



On Line With...

Haviland Telephone Company

A Publication of Haviland Telephone Company, INC.

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## Haviland Telephone Company

Gene Morris ~ President

### Haviland Office

104 N. Main, Haviland  
620.862.5211 or 800.339.8052

Mark Wade ~ General Manager  
Jayne Thompson ~ Administrative Assistant  
Millie Hannan ~ Customer Service  
Jayci Arredondo ~ Customer Service  
Sandy Erwin ~ Billing Coordinator  
Kay Lewis ~ Data Processor  
Dwight Smitherman ~ C.O. Supervisor  
Alvin Degarmo ~ Construction Supervisor  
Bobby Long ~ Technician  
Steve Lewis ~ Technician  
Ryan Oren ~ Technician  
Sabrina Freeman ~ Plant Secretary  
Lori Larsh ~ Accounting Manager  
Sue Leppert ~ Accounting Assistant

### Conway Springs Office

211 W. Spring  
620.456.2211 or 800.287.7905

Vesta Charbonneau ~ Customer Service  
LaDonna Erker ~ Customer Service  
Brent Swingle ~ C.O. Technician  
Dan King ~ Plant Supervisor  
Don Phillips ~ Technician  
Dan Bender ~ Technician

### Business Hours

8:00 AM ~ 5:00 PM Monday ~ Friday  
Office Closed Saturday & Sunday  
[www.havilandtelco.com](http://www.havilandtelco.com)

### For Service After Hours Call:

Haviland Office ~ 800.339.8052  
Conway Springs ~ 800.287.7905

### Haviland Internet Help Desk Hours

7:00 AM ~ 10:00 PM Monday ~ Friday  
7:00 AM ~ 9:00 PM Saturday & Sunday  
1.866.704.4268



# Haviland Telephone Company History

Taken from Independent Telephony in Kansas, 1990  
as submitted by Norma (Ellis) Jones

In 1901 there were three telephones in Haviland, Kansas, one in the John Bryant house. In 1902 Joe Himes started an exchange. The first "central office" consisted of a small box on a platform attached to a pole on the corner outside the Fankhauser Building on Main Street. The box reached from up stairs porch of the building by climbing out on a plank to make the connection.

In 1904 Christie Ruch bought the business and increased it to 80 telephones. It cost 20 cents to call Wellsford, four miles east. Mr. and Mrs. Walter (Pat) Ellis, parents of Howard Ellis, had the first rural telephone. Melvin Davis, parents of Vern Davis who in later years owned the company, had the second rural phone. Christie Ruch buried lead-covered cable in the City of Haviland in 1924. This was in place and still working in 1949 when Howard and Eva Ellis bought the company. Rolley and Marie King were the next owners and lived where the switchboard was in the house on the corner where the Friends Church now stands. After eight years they sold it to Vern and LaVada Davis. The switchboard was set up in one ground floor room of their home and a desk in a small room just inside the front door constituted the business office.

After seven years and two bad ice storms the business sold to Howard and Eva Ellis. Howard was a self-

taught electrician and thought telephones should be just as interesting. At that time there were 285 company-owned phones and 21 farmer-owned phones. Switchboard operators were paid 35 cents per hour. The monthly rate for a phone was \$1.25 for a party line and \$1.50 for a private line. Office hours were from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. with emergencies-only answered after 10:00 p.m.

In 1951, the switchboard and business office was moved to the building where the present Central Dial Office is located. In 1952, REA approved a loan of \$141,000 for rebuilding and improving the telephone service in Haviland exchange. This was the first REA loan in Kansas. Construction began in 1953 and dial service became a reality in 1954. Haviland exchange ceased to have its own switchboard operators at this time. In 1956, the business office was relocated in the building on the west side of Main Street where it is today.

