VOICE of the Valley

THIS ISSUE:
Coming to Warren
2021 Capital Budget
Capital Credit Payout
Rural Digital Opportunity Fund

GARDEN VALLEY TECHNOLOGIES

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Innovate > Advance > Connect

GVT is Coming to Warren

The Garden Valley Technologies Board of Directors voted to extend its fiber optic networks and offer products and services to residential and business customers located in Warren, MN. ***"GVT is excited to be able to provide Warren a fiber optic network capable of offering Telephone, Internet, Video and Security services,"*** stated GVT CEO/General Manager Timothy Brinkman. ***"Warren will compliment recent CLEC expansion into Thief River Falls, Bejou and Mahnomen territories."***

Garden Valley Technologies is a progressive telecommunications and technology company offering products and services on a reliable fiber optic network. Customers can enjoy Internet speeds up to 1 Gigabit, GVTV Video with over 200 channels, Cellular on the most reliable wireless network, Security and Smart Home technology, as well as local Telephone service. In 2020, GVT began fiber optic construction to the residents and businesses in the city of Thief River Falls and is currently connecting subscribers. Over the past several years, GVT has opened three retail stores located in Thief River Falls, Erskine, and Bagley, providing technology products such as: smart TVs, computers, iPads, headphones, cellular devices, accessories and much more. We encourage you to stop by one of the retail locations and check out the interactive security and smart wall.

Continued on inside

Hello Neighbor

GVTV INTERNET CELLULAR PHONE SECURITY

Sign up today at join.gvtel.com

News & Events

College Scholarship Opportunities

Students, apply online by **March 5** for a number of Scholarship opportunities.
Learn more: www.gvtel.com/about-gv/community-involvement/scholarships

Now Available

The Fargo CW network **(Channel 14 and 1014HD)** has been added to all Residential and Commercial programming packages.

Continued from Front Page

GVT plans to begin our fiber network construction in 2021 to all homes and businesses in Warren. Interested in signing up for services? Simply go to join.gvtel.com, stop by our retail store in Thief River Falls, Erskine or Bagley, or call Garden Valley Technologies at 800-448-8260. The knowledgeable and friendly employees at GVT are ready to answer any questions you may have and are looking forward to providing Warren customers with the same quality products and services we provide all our current customers.

Salvation Army Donation

Typically, Garden Valley Technologies holds an Annual Customer Appreciation Day event in early December and has a Salvation Army bell ringer present to gather donations. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this event was unable to take place. Therefore, the Board of Directors decided to make a $5,000 donation to be distributed evenly among the eight counties GVT provides services to. The opportunity to donate to such a vital cause is something that is very important to GVT.

GVT Pays Out $1.6M

Capital Credit Pilot Program Update

In December, the Garden Valley Technologies Board of Directors returned over $1.6M in unretired capital credits to members age 85 years or older. This payout was part of a successful pilot program designed to ensure our older members have the option to receive 100% of their unretired capital credits.

Capital credits are one of the many benefits of being a GVT member. Because co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues (called margins) are allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits.

"As a member-owned cooperative based in Erskine, MN, it's rewarding to see these dollars go back to people in our local communities," explains Timothy Brinkman, CEO/General Manager of GVT. "Unlike a private company or corporation, our members earn money back for every dollar they spend with us."

This capital credit payout comes just 7 months after GVT issued more than 16,500 checks to members totaling over $2,065,000. Meaning our members received $3.7M in capital credit payouts in 2020 alone.

Payments of capital credits at this time of year made the holiday season a little brighter for 627 members who were part of this pilot program. A member in Red Lake Falls sent a thoughtful card after receiving their payout:

"We want to thank Garden Valley and all the employees for the wonderful Christmas gift; the large check that we received this week. It was very much appreciated."

Based upon the Cooperative's financial condition and other considerations, the Board of Directors will determine if this is something we will continue in the future. We were pleased with the success of the pilot program and want to thank those who were able to participate.

Did you know?

If you are a GVT Internet subscriber with Managed Wi-Fi, you can download the GVT WiFi App and take control of your Wi-Fi experience today!

