



business connections

Think, Shop, and Buy Local!

Think: Local businesses give back more to the community. Plus, more dollars and jobs stay right here.

Shop: You can find most of what you need locally and at affordable prices. This kind of shopping also helps you develop relationships with other local businesses.

Buy: For every \$1 spent at local businesses, 45¢ is reinvested locally. Non-local purchases keep, at most, 15¢ in the local community. What's more, local businesses value, respect, and appreciate your patronage.

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Jefferson Telecom
105 West Harrison Street
PO Box 269
Jefferson, IA 50129
www.jeffersonsentelecom.com
[facebook.com/jeffersonsentelecom](https://www.facebook.com/jeffersonsentelecom)

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For help with your communications challenges, call 515-386-4141 and ask to speak with a member of our Business Solutions Team.

Contact Us
Phone: 515-386-4141
Fax: 515-386-2600
Email: info@jeffersonsentelecom.com
Office Hours: Mon: 9:00 am to 5:30 pm;
Tues-Fri: 8:00 am to 5:30 pm;
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TELECOM
Technology People Talk About

Business Spotlight



Trisha Emery, Design Specialist for Tri-County Lumber, helps customers with floor-to-ceiling decisions.

Tri-County Lumber Builds Success With Hands-On Customer Service

Tri-County Lumber opened its doors in Jefferson in 1958. Until the mid-1990s, it was a contractor-based business. Since then, Tri-County Lumber has expanded its customer base to also include the residential market. Sales are now about 60 percent from contractors and 40 percent from residential customers.

Mark Bauer, owner and President of Tri-County Lumber, is originally from Carroll and has been in the building materials industry for over 30 years. After he bought into the business in 1995, he added a retail showroom. This space displays a large inventory of home improvement products including carpet and flooring, electrical, plumbing, paint and cabinets.

Bauer's daughter, Trisha Emery, is the Design Specialist for Tri-County Lumber. Emery says, "We're the only full-scale store of this kind in Jefferson, with our closest competitors in Panora and Carroll. We often travel 30+ miles in every

direction from Jefferson to meet with customers or deliver products."

To what does Emery attribute Tri-County Lumber's success? She replies, "I believe it's due to our hands-on customer service. Most of our employees have worked here for a long time. We know the names of almost everyone who walks into Tri-County Lumber. To help take any project from start to finish, we offer free estimates, free design services and free delivery for most orders. I go to the customer's home, take measurements, and help them select paint, carpeting, etc. to put a room together. I absolutely love what I do."

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Increase Your Internet Speed to Increase Productivity

Is your current Internet speed keeping up with the demands of your employees and customers? Ask yourself these questions:

- Do you conduct business at multiple locations?
- Do you employ three or more employees with multiple computers?
- Does it take too much time for your staff to do online research or receive large files?
- Are your employees frustrated with the Internet speeds at your business?
- Do your customers have to wait on the phone while their account information is loading or transactions are being processed?
- Is your staff unable to effectively use video conferencing for collaboration?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, it may be time to increase your Internet speed. The bottom line is this: Most business activity is now done online, and data-intensive applications require faster speeds. To stay ahead of your competition, you need to be traveling as fast, or faster, than they are. By equipping your business with more bandwidth, your employees can move data more quickly and efficiently, resulting in a better overall experience for your customers.



Let Jefferson Telecom help you select the right Internet speed up to 100Mbps for your business. Call 515-386-4141 today.

Business Spotlight *(continued from page 1)*

Tri-County Lumber Builds Success

Emery adds, “Our success has also been a result of being accountable to our customers. By that I mean if there’s an issue with an order, the same employee who made the sale will be here to talk to the customer and answer questions.”

Tri-County Lumber has a strong working relationship with Jefferson Telecom and currently uses multiple phone lines, a lease key system, cable TV, and fiber Internet. Jefferson Telecom’s ability to bring fiber to Tri-County Lumber has made a big difference.

“We were excited to learn of Jefferson Telecom’s fiber network. When we heard Jefferson Telecom was offering fiber Internet in our area, we jumped on it right away increasing our speed and reliability,” explains Emery.

Internet service has become increasingly important to Tri-County Lumber. Emery notes, “Customers can visit our website and learn more about our products and services. We’re also active on both Facebook and Twitter. Even our shop cat, Sophie, has accounts on these sites. Many of our customers love to follow Sophie’s posts. It’s a riot! People walk into the store just to see our cat. She’s become our unofficial mascot.”

Customers of Tri-County Lumber often communicate with Trisha online. “People email me through our website and also send me Facebook messages. I get online orders daily. The growth of activity on social media has surprised all of us,” she says.

“When we heard Jefferson Telecom was offering fiber Internet in our area, we jumped on it right away.”

