

Connection

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Avoid tax time cybercrime

Tax season is primetime for online scams. According to the Federal Trade Commission, tax-related identity theft – when a criminal uses someone else's Social Security number along with other personal data to file an income tax return (and reap any refunds) – is the most common type of identity theft.

Take action and stay cyber safe this tax season. The National Cyber Security Alliance has some easy-to-use tips to help protect against fraudsters:

Keep all machines clean. Having updated software on all devices that connect to the Internet is critical. This includes security software, web browsers and operating systems for PCs and your mobile devices. Having current software is a



strong defense against viruses and malware that can steal login credentials or use your computer to generate spam.

Lock down your login. Fortify your online accounts by enabling the strongest authentication tools available, such as

biometrics, security keys or a unique one-time code through an app on your mobile device. Your usernames and passwords are not enough to protect key accounts like banking and social media.

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F&B supports Iowa's gigabit efforts

According to *U.S. News and World Report*, Iowa ranked No. 1 in the nation in 2018 for its broadband access.

F&B, along with the nearly 120 independent telecom broadband providers in the state, is proud to contribute to this effort.

This year marks the second anniversary of F&B's designation by NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association as



a certified Gig-Capable Provider for delivering gigabit broadband speeds and enabling technological innovation in the Calamus and Wheatland exchanges.

As a certified Gig-Capable Provider, F&B joins a national campaign to build awareness and industry recognition of community-based telecom providers that have built communications networks capable of delivering Internet speeds of up to one gigabit per second, which is 100 times faster than those currently available in many U.S. households.

F&B continues its gigabit fiber deployment in 2019 in Lowden followed by Bennett and Delmar.

Solar interference

If you notice a snowy picture on some of your Skitter TV channels the first two weeks of March in the afternoon hours, do not be alarmed. This is the result of solar interference and a natural event that occurs in the spring and fall.

Iowa One Call

Doing any digging this spring? Be sure to call Iowa One Call at 1-800-292-8989 or dial 811 at least 48 hours in advance to have underground utilities marked. The service is free and it's the law.

Online directory

Telephone directory listings are just a few clicks away with the F&B online telephone directory.

Go to www.fbc-tele.com and click the "Online Directory" link to look up business and residential phone numbers or perform reverse phone number look-ups. Yellow page listings are also available.





FREE TRAINING WORKSHOP
Home/Farm Security:
Nest Cams & Outdoor Wi-Fi
 Tuesday, March 19 from 6 to 7:30 pm
 Learn about protecting your home or farm with Nest Wi-Fi security cameras. We'll touch on camera features and the mobile app. Basic setup requirements and outdoor Wi-Fi networks will also be discussed. Time will also be spent reviewing other smart-home devices including Nest thermostats.

FREE to F&B or Technology Solutions customers. Preregistration is required as class space is limited. Classes held at the Technology Solutions store. Call (563) 374-1322 to sign up or register online at www.fbc-tele.com.

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Avoid tax time cybercrime

Make better passwords. If your passwords are too short or easy to guess, it's like giving a cyber thief your banking PIN. Longer passwords and those that combine capital and lowercase letters with numbers and symbols provide better protection.

Get savvy about Wi-Fi hot spots. Public wireless networks are not secure. Cybercriminals can potentially intercept Internet connections while you are filing highly personal information on public Wi-Fi.

When in doubt, throw it out. Links in email are often the way bad guys get access to your personal information. If it looks weird, even if you know the source, it's best to delete.

Think before you act. Be leery of communications that implore you to act immediately – especially if you are told you owe money to the IRS and it must be paid promptly.

File your tax forms on secure HTTPS sites only.

SOURCE: National Cyber Security Alliance

Make your Wi-Fi faster

You can optimize your Internet connection by taking a look at your Wi-Fi router. Here are some tips that will improve your Internet experience.

Choose the right channel and frequency. Routers have numerous channels. Sometimes logging into the router's admin interface and changing the



channel can make a huge difference. Newer routers also have different frequencies. Generally speaking, 2.4 GHz is better for homes with multiple floors because the signal travels farther. 5 GHz is great for smaller homes but offers faster speed, just at a shorter range.

Move your router to its ideal position. Keep your router centrally located and away from thick walls made of brick or concrete, water and windows. In some cases, you may need to install an additional access point to provide adequate coverage.

Make sure your router is secure. Putting a password on your router or limiting which devices can access your network will keep other people from using your network and slowing it down.

Get a newer router. You may only have a few people in your household, but if each has a computer, phone, tablet and gaming console that will easily exceed an entry level router's capacity. The router is the brain of the Wi-Fi network and may need a firmware update or replaced entirely to meet the demands of today's multi-device homes.

A strong Wi-Fi signal is not an indicator of fast Wi-Fi speed. You may have the correct channel selected, a security key and a fast Internet speed package, but if your router cannot handle the amount of traffic you are trying to put through it, you will see very little improvement.

If you have additional questions about improving your Wi-Fi performance, consult the pros at Technology Solutions for a recommendation on a new router or to schedule an on-site Wi-Fi analysis appointment.



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TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS HOURS
 Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Saturday 9 am to noon

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 Trouble/Repair
 (563) 374-1238 or (563) 574-1238
 Internet Tech Support (24/7)
 1-888-832-4322
 Technology Solutions
 (563) 374-1322

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