

In Touch

WINTER 2019



We Wish You Joy and Peace This Holiday Season

Happy Holidays from all of us at UniTel. We hope you experience the joy that comes from time with people you love and the peace that comes from gratitude for nature's beauty.

It's been our privilege to help connect you to the world through our communications services. We look forward to the coming year and the new opportunities it will bring.

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Office Closures
December 24 & 25 for Christmas
January 1 for New Year's Day

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CHRISTMAS *entertainment* LOADING...
ENJOY FASTER, MORE FESTIVE INTERNET

It's time to tech the halls and make your family merrier when they use all their devices. A super-fast internet connection will eliminate annoying buffering and enhance your experiences while streaming, video chatting, gaming, and more.

Give your family the gift of an internet upgrade!

CALL 948-3900

TO SIGN UP FOR SPEEDS UP TO 1 GIGABIT*

*Service availability and internet speed will depend on location. Certain restrictions apply. Contact us for details.

Video Chats Can Help You Feel Closer During the Holidays

In a perfect world, families would all be together in one place to celebrate the holidays. But as families grow and spread to different cities, it's often not feasible for everyone to attend holiday events in person. Fortunately, video chats—via services such as Skype, FaceTime, and Google Hangouts—allow faraway family members to make a virtual appearance and participate in activities remotely. To quote the vintage commercial for long distance, "It's the next best thing to being there."

While you can use a variety of devices for video chats, you may find using a tablet to be the most practical option. Some families set a tablet at the empty spot around the dining room table so the person who's away can participate in the conversation. Or you could pass around a tablet to family gathered for the gift exchange so the person being streamed into the room can share in the excitement as each gift is unwrapped.

You don't have to limit video chatting to major holiday events either. A quick, spontaneous chat can be a fun way to stay connected at any time of the year.



Looking for Creative Gift Exchange Ideas?

Buying and exchanging holiday gifts can start to feel "same old, same old" after awhile. If you'd like to inject more variety, surprises, and meaning into the process this year, consider these ideas:

A Themed Exchange

Everyone in your group must stick to the chosen theme when buying gifts. This provides a fun challenge and narrows the focus to avoid feeling overwhelmed by unlimited gift possibilities. The theme could be whatever you want it to be, such as:

- Made in America
- Anything Red or Green
- Local Products Only
- Experiences (like event tickets or movie theater gift cards)
- Gifts to Make People Laugh
- Thrift Store (or Dollar Store) Finds
- Items Handmade by You
- Edible Gifts

Grab Bag

Each person brings a wrapped gift, which is placed in a large bag to keep hidden from view. You're encouraged to contribute unusual or intriguingly shaped gifts, or to package them deceptively, for maximum surprise value. People then take turns choosing a gift from the bag based solely on what it feels like on the outside.

Musical Gifts

This idea is a variation on the children's game of musical chairs. Everyone brings a wrapped gift to the party. As Christmas music plays, one gift is passed from person to person in the room until the song is stopped. The person holding the gift when the music stops gets to keep it.

Swap Toys with Santa

Have children in your home? Along with cookies and milk, have them leave a few of their gently used toys under the tree on Christmas Eve for Santa to "take back to the North Pole for the elves to spruce up for other kids." (You can donate the toys to a local nonprofit organization after the holidays.)

Regardless of how you decide to exchange holiday gifts, be sure to fully enjoy the biggest gift of them all—hanging out with people you care about.



BBB Reminds You to Donate Wisely to Charities

Charitable giving tends to peak during the holiday season, whether motivated by the year-end deadline for tax deductions, the goodness of generous hearts, or both. The Better Business Bureau (BBB) wants donors to give carefully to avoid charity scams, so it's released this list of tips:

