VOICE of the Valley

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GARDEN VALLEY TECHNOLOGIES

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Innovate > Advance > Connect

Rural Utilities Service Loan

Garden Valley Technologies is excited to announce that it has been officially approved by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for a Rural Utilities Service (RUS) loan totaling $20,360,040. This RUS loan will allow Garden Valley to finish its construction of Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) technology to the remaining 22% of subscribers not yet upgraded. This will consist of constructing 295.1 route miles of fiber plant over the next five years. Garden Valley began its FTTH upgrades to the rural areas in our network and has been steadily upgrading its system to FTTH architecture during the past 15 years under previous RUS loans. At present, 78% of subscribers are served on the FTTH platform.

The remaining 22% are for the cities we serve as well as the lake areas. These areas include the cities of Erskine, Clearbrook, Gonvick, Goodridge, Grygla, McIntosh, Oklee, Plummer, and Winger. It also includes the lake areas of Island, Maple, and Union lakes.

This loan also includes funds to remodel and potentially expand our current corporate offices in Erskine as well as update the mechanical systems which have been in place for over 30 years.

The first loan by the USDA RUS (REA at the time) to GVTC was made in 1951, and since then RUS has granted many additional loans to GVTC totaling several million dollars. GVTC services approximately 12,400 access lines in an area spanning over 3,700 square miles.

Continued on inside

Fiber-to-the-Home Continues to Expand!

Garden Valley Technologies Fiber-to-the-Home deployment has been very busy and successful. We have completed approximately 327 miles of fiber optic cable, serving nearly 950 homes and businesses.

The 2018 construction season will consist of 160 miles of fiber optic cable that will serve around 590 homes and businesses. Currently we have installed fiber optic cable to over 8,000 homes in 25 exchanges.

Garden Valley customers on fiber can subscribe to GVTV video services offering over 280 channels with HD access, telephone services, and Internet speeds up to 1 Gigabit with no data limits and unmatched reliability. Call GV for more details.

News & Events

GO GREEN!

Embrace Earth Day and go GREEN by signing up for automatic bill payments. Visit 'Account Login' on our site or go to www.gvtel.com/pay-bill-signup

One of three Directors seeking re-election

See inside for more details.

HBO & Cinemax FREE 4-DAY PREVIEW

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Rural Utilities Service Loan

Continued from front page

The upgraded system will be well positioned to meet current and future requirements for the delivery of voice, broadband, video and other data services. Equipment proposed in this loan will be capable of providing any service desired by GVTC subscribers within the next ten years.

Improving the telecommunications infrastructure in GVTC's rural territories will contribute to creating more technically advanced job opportunities, provide state-of-the-art communications and offerings to its member subscribers, and thereby contributing to improved quality of life. Newly implemented FTTH design will allow the Cooperative to answer growing subscriber demand as well as implement more reliable, longer lasting higher bandwidth services.

Garden Valley Technologies is your local provider for Internet, Video, Cellular, and Security services. We also offer a wide range of products in our retail stores, located in Erskine, Bagley and coming soon TRF! We are a member-owned company with strong values and believe in giving back to the communities we serve. One way we give back is through our donations program. Our donations policy allows for an annual amount, based on the number of access lines in an exchange, that is designated to be used on a first-come, first-served basis to non-political, non-religious, and non-profit organizations within our service area. At the end of the year any funds unused help fund the Garden Valley Education Foundation which provides technology grants for area schools.

We are proud to be able to provide cash or merchandise donations to area community organizations for over 30 years. Almost $100,000 has been donated to organizations in the last 17 years!

New Full-Time Service Representative

Part-time Service Representative Tania Waldal has been promoted to the Full-time Service Representative position in our new Thief River Falls store located at 1517 US Hwy 59 South. The store is scheduled to open in early Spring with business hours from 10:00am to 6:00pm Monday through Friday. We welcome everyone to stop by and visit our new location.

Condolences

Our sympathy to the family of retired construction lineman Ronald Tradewell who passed away on February 19, 2018.

