

Co-op Connection

Hamilton County Telephone Co-op
December 2025

Shop Safe and Secure

We want to remind everyone that the safest way to shop is to shop with people or stores that you know and are familiar with. Shopping LOCAL is not only the fastest way to shop, but also the most safe and secure option available.

However, we know there will be a lot of online shopping done this season, and as your internet provider, we want to share some tips for secure online shopping.

Some top threats to be aware of are:

- ~ Be cautious of malicious websites or bogus email messages.
- ~ Vendors or stores who do not properly secure their online system may allow an attacker to intercept your information.
- ~ Make sure your digital device is updated and protected before entering your information through it.

How to protect yourself:

- ~ Make sure you are interacting with a reputable and well known vendor.
- ~ Make sure the address bar begins with "https:" and that it has a padlock icon. These are indicators that you are interacting with a secure website/vendor.
- ~ Do not provide any account information and payment information through email.
- ~ Try to use a credit card instead of a debit card for purchases, limiting your liability for fraudulent charges. Another option is to use an online payment service like PayPal, Venmo or Google Wallet.
- ~ Always compare your purchases to your bank or credit card statements.
- ~ Before providing your personal or financial information, check the website's privacy policy to understand the storage and use of your information.
- ~ Be smart about apps. Apps make everything more convenient, including stealing your private information. Only download apps from reliable sources like Apple or Google Play and pay attention to the permissions that the app asks for.

We hope you all have a merry and safe holiday shopping season!

Hard of Hearing? Speech-Disabled? Deaf?



ITAC, (Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation) offers free equipment for telephone users who are hard of hearing or deaf. Equipment can include amplified phones, captioned phones, cell phones, cell phone amplifiers, speech equipment, tty deaf iPhone or tty deaf iPad. The application requires some basic information and a doctor's signature. You can apply online at <https://www.itac-apply.org> or by calling 800-841-6167.

Pay your bill by phone: 1-855-940-3828

P.O. Box 40 • Dahlgren, IL 62828
www.hamiltoncom.net
support1@hamiltoncom.net

H Hamilton County
Telephone Co-op

Calendar of Events:

- Dec 6 - McLeansboro Christmas Parade - 5:30 pm
Dec 24 - Closing at NOON
Dec 25 - Christmas Day
CLOSED
Jan 1 - New Year's Day
CLOSED



Capital Credit Update

As you may remember from information we have provided at the Annual Meeting in recent years, as well as past newsletters, a lot of changes are happening in the funding mechanisms for our co-op. When considering to authorize capital credits, you need to be aware just how critical it is that the board exercise its full fiduciary responsibility in reviewing the co-op's capability based on expected funding shortfalls.

Right now, the Co-op is investing every dollar back into our plant to expand our fiber construction within the Co-op. Although this is great for securing the future of our Co-op, it does mean that there will not be any Capital Credit checks again this year. Estate payouts may also be limited. Thank you for your understanding.

618-736-2211
Fax: 618-736-2616
Mon - Fri / 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Christmas in McLeansboro

by Hamilton County Rotary

Wed, Dec 3 - **BINGO**
@ American Legion 6p.m.

Fri, Dec 5 - **TRIVIA**
@ McL Elks Club 6 p.m.

Fri, Dec 5 - **Live Nativity**
@ HamCo Fairgrounds
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, December 6th Events around McLeansboro:

Breakfast with Santa

@ Fox Meadows
8:30 - 10 a.m.

Carriage Rides

by Lynn Braden State Farm
2 - 5 p.m.
@ Location: TBD

One Starry Night

@ HamCo Fairgrounds
Live Nativity
Fri & Sat 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Christmas Story Hour

@ McCoy Library
10:30 a.m.

Santa's Workshop

@ Courthouse Lobby
3:30 - 5 p.m.
Kids Shop Free

Games & Hot Cocoa

@ Courthouse Basement
After Parade

Christmas Market

@ Old High School Gym
9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Christmas Parade

@ around the square
5:30 p.m.



For more information about any of these events, visit the Hamilton County Rotary Facebook page. To sign up to participate in the parade, contact Heather Bowman 618-838-7533.

Kevin Pyle
Executive Vice President &
General Manager

Board of Directors:

647 Exchange
Steven Douglass

648 Exchange
Alan Monroe, Secretary

728 Exchange
Chris Sink, President

736 Exchange
Lemuel Gage, Vice-President

756 Exchange
Rob Kiefer, Treasurer

757 Exchange
Justin Woodrow

773 Exchange
Robert Abbott

Santa Claus Cookies



Ingredients

-12 ounces white baking
chocolate, chopped

-1 package (1 pound) Nutter
Butter sandwich cookies
-Red colored sugar
-32 vanilla or white chips
-64 miniature semisweet
chocolate chips
-32 Red Hots candies

Directions

In a microwave, melt white
chocolate at 70% power for 1
minute; stir. Microwave at addi-
tional 10- to 20-second intervals,

stirring until smooth.

Dip one end of each cookie into
melted chocolate, allowing excess
to drip off. Place on wire racks.
For Santa's hat, sprinkle red
sugar on top part of chocolate.
Press one vanilla chip off-center
on hat for pompom; let stand
until set. Dip other end of each
cookie into melted chocolate for
beard, leaving center of cookie
uncovered. Place on wire racks.

With a dab of melted chocolate,
attach semisweet chips for eyes and
a Red Hot for nose. Place on waxed
paper until set.

Nutrition Facts

1 each: 117 calories, 6g fat (2g
saturated fat), 1mg cholesterol, 59mg
sodium, 15g carbohydrate (10g
sugars, 0 fiber), 2g protein.

Win \$10 Off Your HCTC Bill!

Complete the following questionnaire and mail or email the completed form by December 10, 2025. Your name will be placed in a drawing for \$10 off your telephone bill with HCTC. There will be FOUR winners in December.

1. What is one thing you can do to protect yourself when shopping online? _____
2. Who is the President of the Board of Directors at this time? _____
3. What date and time is this year's McLeansboro Christmas parade? _____
4. What date will our office be closed in December? _____

Name: _____

Telephone #: _____

Congratulations to last month's winners Samuel Halligan, Aaron Rawls, and Shayne Downen.

Check out our website at www.hamiltoncom.net for more
information about the Co-op.