- **Know the charity's exact name and contact information/website.** Thousands of charities have similar names and charities can be easily confused.
- **Take time to research a charity before deciding to give.** Resist pressure to give money on the spot, whether from a telemarketer or a solicitor canvassing the neighborhood.
- **Review a charity's website for the basics.** A legitimate charity will list its mission, program details, and finances openly on its website. If basic information is not available, request the information and search for a national charity report at give.org.
- **Be aware some organizations will use emotional, heart-wrenching stories.** This is done to urge potential donors to make an emotional decision, rather than a rational one. Find out how your money will be used to help those in need.
- **Ask for details about how a donation is used.** If a charity says its mission is to help the needy, find out specifically how the targeted population will be helped and where your donation will go geographically. Don't be afraid to ask what percentage of your donation is spent on actual program activities versus fundraising expenses. In order for a charity to meet BBB standards, no more than 35 percent of related contributions can be spent on fundraising.
- **Remember, not all donations to soliciting organizations will be considered tax exempt.** Check an organization's tax status with the IRS at <https://apps.irs.gov/app/eos>.
- **When donating online, make sure you're on the verified website of a legitimate charity.** Don't enter any personal or financial information on sites that aren't secure. Check for the lock symbol and the URL will start with <https://>.

To see the "BBB Holiday Guide to Help Consumers Shop Smart and Give Wisely," visit www.bbb.org/council/holiday-helper/holiday-tips.



December 26 is Candy Cane Day

The candy cane is an iconic symbol of the holiday season, often used on Christmas trees, wreaths, and garlands. So it makes sense that December 26 was selected for National Candy Cane Day.

While typically peppermint-flavored and white with red stripes, the candy cane can be found in many flavors and colors. There's also variety in the folklore surrounding its origin.

Some say the candy was invented by priests in the 1400s and was originally straight and solid-white in color. A popular legend claims a choirmaster at the Cologne Cathedral in Germany bent straight sugar sticks into the shape of shepherd's staffs and handed them out to children at living nativity services on Christmas Eve in 1670. Another story says that in 1847, a German-Swedish immigrant named August Imgard of Wooster, Ohio, asked a candy maker to add a crook to the canes to justify giving candy to children during worship services.

Regardless of how they got their start, candy canes are now part of many sweet traditions.



20 Reasons to Have a Home Phone in 2020

When you ring in the New Year, make sure some of the ringing is coming from a home phone! You'll get these benefits:

1. Address displays with 911 calls.
2. Better sound quality and clarity.
3. Consistent signal strength.
4. Works during electrical outage.
5. No need to charge battery.
6. Unlimited local calling.
7. Never drops your calls.
8. Can't be hacked.
9. Saves money with a bundle.
10. Provides a directory listing.
11. Offers better security.
12. Serves as cell phone backup.
13. Won't get lost at home.
14. No searching when it rings.
15. Easier for children to use.
16. Keeps you reachable when cell phone silenced.
17. Streamlined dialing.
18. No worries about dead battery.
19. Durable even if dropped.
20. No software upgrades needed.

Call 948-3900 to ask about our affordable options for home phone service.

Your Computer Wants You to Keep These New Year's Resolutions

As you make New Year's resolutions related to your finances, health, and personal growth, don't forget to include your computer on that list. Sticking to the resolutions below can reduce the number of computer problems you experience.

Do backups often.

Hopefully you're already doing this. If not, resolve to start now. You can keep this second set of your files on an external hard drive or an online storage service.

Restart your computer weekly.

RAM (Random Access Memory) is your computer's main type of memory, and it's constantly in flux. When you restart your computer, you flush out the random, unimportant, and temporary data bogging it down. This can allow your computer to run a lot faster.

Stop eating and drinking near your computer.

Granted, this can be a difficult habit to break. But it's worth the effort. You don't want to damage your computer by spilling a cup of coffee or dropping crumbs between the keys.

Clean the screen and keyboard regularly.

Dust, hair, and other debris can adversely affect your computer's performance. Dust large areas with a microfiber cloth and use a small clean paintbrush to dust keys and small crevices. Canned air also works well to dislodge dust and other small debris that can be difficult to remove.

Keep your passwords strong and varied.

Make sure yours are as long as possible; contain a mix of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols; and have no personal information or dictionary words. It's also important to use a unique password for each account. If this seems like too much work, get a password manager.

Close programs you're not currently using.

The problem with running too many programs simultaneously is that your computer may slow down or even freeze.

**Thank you for being a valued UniTel customer!
We appreciate your business!**