In February 1954, a vicious snowstorm blocked roads and highways, stranding school children, travelers, and telephone lineman for three days. Eva Ellis and another switchboard operator spent the first night manning the switchboard, finding places for those who were stranded and passing messages to worried parents. In 1957 an ice storm wiped out all toll lines and all but one of our rural lines. The ice was eight inches thick on the lines

and all the poles went down like dominoes. It took \$7000 and thirteen days to recover from that one.

Howard and Eva's oldest son, Charles, was an installer for Stromberg-Carlson until 1959 when he came to work at the company as a manager of the four east exchanges in the Conway Springs branch office. Daughter, Norma, started as a switchboard operator at the age of twelve. Son, Robert, attended switchboard school in Rochester, NY, at the age of fifteen and later went to telephone technician school in Atlanta, Ga.

The first telephone service in Conway Springs consisted of a two-party line strung on fence posts between the Star Newspaper office and the Joe Gooch home north of town. Editor E.L. Cline had brought two box phones home with him from a visit in Indiana in 1901 and a phone line was rigged up "just for fun". Everyone was impressed with the voices coming in so loud and clear from the Gooch end of the line "so far away".



E.L. Cline and a group of farmers living between Conway and Viola organized the Conway Springs and Viola Telephone Association in 1901 to build a party line system that would extend from Hanabarger's store in Viola to the Star Office in Conway Springs. Twenty phones could be installed. Since no more phones could be added under their arrangement, the CS. & V. Association offered the company for sale. John and Noah Frantz submitted the high bid and bought the 20-phone system in 1903. A switchboard was placed in the back room of the Frantz store. The first operators were Stella and Eva Snowden.

The new company, The Home Telephone and Electric Company, extended service locally and by 1904 had lines built to Clearwater and Argonia. E.J. Frantz acquired the business and operated the exchanges until 1929 when they were sold to Western Light & Telephone Company. In the mid-1950's the company was sold to Hank Gould and operated as Sedgwick Tele-

phone Company. In 1957 the system was converted to dial us in Stromberg-Carlson XY equipment. In October 1959, the company was bought out by Haviland Telephone Company, Inc.

In the forty years since Haviland Telephone Company was acquired by the Ellis family, many improvements, expansions and enhanced services have been added; Nashville Argonia, Conway Springs, Norwich, Mullinville, Sawyer, Wilmore, Isabel, Riverdale, Coats and Cullison, bringing the total subscribers to over 3500. All one-party service, touch-tone service, IMTS mobile service and all buried lines have been accomplished. Three missile bases in the Conway Springs-Norwich area were served during a period of years beginning in 1962. Billing and accounting were computerized in 1977.

The Ellis family farming operation supported the Telephone Company for the first few years until REA financing became available. Howard and Eva Ellis worked long, hard hours for many years to not only keep the business running but to continually upgrade and improve the quality of service. The Ellis children, Charles, Norma and Robert became active in the company in one capacity or another starting in 1949 and continue up to the present. Howard Ellis was killed in a car accident in 1982 at the age of 74, having been very actively involved in the company's activities right up to the last day. He was well known throughout the industry and has been sorely missed by his colleagues, his community and his family.

Haviland Telephone Company will be closed  
 Friday, December 25th   
as well as  
Friday, January 1st.  
Have a safe and happy Holiday season!

#### Just a Reminder:

Bills are due on the 15th of each month. We pre-bill each month. This means the bill you receive around the first of December is for services for the month of December, with the exception of toll calls. Toll charges usually show up on your bill about 1 month behind.

#### Some 'Sites to See'

[www.jep.com](http://www.jep.com) - JC Penney's Online  
[www.historyofchristmas.net](http://www.historyofchristmas.net) - Educational  
[www.salvationarmy.com](http://www.salvationarmy.com) - Official Website  
[www.dignetwork.com](http://www.dignetwork.com) - Home Improvement

## Christmas Open House



Haviland Telephone Company  
would like to invite you to our  
annual Christmas Open House.



Wednesday, December 9th  
9:00 AM ~ 12:00 PM

Come enjoy refreshments, good company and enter  
for your chance to win a prize!