

BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

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J Six Enterprises is a Family-Owned and Family-Friendly Company


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COMMUNICATIONS

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BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

The right technology isn't always what you think. Sometimes an “upgrade” isn't the best option, and sometimes parts of the process don't work as well as they should. In this issue of *Business Connections*, we look at some aspects of technology that may surprise you.

Cellular and Internet phone line usage is on the rise, but that doesn't mean they're always the most appropriate choice for your business. On page 3, you'll learn why it's a good idea to **Stay Connected with a Landline.**

On pages 4 and 5, read about **J Six Enterprises.** This growing, family-owned agricultural company makes effective use of technology, but another big part of its success is the people who run the business, serve customers, care for livestock, and prepare, test, and deliver products.

A growing concern for Rainbow Communications and the businesses we serve is the issue of long distance calling to rural areas. **Call Completion Problems Disrupt Business,** and on page 6, we examine why it happens and what's being done to prevent it.

Finally, on page 7, you'll learn how **Rainbow Communications Advocates for Rural Call Completion.** Our Assistant Manager, Jason Smith, recently attended a workshop on this issue in Washington, D.C. and has a lot to report.

Rainbow Communications is always here to help you use technology to your best advantage. Just let us know how we can help.

Sincerely,
Rainbow Communications
Sales Department



L to R: Julie Bergman, Sales Representative; Amiee DeFore, Technology Solutions Clerk; Angie Kreider, Sales Account Manager, and Jerad Enneking, Sales Representative



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Stay Connected with a Landline

Traditional phone lines offer safety, convenience, and consistent call quality

Think a landline and long distance service aren't necessary in the digital age? Think again. Many companies still conduct a large portion of their business over the phone, and these lines must be reliable—no dropped calls or spotty service—to ensure customers will call again. Landlines provide consistent service with clear sound quality, all with a local exchange number that remains recognizable to your regular customers.

A Landline Is a Lifeline

Other reasons to retain a landline include safety and convenience. If there's an emergency at your business and you call from a landline, emergency services will know exactly where to go because your line is connected to a specific address. This isn't the case with mobile phones, which are notoriously unreliable for revealing your exact location in such situations. You may have to verbally give your address over what could be a bad connection. In this type of situation, those extra seconds may be crucial. Plus, in an emergency, mobile communications are more likely to get jammed, while landlines remain clear.

With landlines, you don't have to try to remember where the phone is; it's always in the same place because it's not being picked up and put down somewhere else, like a mobile phone. In addition, you don't have to charge it; it's always ready to go when you are. If the power or your Internet service go out, you can still use the phone.

Affordable Business Promotion

Angie Kreider, Sales Manager at Rainbow, adds, "Landlines from Rainbow Communications are very affordable, even with multiple

lines, which are important to ensure customers always get a live voice rather than a recording or a busy signal. In addition, Rainbow Communications offers long distance service at just 5.9 cents per minute, with no additional fees—meaning you pay only for what you use." Toll-free lines are available for a one-time setup fee, plus the same 5.9 cents per minute rate with no additional monthly fee.

"Landlines from Rainbow Communications are very affordable, even with multiple lines."

— ANGIE KREIDER, SALES MANAGER, RAINBOW COMMUNICATIONS

Phone service from Rainbow Communications includes a directory listing, which is still a source for many people to find information about businesses. According to market analysis and consulting firm CRM Associates, users pay attention to ads 100 percent of the time because they actively seek out the information when they have an immediate shopping need. In addition, advertisers enjoy a 50 percent conversion rate for every call or lead from phone directory ads.

J Six Enterprises

This family-owned agricultural business has been in operation for over 40 years

J Six Enterprises began in the 1970s as J Six Farms, which raised livestock and a few crops. As with many family farms, it started small, with John and Janie Kramer and their children running it. Today, more than 300 employees enjoy the family-friendly environment, the hard-working ethic, relationships with others, and feeling like part of the organization.

Employees of J Six Enterprises like that it's a solid company, and are encouraged to stay with the company as long as possible. Co-owner Jenny Gerety says, "We have a philosophy of 'recruit, retain, reward, and retire.' We truly want everyone we hire to retire with us. If someone doesn't fit into a position, we try to find a better fitting position to place them in."