Congratulations to the following employees for their years of loyalty and dedicated service with Garden Valley Technologies.

20 years

Steve Chalich | Facilities Technician

Dave Holzer | COE Technician

Jeff McCollum | Cable Splicer

Capital Credit Checks in May

Garden Valley will be paying out 55% of remaining capital credits allocated for 2000 and 10% of capital credits allocated for 2017, totaling approximately $500,000. Checks will be mailed to GV members the latter part of May.

A summary of capital credits allocated to members for the 2017 net margins is included on the check stub. Net margins are allocated to members based on patronage dollars with the Cooperative for the year.

Universal Service Charge

Effective in April 2018, the Federal Universal Service Fund Charge (FUSC) decreased from $1.85 to $1.75 per line for most residential and single-line business customers, and from $2.38 to $2.24 per access line for most multi-line business customers.

The new FUSC amount for cellular service is calculated by multiplying the FUSC factor against your cellular plan charges. Effective in April 2018, that FUSC factor decreased from 7.2345% to 6.8264%.

Audit Confirms Successful Operations in 2017

Net Margins for 2017 are $1.96 million on revenues of $25 million. Net margins are down from 2016 due to the sale of Verisign stock in 2016 which netted $3.8 million and produced margins over $6.1 million. Operating margins decreased from 2016 to 2017 mainly due to an increase in depreciation expense after net additions to Plant In Service of over $4.5 million. Allocation statements will be included on the members' check stubs when capital credits checks are delivered in May 2018. The audit was conducted by the certified public accounting firm of Olsen, Thielen & Co., Ltd. of St. Paul, MN.

Save the Date

June 5, 2018
WIN-E-MAC SCHOOL
ERSKINE, MN

113th Annual Meeting

Directors will be elected for 3-year terms from District 3 *(Red Lake Falls, St. Hilaire exchanges)*, District No. 6 *(Clearbrook, Gonvick, Leonard exchanges)*, and District 9 *(Gatzke, Goodridge, Grygla exchanges)*. District 6 Director Vernon Hamnes and District 9 Director Ronald Engelstad have chosen not to seek re-election.

Qualifications for Directors are contained in Article III and Article IV *(Section 2)* of Garden Valley's By-Laws, printed on pages A59 to A64 in the 2018 telephone directory, and will be summarized in our May Voice of the Valley.

Financial reports on operations for the year ended December 31, 2017 will be presented during the Annual Meeting, scheduled to begin at 10:30am, with member registration beginning at 8:30am.

Board Election Process

Have you ever wondered how Directors are elected to Garden Valley's nine-member Board of Directors? Every year three board members are up for election/re-election. This year those Districts are 3, 6, and 9.

Pursuant to the Company's By-Laws, the entire election process is handled at the Annual Membership Meeting. We do not have a nominating committee, nor do we have mail-in ballots. A person who wants to become a Director must first be a member of the Cooperative *(By-Law Article I)* and must reside in one of the districts up for election.

Members from Districts 3, 6, and 9 may attend their district caucus meeting which is held during a recess. During each district caucus meeting, a caucus chairman is chosen and nominations are called for. A person seeking to be a Director cannot nominate himself/herself. The annual meeting is called back to order once the caucus meetings have concluded. The list of nominees from each district caucus is then announced to all in attendance. Nominations will also be called for from the floor. All nominees, those nominated from the district caucuses and those nominated from the floor, are given an opportunity to address the membership before the ballots are collected and counted. Members in attendance from all districts may vote for one person per district. The winner for each district is the nominee with the majority votes.

Novak seeking re-election

Arlene Novak
District No. 3
Red Lake Falls, St. Hilaire

Incumbents not seeking re-election

Vernon Hamnes
District No. 6
Clearbrook, Gonvick, Leonard

Ronald Engelstad
District No. 9
Gatzke, Goodridge, Grygla

Bring the Family Together

with our GV Cellular *Family Plans*

UNLIMITED TALK, MESSAGING, and **SHARED DATA** on plans starting at **1GB** up to **UNLIMITED DATA**.

