

# McDonough Telephone Cooperative BUSY LINE



Colchester, IL

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## Stay Sharp: How to Spot Phishing Scams Before They Hook You

Phishing emails and text messages are getting trickier—and they're showing up everywhere. Scammers are trying harder than ever to make their messages look real, hoping you'll click a link, give up personal info, or install malware without realizing it.



At MTC, your online safety matters to us, and a little awareness goes a long way. Here are a few quick ways to spot a phishing attempt before it *reels* you in:

- ▶ **1. Look closely at the sender.** Scam emails often come from addresses that look official at first glance—but *not quite*. Watch for missing letters, weird spellings, random numbers, and wrong domain names. If the sender seems “off,” trust your instincts.
- ▶ **2. Beware of urgent or threatening language.** Messages that say things like “Your account will be closed today!” or “Immediate action required!” are designed to rush you into clicking without thinking. Legitimate companies—including MTC—don’t pressure you through scare tactics.
- ▶ **3. Don’t click unknown links.** Scammers often hide dangerous links behind “Verify your account,” “Track your package,” or “Update payment information.” If you weren’t expecting the message, *don’t click the link*. Go to the official website instead; NOT through the email.



▶ **What to do if you’re unsure:** When in doubt, reach out. We’re here to help keep you safe online. Call our office at: 309-776-3211, or email us at [info@mdtc.net](mailto:info@mdtc.net).

## 2026 FRS Scholarship Program

The Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) Scholarship Program offers an annual college scholarship to help further higher education among rural youth. FRS awards one-time **\$2,500 scholarships** to students from rural America for their first year of college, university, or vocational-technical school. Please view the application for the qualifications and requirements.



FOUNDATION FOR  
RURAL SERVICE

Apply ONLINE: <https://www.frs.org/programs/youth-programs/scholarships>.

When applying for the FRS Scholarship, please **select McDonough Telephone** as your local cooperative, and take a screenshot of the submitted application. Send an email to confirm your registration to [info@mdtc.net](mailto:info@mdtc.net) with the screenshot. Have Questions? **Call us at 309.776.3211.**

## What's HAPPENING



**Happy New Year!** Our office will be closed on 1/1/26 for New Year's.



**Thank you** for all the donations to our MEG Food drive!



For prompt attention to any service problems you are experiencing after hours, on weekends or holidays, please call 309-776-3214.



**NEW NUMBER!!**  
**24/7 Pay by phone!**  
**1-855-940-3852**

## Our Board of DIRECTORS

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**New Year,  
New Router,  
New Possibilities.**



**Connect  
Like Never Before!**

Call us for your free router upgrade!

## Welcome Shawna Brown!

We're excited to introduce Shawna Brown, the newest member of our Customer Service team! Shawna joined McDonough Telephone as a Customer Service Representative in October. She was born and raised right here in the area, and she brings a true local spirit and community-minded energy to MTC.

Shawna is a proud mom of three—her oldest daughter is in college, and her younger two attend West Prairie (go Cyclones!). Outside of work, you'll find her spending time with family and friends, traveling whenever she gets the chance, cheering on the Cardinals, or catching a concert. She also loves being outdoors and soaking up any time she can in the fresh air.

We are happy to welcome Shawna to the McDonough Team!



## 900 Number Consumer Rights

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted rules for pay-per-call 900 services under the Telephone Disclosure Resolution Act of 1992. These rules are designed to protect consumer rights.

Pay-per-call services are those information services that are offered through 900 numbers and carry a fee greater than the cost of simply transmitting a call. Any interstate service that charges consumers for information —other than telephone directory assistance — must be provided through a 900 number. Pay-per-call services must be shown in a portion of the bill separate from local and long-distance charges. Information outlining consumers' rights and responsibilities with respect to payment of information service charges must be included with the bill.

McDonough Telephone Cooperative offers blocking of 900 and collect calls at no charge to the membership on a one-time basis. Members wanting to unblock are assessed the normal service order charges.

HAPPY  
**2026**  
NEW YEAR  
WISHING YOU JOY  
AND HAPPINESS!

**988**

**SUICIDE & CRISIS  
LIFELINE**

<https://988lifeline.org/>

## Recipe Of The Month

Recipe: Eggnog Poke Cake

Ingredients:

1 (15.25 oz) box of vanilla cake mix  
½ teaspoon cinnamon  
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg  
4 cups eggnog divided  
½ cup canola or vegetable oil  
3 large eggs  
2 (3.4 oz) boxes of instant vanilla pudding mix  
1 (8 oz) tub of whipped topping thawed

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Spray a 9×13 inch cake pan with baking spray and set aside. Whisk together the cake mix, cinnamon, and nutmeg in a large mixing bowl until well combined. Add 1 cup of eggnog, oil, and eggs and beat until well combined. Pour the cake batter into the prepared cake pan and bake for 20-25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Allow the cake to cool to room temperature. Poke rows of holes over the surface of the cake 1 inch apart using the rounded handle of a wooden spoon. Whisk the remaining 3 cups of eggnog and vanilla pudding in a large bowl until it thickens. Pour the pudding over the cake and spread it into an even layer, pressing it down into the holes as you go. Top the cake with whipped topping and refrigerate for at least two hours to allow the flavors to meld. Garnish with a sprinkling of cinnamon or ground nutmeg before serving if desired.

