

Business Communicator



Local Pharmacies, Long Histories

Kenmare Drug
Chase Pharmacy



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Business Communicator

RTC

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Success often comes from bringing the past into the present. Knowing your history — what has worked and what hasn't — can give you a strong foundation for accomplishing your goals. In this issue of *Business Communicator*, we explore how looking back can help you move forward.

First, on page 3, we invite you to **Join Us for RTC's 64th Annual Meeting**, which will allow you to have a say in what happens within the cooperative that you own! At this meeting, we'll look back on our accomplishments and look forward to new leadership, more customers, and the endless possibilities of fiber.

On pages 4 and 5, our Business Spotlight features **Chase Pharmacy and Kenmare Drug**, two local pharmacies with long histories. These businesses have weathered many changes over the years and are still providing excellent service to customers, made possible in part by the latest technology.

If looking back means you've decided to grow in the future, be sure to read about the **Call Before You Dig** rules on page 6 prior to starting any new building projects.

Finally, marketing efforts that have worked in the past can be enhanced with the social media applications of today. On page 7, learn how to **Get Down to Business on YouTube** with videos to support you with recruiting, training, sharing news, and much more.

We're here to help ensure a smooth transition from the past to the present, and in my new role as RTC CEO/General Manager, I'm happy to be part of both. Be sure to let me or anyone on the team know how we can help today and into the future.

Sincerely,

Shane D. Hart

CEO/General Manager



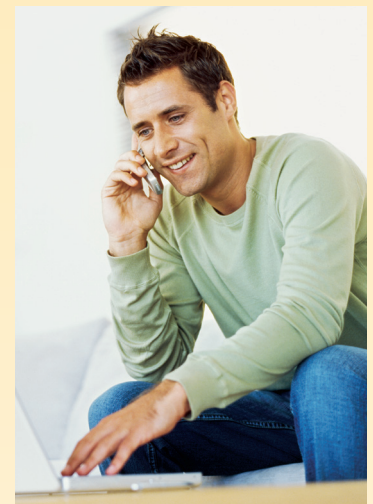


BENEFITS OF CO-OP MEMBERSHIP

As a cooperative member, you may appreciate the services you receive from RTC, but may not be aware of the role, accomplishments, and contributions of all our nation's co-ops:

- Co-ops generate more than two million jobs, create more than \$74 billion in wages, and account for more than \$654 billion in revenue.
- Co-ops uphold the internationally accepted values of honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others. Co-ops maintain these values and offer goods and services that consumers feel "right" about.
- Co-ops don't have to answer to shareholders; they focus on meeting their members' needs.

As a local telephone subscriber, you're much more than a customer; you're a member of the co-op with a stake in RTC's future. You also benefit from our role as an active community citizen. In addition to the capital credits our members earn, RTC donates generously to many community programs, local charities, and schools.



Join Us for RTC's 64th Annual Meeting

Members will get a \$25 bill credit just for attending

Here's an opportunity to take part in your cooperative! At RTC's 64th Annual Meeting, you'll be able to learn more about the co-op that you own. The meeting will be held Thursday, June 18 at the Parshall High School gym. A meal from Kyle's Katering will be served from 5:00pm to 6:30pm, and the meeting will begin at 6:30pm.

Members who attend and register for the meeting will receive a \$25 bill credit on their account (limit of one credit per member account). Bring the family! Kids are welcome and childcare will be provided. There will be prizes given out throughout the evening, including a children's drawing and the grand prize drawing for a flat panel TV with a free year of local service.

The theme for RTC's 64th Annual Meeting is "Looking Back, Moving Forward." RTC Marketing Manager Kristin Jaeger explains what's new this year: "We will take a look back at where we've come from by offering plain old telephone service and look forward to see where we are headed by offering gigabit internet service. We are also welcoming Shane Hart as our new CEO/General Manager and bidding farewell to retiring CEO/General Manager Royce Aslakson."

Here's a peek at other items on the agenda:

- Welcome to members
- Minutes reading and approval
- Nominating committee report
- Election of directors
- President's report
- Audit report
- CEO/General Manager's report
- Recognition of scholarship winners
- Employee/Retiree Award presentations
- Election results

Please come and enjoy a delicious free meal and the opportunity to shape the direction of your co-op. You'll be able to vote for board members, give them your input, and share your thoughts with managers and employees. Remember, members that join us will receive a \$25 RTC bill credit! (Limit one credit per membership account.)

Chase Pharmacy and Kenmare Drug

These century-old businesses are going strong in the digital age



Chase Pharmacy is located at 21 N Main St #189 in Garrison.

