

# The Baca Connection

HOLIDAY 2021



## We Hope Your Days are Merry and Bright

Merry Christmas from all of us at Baca Valley. May this season be filled with whatever brings you joy — whether that's baking and sharing cookies, shopping for the perfect presents, enjoying holiday feasts with family, decorating your home from top to bottom, or giving back to the community through your time and talents.

We're honored to help keep you connected to your world.

**Baca Valley Telephone Company and Sierra Communications**  
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Des Moines, NM 88418

### Phone Numbers:

Des Moines: 575.278.2101  
Maxwell: 575.375.2101  
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Toll Free: 1.888.682.2101

### Office Hours

Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Closed 12:00 – 1:00 Daily

### Technical Support

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

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## Tech the Halls to Simplify Your Holiday

Smart home devices can reduce the stress of the holiday season by taking some of the tasks off your to-do list. Are you taking full advantage of this handy technology?

### Holiday Light Control

If you love to brighten your home inside and out with what seems like miles of light strands, you know what a hassle it can be to plug and unplug them each day. Save yourself the trouble by using smart plugs in your electric outlets. You can control smart plugs via your mobile device or smart speaker, or program them to turn on and off automatically according to your schedule. While you're at it, consider swapping out your regular light bulbs in lamps and ceiling fixtures with smart bulbs. They offer color-changing capabilities to light up walls and décor for a more festive mood.

### Doorbell Cameras

You'll probably have more visitors and more packages at your front door this time of year. By installing a doorbell camera, you can stay updated on what's happening with both. These cameras allow you to view and chat with porch visitors through a smartphone app — whether you're on the other side of the door or the other side of the country. They can also alert you when a package is dropped off, so you can grab it yourself or call a neighbor to do it for you. Plus, just the sight of a doorbell camera on a front porch may deter package thefts.

### Voice-Enabled Smart Speakers

A smart speaker is like a "digital elf" that can handle all kinds of tasks. For example, the Amazon Echo can create multiple shopping lists (for gifts, party supplies, and more), schedule reminders, track an airline flight, play a Christmas carol for you, or even order a last-minute gift.

### Housework Helpers

Get help managing your home. Robot vacuum cleaners and mops can automatically clean up messes, and smart refrigerators can alert you when the door is left open and tell you what's inside so you know what food to pick up at the store.

**Baca Valley offers the high-speed internet plans you need to support smart home devices. To learn more, call 1.888.682.2101.**

## Your Friendly Reminder of National Call a Friend Day

National Call a Friend Day is December 28, during the relatively quiet period after Christmas is over and before New Year's Day arrives. It was created in 2019 to encourage people to reconnect with friends they haven't spoken with in awhile.

It's easy to understand how friends can lose touch. Our lives get hectic between the demands of work, family, and other activities, so maintaining friendships can slip down on the list of priorities. National Call a Friend Day is an extra incentive to pick up the phone and call that person you've been meaning to get back in touch with one of these days.

You don't have to limit yourself to friends with which you've completely lost touch, however. National Call a Friend Day is also a great time to call friends instead of your usual written form of communication, whether that's texts, emails, or chat messages.

**Baca Valley believes in the power of the human voice. Call us at 1.888.682.2101 if you'd like more information about our voice services.**



Online purchasing is the most common scam type reported to the Better Business Bureau (BBB). These scams typically start with a fake shopping website that offers incredible deals on well-known brands. If you order products from one of these websites, you may never receive the merchandise or you may get a shoddy, counterfeit item delivered instead. And your losses might continue. Scammers sometimes seed their phony websites with malware that infects your device and harvests personal information for use in identity theft.

**Many fake shopping websites mimic trusted retailers, using familiar logos and slogans and a URL that's close to the real thing. According to the BBB, you should look for these warning signs:**

- **Bargain-basement prices.** Internet security firm Norton says to be on guard if discounts exceed 55 percent.
- **Shoddy website design or sloppy English.** Real retailers take great care with their online presentation.
- **Limited or suspicious contact options.** For example, the customer-service email is a Yahoo or Gmail account, not a corporate one.
- **Slightly changed URLs.** Be suspicious if there's an odd character or extraneous punctuation mark compared to the real website's URL, such as "Amaz0n.net," which uses a zero instead of the letter "O." The same goes if there's a foreign domain or an unfamiliar domain such as ".bargain" instead of ".com" or ".net" at the end of the URL.

**In addition to watching out for the signs of fake shopping websites, follow these strategies to minimize your chances of getting scammed:**

- Use trusted websites rather than shopping with a search engine, since scammers can manipulate search results to lead you to their content.
- Comparison shop and check prices from multiple retailers to help determine if a deal you've seen really is too good to be true.
- Research an unfamiliar product or brand by search for its name with terms like "scam" or "complaint."
- Carefully read delivery, exchange, refund, and privacy policies, and if they're vague or nonexistent, take your business elsewhere.

While shopping online is a convenient option, don't rush through the process and focus only on getting the lowest price. If you do, you might end up with nothing but a headache.