Receive **3 MONTHS FREE ACCESS** when you call **800-448-8260** or visit our office.

Located in Erskine, Bagley, & coming soon to TRF

$60 value per line

Simple Shared plans are available for individuals or families up to 10 lines per account. Offer valid to qualifying new 4G subscribers. Unlimited plan, once 22GB of usage is reached, on a per line basis, data speeds will be reduced to 64kbps. Restrictions apply. Offer expires 4.30.18.

2019 Directory Advertising

Rod Wentzel

Marketing/Sales Consultants from Pinnacle Marketing Group will be in our area starting April 23 until the beginning of August selling advertising for the 2019 Garden Valley telephone directory. When you advertise in the GV directory your ad will automatically be featured in our online directory, with all website and email addresses conveniently accessible by your customers.

Kalli Triche

Get the most out of your advertising investment, increase visibility, and connect with your customers with a fresh new ad, a website or social media page by contacting Pinnacle Marketing Group at 800.343.8086 or pinnaclemgp.com for more information.

Greg Meyer

Melissa Schwartz

Kelly Gordon

Enter to win **$50** cash prize

Garden Valley Technologies Directory

COVER CONTEST

Deadline: **July 31, 2018**

View Rules & Submit Entries:

www.gvtel.com/about-gv/directory-photo-contest

Subscriber Mailing Address

Is your mail delivered to a Post Office Box address? If so, in our 2019 directory you can list your Post Office Box address in addition to, or in place of, your 911 address. Please note that the default directory listing will be your 911 address unless you instruct us otherwise. Please contact Garden Valley Technologies before July 1 if you would like us to make a change to your listing.

Statement of Nondiscrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulation and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, officers, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs (including Garden Valley Telephone Company) are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, local human rights commission activity, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442, or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Garden Valley agrees with, and has fully complied with, all nondiscrimination and equal employment requirements. The Company has not received any complaints in regard to these provisions.

Garden Valley Telephone Company is an equal opportunity provider and employer. All employment is decided on the basis of qualifications, merit, and business needs.

Make Security Your #1 Priority

Honeywell Wireless Security Package

$399 INSTALLED

Offer Includes:

Touch Screen Control Unit | Wireless Motion Sensor
(3) Wireless Door Contacts | Four Button Key Fob
Siren | Battery Backup

Pricing includes equipment and installation. Taxes not included. Professional monitoring is required for a monthly fee of $14.95. Based on credit approval. Restrictions may apply. Call for details.

VOICE of the Valley

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An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Office Hours

Erskine: Monday - Friday 8:00am - 4:30pm
Bagley: Monday - Friday 10:00am - 6:00pm
TRF: Monday - Friday 10:00am - 6:00pm
(coming soon)

Company Telephone Numbers

Customer Support 24/7/365
800-448-8260, 218-687-5251, or
888-879-4968 *(GV Long Distance)*

Business Office or Service Requests
218-687-5251 | 800-448-8260

Radio Shack Sales Center
218-687-3233

Gopher State One-Call
800-252-1166
811 *(call toll-free before digging)*

GV Internet

Email: helpdesk@gvtel.com
Website: www.gvtel.com

Internet Support 24/7/365
877-546-7495

Internet Remote Support
support.gvtel.com
Monday - Friday 8:00am - 4:30pm

Live Chat *(8:00am - 11:00pm)*
www.gvtel.com

Board of Directors

Jerry Freitag, President | Plummer
Byron Ness, Vice President | Fertile
Arlene Novak, Secretary | St. Hilaire
James Ferden, Treasurer | McIntosh
Ronald Engelstad, Director | Grygla
Vernon Hamnes, Director | Gonvick
Lee Hoaas, Director | Erskine
Casey Holland, Director | Fosston
Allen Paulson, Director | Shevlin

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$10 off for 10 months promo valid to new GVTV Expanded Basic Customers, who meet the credit qualifications and 2-year commitment. Free months service will be automatically billed to your account after promo period. Restrictions may apply. Limited time offer.