



BAND Together Newsletter

Executive Director Report: December Momentum, Milestones, and Holiday Cheers

December began with exciting momentum for BAND members. Early in the month, we kicked off the **72nd BAND Annual Meeting** in Bismarck. We were honored that **Governor Kelly Armstrong** joined us as the featured speaker and shared his appreciation for the work our members have done to make North Dakota the most fiber-connected state in the nation—and hopefully the first state to ensure every resident has access to high-speed Internet.

Related to the Governor's remarks North Dakota's **Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD)** plan was officially approved by **NTIA**. This approval marks an important step to ensure that funding reaches the broadband providers, which includes a BAND member, positioned to put in the work to deliver high-quality fiber broadband to the remaining unserved in North Dakota.

It's important to note that these final unserved locations aren't tucked away in the most remote corners of the state—they're within an hour of our largest cities, in areas historically served by major national companies that chose not to invest in fiber. Now, with BEAD funding and committed community-based providers stepping up, these households will finally gain access to the same fast, reliable connectivity the rest of North Dakota has enjoyed for years.

During the **Annual Meeting**, BAND members engaged in discussions on the topics shaping the future of our industry. We explored the role of AI, examined the impacts of federal laws and regulations, and shared strategies for maintaining network security. Equally important, we cherished the opportunity to reconnect in person, strengthening the relationships that enable us to work productively for rural North Dakota. We concluded the conference with robust support for our PAC during a lively auction hosted by PAC Chair and auctioneer **Scott Bachmeier**. The funds raised will allow us to continue supporting elected officials who advocate for our members and the communities they serve.

We will keep you posted in 2026 on the positive impact our members provide to North Dakota. On behalf of the BAND members, Happy Holidays!



North Dakota Leads USA Broadband

ND on Track to Become First State With 100% Broadband Coverage

North Dakota on track to be first in nation with 100% broadband internet access

BAND Member Spotlight: Dakota Central

Creating Partnerships to Foster Innovation and Economic Development in Rural North Dakota

For decades, Dakota Central has strategically invested in its fiber network, laying the groundwork for several public-private partnerships that support local communities. Collaborations with entities like the

University of Jamestown and the **Jamestown Regional Medical Center** enable the delivery of state-of-the-art services that address the growing needs for distance learning and telemedicine, extending their reach in providing essential resources. Additionally, corporations such as **Applied Digital**, **Dakota Growers Pasta Company**, and **Cavendish Farms** are creating jobs and driving economic benefits for rural central North Dakota. Notably, one partnership has delivered unique support to children with developmental disabilities and delays through the **Anne Carlsen Center**.



DAKOTA CENTRAL

Dakota Central first partnered with the **Anne Carlsen Center** in 2004. Located in Jamestown, the heart of Dakota Central's service area, the center offers residential care, therapy, early intervention, education, behavioral health, and community-based programs through innovative technology and evidence-based practices designed to unlock potential and foster independence. The integration of Dakota Central's fiber internet technology and technical support is crucial in delivering this advanced level of care. Over the years, remote centers have been established throughout the state, where other BAND members contribute connectivity.

The **Anne Carlsen Center** garners immense public support from state officials, including **Lt. Governor Michelle Strinden**, who also serves on the **Anne Carlsen Center** board.

In August of this year, the **Anne Carlsen Center** hosted an **Accessible Gaming Day** for their students and the broader community, coining the phrase "Inclusive Play!" This event was supported by Dakota Central and the **University of Jamestown** e-Sports program. This event is a shining example of the power of partnerships for the benefit of the community.

Dakota Central's extensive 4,000 miles of fiber internet across nine counties not only offers reliable connectivity to its 9,500 customers but also empowers rural North Dakotans with job, healthcare, and educational opportunities, ultimately boosting local economies. Dakota Central sustains these benefits through private investment, grants, and continues its critical work with the support of the **universal Service Fund**.

Upcoming Events

July 7-8
BAND Summer Meeting (Bismarck, ND)



Get in Touch & Stay Connected!

**Carissa Swenson,
Executive Director**

I am happy to provide information or speak at an event. If you aren't already subscribed to this newsletter, [please join our mailing list](#).



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