The Kramers had no idea that the company would expand as it has. Having been in business for over 40 years, it has strategically grown operations and now has four divisions: milling, farming, livestock, and trucking.



Milling

Fairview Mills is the company's milling operation, processing high-quality supplies and ingredients for food and other applications. The typical process is creating a complete blend, sending it to an extrusion company, and then shipping it directly to the customer. However, the company can flexibly provide different types of services for varying customer needs. It's not unusual to get a new operation, including new equipment and new employees, up and running within six months.

One feature that makes the company unique is the fully functional labs at each of its facilities that manufacture pet food. This arrangement assures customers that they can be confident the products they're getting have been fully tested and meet all specifications.

The milling operation has several locations:

- The mill in Fairview, KS is the flagship of Fairview Mills. Centrally located, it features quick access to raw materials and is equipped with a state-of-the-art scaling and batching system.
- The Anderson, MO location is equipped with one of the few pellet mills in the U.S. dedicated to the pet food industry. The pellet system specializes in converting hard-to-handle products into free-flowing, easy-to-handle pellets.
- The Greenleaf, KS mill is home to the majority of the company's livestock feed production, and uses a state-of-the-art, computer-controlled batching system.
- The Hiawatha, KS location runs packaging and reclaiming operations in multiple buildings. This location features convenient access to the I-29 corridor and is situated on a Union Pacific mainline.
- The Corn Mill in Seneca, KS provides many different products for the food and industrial markets. Seneca is also home to the Extrusion Center, where additional processing is provided for products from the corn mill.
- The Auburn, NE location is a 250,000 square foot warehouse and mixing facility with 12 employees.

Farming

J Six Enterprises' farms are rich with diverse soils and growing conditions, so they're ideal for planting grains and raw materials for the company's operations. The farming operations are full-circle, meaning that what is grown helps to feed, enrich, and sustain the farm itself. Using this method, the company can be more organic and friendly to the environment, including using less nonorganic fertilizer. The farming component is part of worldwide agriculture, providing many products that people use on a daily basis.

Livestock

The livestock division was founded on quality care, nutrition, safety, and security for the animals. Caring people are entrusted with the welfare of livestock from birth. The livestock division's number one goal is to provide strong, healthy animals; it does so by giving full attention to every aspect of livestock well-being.

We have a very good relationship with Rainbow Communications. They understand our need for reliable phone and Internet service, so we can get our day-to-day business done."

—COLLEEN TERPENING, EMPLOYEE, FAIRVIEW MILLS

Trucking

To provide better services to customers, J Six Enterprises formed the Fairview Express trucking operation, which picks up and delivers customers' products in a timely and cost-efficient manner. "We like to be in control of the product the entire time before it reaches the customer, to ensure the highest product integrity," says Co-owner Troy Kramer. All deliveries are made with superior service at a reasonable cost, and the fleet can also handle specialized customer needs.

Within all of its operations, J Six Enterprises measures success by customer satisfaction and increasing opportunities for employees at every level.

**Critical Communications**

The company's milling division, Fairview Mills, has been a customer of Rainbow Communications since 2005. They utilize several services including phone, long distance, fiber Internet, cable TV, and surveillance. Angie Kreider, Sales Manager at Rainbow Communications, says, "All these services are necessary communication tools for a successful growing business like Fairview Mills." She adds, "The company plays a vital role in the community. We appreciate their business and look forward to working with them now and in the future to enhance their services as their business thrives and grows."

Fairview Mills employee Colleen Terpening comments, "We have a very good relationship with Rainbow Communications. They understand our need for reliable phone and Internet service, so we can get our day-to-day business done. In addition, when we have an issue, they get it resolved as soon as possible."

Call Completion Problems Disrupt Business

Long distance calling to rural areas is a nationwide issue



Recently, Rainbow Communications has been hearing from customers that some calls made to them are not completed. In these cases, the caller hears the phone ringing repeatedly, but the business is completely unaware that a call is coming in. In other instances, they're receiving calls with no sound (dead air), or poor sound quality or echoing.

Why Calls Aren't Completed

This issue is a national problem caused by the way many long distance providers route calls to rural providers.

It's particularly troublesome for businesses that rely on customers' ability to contact them to initiate sales. If the problem was within the Rainbow Communications network, we could take steps to fix it.