Owner and pharmacist Kim Essler bought Kenmare Drug and Chase Pharmacy in 2005 and 2010 respectively, but both pharmacies have been in business for much longer. Essler says, “Chase Pharmacy (formerly Robinson Drug) has been sold a few times over the years, but it evolved from a pharmacy that originated around 1911.” He adds, “Kenmare (formerly Carlson Drug) dates back to around 1907.”

Then and Now

Naturally, both businesses have experienced many changes, including a building renovation for Kenmare Drug in 2012. Essler explains, “The block where the pharmacy is located got a facelift, and three businesses — the previous Kenmare location, a bank, and a movie theater — were combined. This block is one that borders a park with a Danish mill as the centerpiece. All of the surrounding blocks form a business district that has been in existence since the early history of Kenmare.”

Chase Pharmacy and Kenmare Drug both provide standard pharmacy services including the sale of prescription and non-prescription medications, mail-outs, home delivery, and compounding. Both pharmacies also sell greeting cards, gifts, toys, and medical supplies. Additionally, Essler offers consultation to long-term care facilities and hopes to add flu vaccinations to the list of services that the pharmacies provide.

Kenmare Drug features an old-fashioned soda fountain where customers can get ice cream, soft drinks, and coffee. Essler says, “The White Buffalo is our specialty. It’s ice cream with chocolate syrup and marshmallow topping.”

Serving Customers and the Community

Employees appreciate the atmosphere of a small town work setting as well as getting to know their customers and working with dependable, competent coworkers. The staff of 8 at Kenmare Drug and of 10 at Chase Pharmacy strive to maintain competitive pricing, prompt and efficient service, and convenient locations. In addition, they like to get to know customers and their specific needs. Essler comments, “We also work to make sure we’re keeping a well-stocked inventory and keeping customers informed about the status of their orders.”

The employees at both locations participate heavily in the community. Essler says, “We volunteer at community events, take part in Chamber activities, and are active in various churches, schools, and other community organizations. The pharmacies also sponsor events, as do most other businesses in our tight-knit community.”

21st Century Pharmacies

The pharmacies use phone and fax lines, internet service, SecureIT Plus internet protection, and directory advertising from RTC. Essler notes, “In today’s electronic age, fast and dependable internet service is a must. Specifically, for pharmacies, more and more prescriptions are being sent electronically, rather than with a written prescription or via phone as in the past. We also now have telepharmacy capabilities.”

The telepharmacy application is provided by a third-party vendor, but it requires a robust internet connection. Essler explains, “When I bought Kenmare Drug, I wasn’t sure I would be able to staff it with a pharmacist full-time so I



Kenmare Drug is located 109 1st Ave NW in Kenmare.

A customer stops by Chase Pharmacy's prescription counter.

Shoppers will find lots of greeting cards and gifts at Kenmare Drug.

arranged for the telepharmacy connection, which uses cameras at both stores to enable me to process prescriptions at one site from the other location. The technician at the other location processes the prescription, and I monitor and verify their work. When the customer picks up the prescription, I can counsel them and answer questions remotely.” Essler adds that RTC has been “more than supportive and helpful” in troubleshooting issues with this system as well as responding to other questions and problems.

As time goes on, says Essler, “Internet service will become even more important. Our prescription software supports text messaging and email, so in the future patients will be able to send refill requests that way, which will improve the level of efficiency we can provide.”

RTC East Outside Plant Manager Chad Betz notes that Essler is an asset to the local community. He says, “Kim’s small town values and customer service skills are hands-down the best. He goes above and beyond what the large-box pharmacies do for

their customers. He talks to each customer when they come in, and they all feel great when they leave.” Betz adds, “We appreciate the pharmacies’ longevity as customers. We’ve served both locations for 19 years.”

Betz notes, “The telepharmacy service saves time and money for Essler, and enables him to work from either pharmacy or his home to ensure customers are getting top-notch service.”

In today’s electronic age, fast and dependable internet service is a must. Specifically, for pharmacies, more and more prescriptions are being sent electronically.”

— KIM ESSLER, OWNER AND PHARMACIST,
CHASE PHARMACY AND KENMARE DRUG

ETHERNET LAN SERVICES FROM RTC

For businesses with multiple locations within our service area, RTC offers an Ethernet local area network (LAN) service, which allows your business and your employees to operate as though they’re all at one location, using one centralized network. An RTC Ethernet LAN replaces a virtual private network (VPN), which many businesses have used in the past. While a VPN relies on an internet connection to access your main network and customer premise equipment, the Ethernet LAN is a dedicated virtual point-to-point connection — which means you get a simplified, secure link that’s much faster and more reliable than a VPN.