– TRISHA EMERY, DESIGN SPECIALIST,
TRI-COUNTY LUMBER

Looking ahead, Tri-County Lumber is getting ready to expand its flooring department and replace a 15-year-old display with an updated one. Adds Emery, “We also anticipate lots of work supplying materials for new homes, a segment we’re happy to see pick up.”

One area of focus that both Tri-County Lumber and Jefferson Telecom can agree on is the importance of building connections through relationships in our communities for future success.

Visit www.tricountylumberinc.com to learn more.





Greene Beene Coffee employee Mason Osborne (in green shirt) serves customer Rick Osborne.

App-titude for Workplace Efficiency

Learn how using apps can benefit your Greene County business

If you use smartphone apps in your personal life, you no doubt appreciate the many ways they can make things easier. Money apps can help you save with coupons, personal finance management, and gas price comparisons. Time-saving apps can help you get things done more efficiently with driving directions, to-do lists, and access to your favorite news sites.

Many apps can help businesses in the same way. The Small Business and Entrepreneur Council says small businesses using mobile apps are saving hundreds of millions of employee hours and thousands of dollars per year. Here are some apps to get you started realizing these benefits:

Evernote (www.evernote.com)

Evernote enables users to organize many types of information, such as text, photos, and audio snippets. With this functionality, it helps employees keep track of ideas on the go.

Google Drive (www.drive.google.com)

Google Drive is a cloud solution that allows users to create and store documents, then access them from any Internet-enabled device. Professionals can develop and share text, spreadsheet, image, audio, and presentation files.

Tripit (www.tripit.com)

Business travelers will appreciate Tripit, which enables users to create a comprehensive itinerary that includes all the flight, hotel, and car rental information for one trip. The app also provides weather updates, maps, and directions to make travel easier.

Square (www.squareup.com)

Small businesses can now accept credit cards without setting up a traditional account. For a small fee per transaction, Square allows users to process payments with a card reader that attaches to their smartphone or tablet.

Richard and Reagan Osborne, owners of Greene Bean Coffee, use Square daily in their business. Reagan notes, "We started using Square as a way to process credit cards at the Greene County Farmers' Market almost eight years ago. New features are continually added to the app, and we now use Square in the coffeehouse and online. The processing charges are simple without hidden fees. The Point of Sale app is easy to use and training new employees is a breeze. It's an ideal solution for us."

Voicemail to Email is Here

Ever gone to work and discovered a phone message you really needed to act on the previous day? Or arrived at an appointment only to find out someone had left a message on your office phone that the appointment was rescheduled?

With Jefferson Telecom's voicemail to email service, you're in constant touch, with no need to dial a number and listen to prompts to get your messages. When someone leaves you a message at work, an email is sent to the email address of your choice. Attached to the email is a sound file that you can listen to using your computer speakers or smartphone. You may also delete this phone message or save it on your computer. If you travel for work, voicemail to email is an especially valuable way to keep updated on voicemail messages.

Peg Raney, Main Street Program Director at Jefferson Matters, says, "Since I'm out of the office in the community as much as I am, I appreciate the voicemail to email option. An email alerts me that I've missed a call, and I can click on the file from my mobile device and listen to the voicemail. I feel more confident knowing I won't miss an important call."

Call 515-386-4141 and ask how to get a FREE one-month trial of voicemail to email.



Peg Raney uses voicemail to email at Jefferson Matters.

Educate Your Customers While On Hold

When you place a customer on hold at your business, what does that customer hear? Is it music or silence? If so, you're missing out on a powerful opportunity to educate your customers while they wait. On Hold Messaging through Jefferson Telecom is the perfect medium to drive traffic to your website, answer

frequently asked questions, and provide a 'talking newsletter' about your business. We make the process easy by partnering with a company that has professional voice talent and the experience to customize messages for different businesses.

Contact Jefferson Telecom and we'll help you create On Hold Messaging that turns wait time into great time.



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105 West Harrison Street

PO Box 269

Jefferson, IA 50129

www.jeffersontelecom.com

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Wireless Phones and Plans for Every Business

Jefferson Telecom offers a range of options for businesses, all powered by U.S. Cellular. They include shared plans with multiple lines as well as the latest iPhone models, Android smartphones and tablets. **Stop by our office at 105 West Harrison Street.**



Rules of Thumb for Timely Responses

In the business world, how quickly you should reply to an email or return a phone call depends on the nature of the communication.

Conventional wisdom says to respond in a timely manner to emails and calls, often defined as within 24-48 hours. If you don't have an immediate answer to a question, reply to acknowledge receipt of the email or phone message and give a time frame of when you'll be able to respond completely. To take it a step further, mark the initial email as unread to keep it as a reminder that a detailed response is still due.

What's in it for you if you get back to people promptly? It fosters a reputation of reliability and professionalism. In fact, since ignoring emails and calls is now so commonplace, simply responding in a timely way can put you ahead of your competition.

