the telephone with many common issues that arise. For example:

- They can assist you in re-booting the set-top-box, DVR, or modems.
- They can assist you with changing the 'input' selection. They can advise you if your Remote needs new batteries. These are easily changed and we recommend you keep a supply on hand.

- They can contact our Sys (See **SYSTEM**, Page 2)

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SYSTEM UPGRADES

**Payment by draft
means 1% discount**

WT Services Friona/Bovina customers can get a one percent discount by paying their bill by bank draft.

Customers who authorize draft payment agree to have their bank account drafted for the amount of their outstanding balance on their account with WT Services. Drafts will occur between the 20th and 23rd of each month.

To arrange for payment of your WT Services bill via bank draft and net the one percent savings, contact the WT Services office in Friona at 1010 Columbia.



**Happy
Thanksgiving**

Friona/Bovina: Smart Communities with Fiber to the Premise—by WT Services

System upgrade to improve...continued from Page 1

tems and Facilities On-Call Team member for assistance if they believe there is a system problem. The Systems and Facilities On-Call Team member may be able to remote view the equipment known as the ONT on your house to check for problems.

If we are unable to correct the problem over the telephone, our On-Call Repair Team member will schedule a service call the next morning. If you insist that a service call be made between 8 pm and 8 am, you will be charged \$100 for this after hours service call. This fee helps us keep our overall costs to provide service as low as practical.

I have the experience of numerous service providers and we are the only provider that will come to your residence in the middle of the night to repair your service. I can assure you that other providers will try to assist you over the phone, but if they have to send a repairman, I was advised by both companies that they would schedule a service call within 10 days. My current provider advised that I could come to their office (25 miles away from my home) the next business day (it was a 3-day holiday weekend) and pick up a new DVR.

Please know that we always strive to provide the best possible service to you at reasonable rates. We are continually looking for ways to improve how we oper-

ate and our technologies. We have invested millions of dollars in infrastructure and technologies. The service

It can be used as a lure to attract individuals to a dark alley where they'll become victims of crime. It authenticates your email account, knows where you are at any given time, and can turn on your smart phone camera. It is so popular that hackers have created "clone versions" that can steal your identity and empty your bank account.

What goes on here — the latest malware from Islamic State, Russian hackers or other criminals or terrorists? Actually, no, the above incidents are side effects from the launch of the newest version of Pokemon, an augmented reality game.

Make no mistake, the game is fun, possibly even addictive to dedicated fans, who cut across all social, cultural, economic and political strata and range in age from tiny tots to octogenarians. But sometimes the game takes control of the player. Already there have been news stories of people so "glued to their smartphone screens" that they walk into oncoming traffic and even off cliffs.

As if self-inflicted video game injuries weren't bad enough, Pokemon addiction becomes a broader pub-

available in the communities we serve is better than what is available in many urban areas. We are proud to serve

lic safety issue when automobile drivers focus on capturing cute cartoonish characters on their iPhones, instead of paying attention to the road ahead of them.

Law enforcement agencies have stepped in with measures to ensure common sense — and separation of game playing from driving and other important activities that require one's full focus and attention.

Those are the obvious and predictable hazards. Just as concerning to law enforcement agencies are potential harms that few anticipated.

As Subsentio IT Support Technician Hank Grablewski explains, "This is not a new technology, but most people don't understand what they're getting involved in."

Playing Pokemon requires the player to provide full access to his or her phone, camera, GPS and email. Knowing where the player is at all times enables Pokemon's wizards to overlay images of popular game characters on an "augmented reality" view of the player's actual physical location.

"It's fully integrated with the GPS in your phone you're

our customers with state-of-the-art technology.

Don't Pokemon yourself over a cliff

seeing the exact spot and a character you can capture and play the game," says Grablewski, who adds, "Everyone who plays this new game can end up going to the same Pokemon spot."

That's where problems pop up on the cyber front. The Pokemon app itself is not secure. As a result, the number and types of crimes possible are wide open.

Hackers can easily broach the system to capture a player's GPS data, then set up a "Pokemon spot" that lures victims to a physical location where instead of capturing a cute game character they are accosted by a real life predator who commits robbery, or worse. Other dangers could happen such as stalkers and pedophiles luring children to secluded spots on the map.

Another common scam: Some perpetrators offer to "manage" a Pokemon player's game for pay if he'll give them access and control of the smartphone. Then it's "Goodbye iPhone" or Android phone and the "PokeCrook" walks off with a victim's \$700 device.

Grablewski also notes risk of identity theft.