The Ethernet LAN allows you to access your server and your information from a remote location. So, you can get more done, more quickly, and provide faster service to your customers. Connections range from symmetrical 10 Mbps download/10 Mbps upload to a gigabit connection, depending on what your business needs.

To explore LAN options with RTC, call 0811 from your RTC phone or 888.862.3115.

DO YOU KNOW THE COLOR CODE OF LOCATE CREWS?

After an 811 call is made, locate crews from member utility companies are told where you're planning to dig and typically arrive within a few days to mark the location of underground utility lines. These markings may be done with paint or flags and will use this universal color code:

- **Red** – Electric
- **Orange** – Communications, Telephone/CATV
- **Blue** – Potable Water
- **Green** – Sewer/Drainage
- **Yellow** – Gas/Petroleum Pipe Line
- **Purple** – Reclaimed Waters
- **White** – Premark site of intended excavation

Check the digging area carefully before proceeding with your project. Make sure to dig around the marks and not on them. Some utility lines may be buried at a shallow depth, and an unintended shovel thrust can bring you right back to square one, facing potentially dangerous and/or costly consequences.



CALL Before You DIG

Cut communications lines can cost more than money

Though most people are aware of the “call before you dig” rule, phone and internet lines do get damaged during construction and other types of projects on business property. When this happens, long-distance lines or lines that go to cell towers can get cut, so neighboring businesses and individuals can't use their phones.

Fortunately, phone and internet line systems are designed so that only a limited service area can be affected by any one cut. However, a cut line is more than just an inconvenience; it could be a matter of safety. “In the worst-case scenario,” says Tim Jarski, Construction Manager at RTC, “phone customers can lose 911 services. Or an entire town could be without television, so emergency weather warnings wouldn't be available.” Companies can also lose business if they're not able to operate their phones or the internet.

When a line does get cut, up to 16 hours may be required before it can be fixed. In addition to the time needed, the cost can be substantial. Jarski notes, “The cost varies based on the size of the cable, depending on how many fibers are in it. The responsible party could be charged between \$2,000 and \$25,000.”

The person doing the digging is responsible for making the call. Jarski comments, “If a company hires a contractor to dig something up, it's the contractor's responsibility to make the call. If a line is cut and they haven't called, they're responsible for the cost.”

Jarski encourages businesses and contractors to remember to call 811 or the local “call before you dig” phone number. He says, “There's no charge, and the number for each community is easy to find in the local phone book or online, so there's no reason not to call. Plus, it's the law!”

Get Down to Business on YOUTUBE

Online videos help customers find you and better understand your products

In the 10 years it's been around, YouTube has become much more than just an online entertainment phenomenon. The popular video site is now being used successfully by many businesses for a variety of marketing, customer service, recruiting, and training activities.

Why are businesses turning to YouTube? One reason is that when you upload a video, you put your business in a position to be found by customers; the search potential for YouTube approaches that of Google. Online videos can also help build trust with your customers by matching a friendly face with your brand and giving you the chance to do product demonstrations.

How could your business use YouTube? Consider these ideas:

Video Marketing

Use this method for engaging potential customers when words alone don't do the trick. Provide details about your products and show how they're used. Or, do something completely unexpected that's likely to go viral.

Product Information

For customers who are already doing business with you, videos are a great way to keep them happy. Provide step-by-step product instructions that will help them use your products.

FAQs

While Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) can be written, why not take it a step further and provide a personal touch? As with product information, you can demonstrate some things much more easily using video.

Recruiting

Consider creating a series of recruiting videos that show your various departments, give a tour of the facility, and talk about company values and expectations. Upon applying for work,



potential candidates will feel more comfortable if they have already gotten to know you online.

News

Tired of the media chopping and slicing your well-crafted news releases? How about releasing them on video? Record a prominent company representative broadcasting your news item.

Training

Rather than always spending money for employees to travel to training sessions, create videos to disseminate some of the information.

Testimonials

What's better than a potential customer reading about a raving fan? A potential customer seeing that raving fan! A video can bring a customer testimonial to life.

For best results with online videos, keep these guidelines in mind:

- To avoid "gobbling up" company bandwidth, reserve a channel on YouTube and use it to store your videos.
- For search engine optimization, enter a title, description, and tags when you upload each video.
- Try to keep the length of each video to less than two minutes.
- Promote videos within your other online communities, such as your blog, Facebook, and Twitter.

Finally, don't make this harder than it needs to be. Your video doesn't have to be a polished production, and uploading to YouTube is free and easy to do. Give it a try and put your communications plan in motion.





LOOKING BACK
MOVING FORWARD



64TH ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, June 18, 2015 • 5:00 P.M.
Parshall High School • Parshall, North Dakota