

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTION

Winter 2019 Newsletter

## Blackfoot Highlights

As we close out 2019, we are more thankful than ever for the trust you, our member-owners have placed upon us. This year we were busy delivering products and services to more than 17,500 homes and businesses across all of our service areas. We assisted customers more than half a million times via email, phone, online chat, mail and in person. We completed over 7,000 field visits and install appointments. We finished 490 construction orders, many of which were a part of our extensive planned network upgrade project resulting in fiber upgrades for our customers. As always, we take great pride in supporting our local communities in ways that truly matter. In 2019, we contributed more than \$400,000 to many worthy causes. This year, we also reached a few noteworthy milestones in our education programs. We celebrated 10 years of providing free Easy Access computer classes for members and 30 years with our EEE program providing technology for rural classrooms.

Here are some ways to stay connected with us throughout the year!

- **Sign up for monthly tech tip email:** [Blackfoot.com/OptIn](https://blackfoot.com/OptIn)
- **Check out our network upgrade project:** [Blackfoot.com/Networkupgrades](https://blackfoot.com/Networkupgrades)
- **Connect with us on social media:** [Facebook.com/GoBlackfoot](https://facebook.com/GoBlackfoot)
- **Visit with your Trustee:** [boardoftrustees@blackfoot.com](mailto:boardoftrustees@blackfoot.com)
- **Let us know how we are doing:** [customerservice@blackfoot.com](mailto:customerservice@blackfoot.com)

## Save the date!

**What: Blackfoot Annual Member Meeting**

**When: Saturday, April 25, 2020**

**Where: Hilton Garden Inn, Missoula**

Our 2020 theme is *2020: A Clear Vision!* Please join us and learn more about our progress this year. The first 500 member-owners in attendance will receive a cash card and special gift. Look for more details in February.

## A cyber security tip: Protect yourself from ransomware

Ransomware is a type of malware that infects your computer, gains control of all your important files and information and restricts your access until you pay a ransom to have your files restored.

### Here are four tips to protect yourself:

**1: Backup Your Files Often:** A reliable way to avoid losing files to a ransomware attack is to backup all your important files to an off-site location. You can accomplish this by using an external hard drive or using one of many online file storage and backup solutions like Dropbox.

**2: Stay Current on Antivirus and Firewall Options:** Maintaining a strong firewall and keeping your security and antivirus software up to date is critical to preventing malicious activity on your computer.

**3: Enable Your Pop-Up Blocker:** Pop-ups are a common tool of criminals to infect computers. Enable your pop-up blocker to minimize the chance of inadvertently clicking an infected ad.

**4: Know Your Sender and Always Click with Caution:** Avoid opening suspicious emails and never open an attachment from an unknown sender.

**Need Help: We're here 24/7.**

**Blackfoot's Technical Support  
Team 1-877-881-1155**





# Better Together

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# r with Blackfoot

back at 2019







1221 North Russell St | Missoula, MT 59808



## Learn more about our community support program

[Blackfoot.com/Community](https://Blackfoot.com/Community)

## A Message From Jason Williams

*Blackfoot Chief Executive Officer*

Dear Cooperative Member,

As I look upon the smiling faces of Blackfoot’s employees, families, friends and customers inside this newsletter, I think back fondly on 2019. Together, we brought you more than ever before! Whether it was faster, more reliable WiFi broadband service or our “RoboCall” blocking service, we had you covered in 2019.

Inside, you will see lots of data and statistics on what your cooperative has been busy doing over the last year. We also highlight for you only a handful of the countless community support activities we engage in across Western Montana. You will also see some important tips on how to help keep you and your family safe from cybersecurity threats. Remember, unlike some other companies on the Internet, Blackfoot keeps your private information private, never selling your likes or interests to the highest bidder.

As we head into the new year, we have a clear vision for 2020--more fiber-based broadband infrastructure construction, continued high-quality customer service, and ongoing support for the communities where we live, work and raise our families.

Lastly, I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Cooperative’s Annual Meeting in April. The Annual Meeting is always a great opportunity to re-connect with old friends as well as make new ones.

Merry Christmas and best wishes for a Happy New Year!