However, the problem starts with the long distance carrier used by the person placing the call. These carriers are charged access rates when they transfer calls into rural areas. When they set up their systems to find the cheapest routes to complete the calls — known as “least cost routes” — the calls can end up in a loop between offices, instead of being routed to the call recipient. The carriers are charged fines when this happens, but this isn't enough to deter them.

We are making every effort to work with our national and state telecommunications associations and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to resolve this issue. The

FCC has created a special task force to investigate and address it, and we remain hopeful that they will act quickly to resolve these problems. Visit the FCC's website for more information on their efforts: <http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/problems-long-distance-or-wireless-calling-rural-areas>.

What Can You Do?

If someone trying to call you experiences any issues with completing the call or hears poor call quality, we encourage you to report the details below by contacting our Customer Service Department at 800-892-0163:

- The long-distance carrier used by the person trying to reach you. We need to know the name of the carrier used by the caller so that we can contact the carrier on your behalf to try and resolve the issue.
- The time that call was placed and phone number from which the call originated.
- Go to www.fcc.gov/complaints to file an informal wired telephone service complaint with the FCC against the carrier used by the person trying to call you.

While the issues are not with Rainbow Communications facilities, our commitment to customers remains the same. We will continue to do everything in our power to provide premium service and to ensure that outside carriers meet their responsibility to deliver calls to our network so we can, in turn, deliver those calls to you.

Rainbow Communications Advocates for **Rural Call Completion**

Traditional phone lines offer safety, convenience, and consistent call quality

Recently, rural areas across the U.S. have been experiencing call completion issues, meaning some calls aren't reaching local homes and businesses, or the calls have very low sound quality, making conversation impossible. (See page 6.) Nearly one in five calls experience such issues. The problem is challenging for everyone involved, including rural telecommunications providers hindered by the fact that the problem originates with the long distance carriers of those placing the calls.

The Call Completion Story

In April, Rainbow Communications Assistant General Manager Jason Smith attended a call completion workshop presented by Verizon in Washington, D.C. The workshop covered the technical causes of rural call completion issues, as well as strategies and best practices to resolve them. “The purpose of the workshop,” says Smith, “was to make contacts within the industry, and tell the story of call completion issues.” He adds, “The story isn’t just ours; it’s the same one being told by providers in rural areas across the country.”

A video produced by Rainbow Communications helped to put a face on this story. The video describes how local company J Six Enterprises relies on its phone connection and the impact it experiences when calls aren’t completed. In its farming operations, the company uses monitors that trigger automated calls during emergency situations, such as temperatures being too high or running out of feed. The calls are meant to connect to emergency personnel; if they’re not completed, damage can occur to livestock as well as people.

“The story isn’t just ours; it’s the same one being told by providers in rural areas across the country.”

—JASON SMITH, ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER,
RAINBOW COMMUNICATIONS

In addition, call completion problems can affect the company’s revenue because customers place orders by calling in; if they can’t get through, business suffers. Smith remarks, “This video helped us illustrate this issue beyond what a slide presentation or phone call could do. At the workshop, we shared it with government representatives as well as the FCC.”

Steps in the Right Direction

Some progress has been made toward a solution. Recently, Senators Klobuchar (D-MN) and Tester (D-MT) introduced the Improving Rural Call Quality and Reliability Act of 2015. Klobuchar’s website explains, “[This bill] would direct the...FCC to establish basic quality standards for providers that transmit voice calls to help ensure businesses, families, and emergency responders can count on calls being completed.”

Smith comments, “This bill brings the issue out of the shadows and promotes safety and well-being for all citizens.” He adds that additional legislation may be needed to address the law that only one carrier can work on a customer-identified issue at one time.

In an effort to resolve the call completion problem for customers, Smith will continue to meet with attorneys, colleagues, and FCC representatives.



L to R: Jeremy Gorsuch, Operations Manager, Kansas Fiber Network; Steve Dorf, President/General Manager, Kansas Fiber Network; Jason Smith, Assistant General Manager, Rainbow Communications; and Mary Albert, Assistant General Counsel, Comptel

THE FUTURE IS CALLING



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Rainbow Communications offers a variety of business phone systems designed to streamline call management, increase efficiency, and improve flexibility. Combined with our affordable long distance and toll free plans, you'll call these systems "perfect."



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