Getting started is easy. You'll be able to:

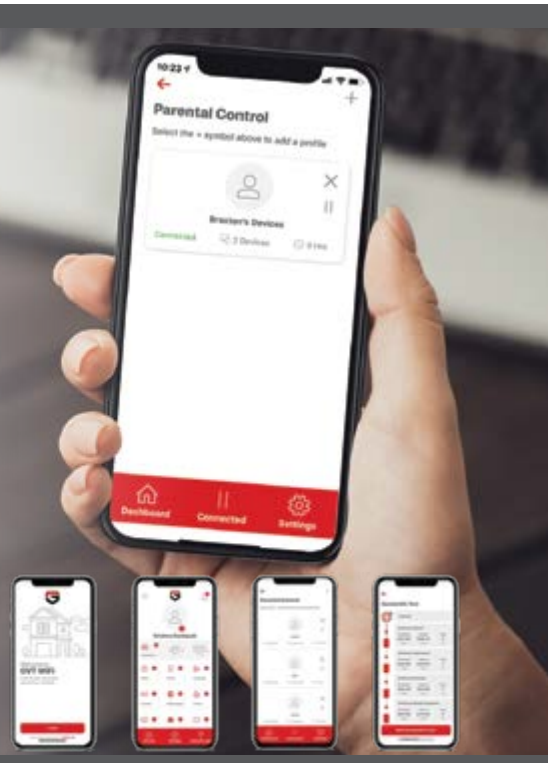
- Run a speed test and check your network performance
- Set up parental controls
- Set up a guest network
- View all connected devices on your network
- Pause a device and more!

Once you download the app, it will walk you through the set-up process. If you have any questions, you can refer to our website **www.gvtel.com/internet/managed-wi-fi-service** and refer to our **Quick Start Guide**.

Download the app by visiting:

Download on the App Store | GET IT ON Google Play

Available for iPhone®, iPad® and Android devices.

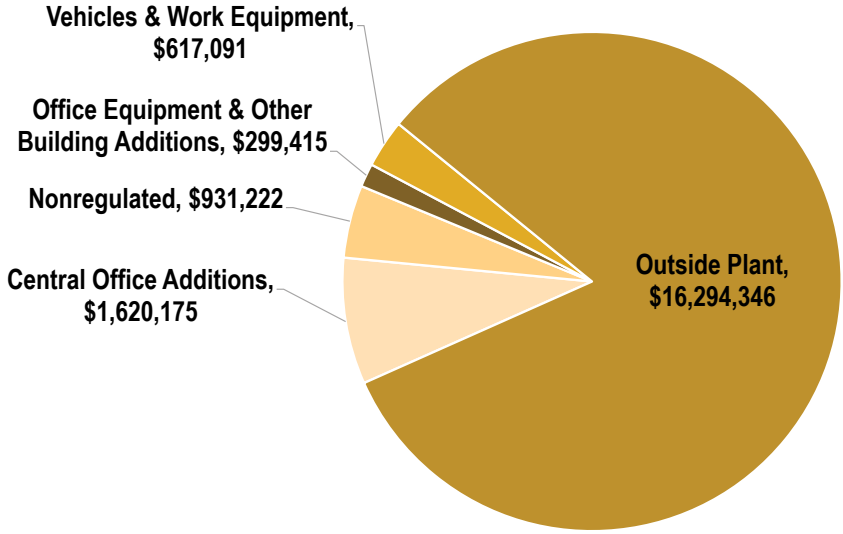


Sign Up for Managed Wi-Fi and get 2 MONTHS FREE!

2 months free Managed Wi-Fi offer is available to new or existing customers. After the promotional period, service will be billed automatically to your account. Ultimate Wi-Fi service requires GigaSpire router. Existing subscribers may be charged time and material to upgrade equipment.

2021 Capital Budget

The Garden Valley Technologies operating Budget, approved by the board of directors in November, includes more than $19.7 million of capital expenditures in 2021. GVT is continuing to upgrade the copper facilities, which limit broadband capabilities, with fiber optic facilities in the exchanges of Erskine, Maple Bay & Lengby. GVT will also complete the installation of fiber optic facilities to 1,500 new customers in the city of Thief River Falls and 800 new customer locations in the city of Warren.



Scholarships Available

For Area Students

The time has come for high school students to apply for college scholarships. GVT is a member of NTCA and is proud to support the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) in this worthy endeavor. **Apply online by March 5, 2021.**

Opportunities Include:

$2,000 - Foundation for Rural Service Scholarship
(plus an additional $500 contribution from GVT)
- Everett Kneece Scholarship
- Good Neighbor Scholarship
- JSI Scholarship

Information can be found on www.gvtel.com or by contacting your high school counselor.
(Must be a member of Garden Valley Technologies to apply)

2021 Foundation for Rural Service Youth Tour Washington, D.C., June 5-9, 2021

Visit www.gvtel.com for essay rules.

Essay deadline is February 12, 2021

Must be a member of Garden Valley Technologies to qualify.
High School Students age 16 or 17.

IT Services for SMB's

GVT is now offering IT consulting services specializing in SMB *(Small and Medium Business)* computer network installation, administration, and maintenance. We're able to provide computer network services to local businesses that might not have a full-scale IT Department. By leveraging GVT, these companies receive more expertise because, instead of leveraging one IT professional, they get our entire team at their disposal if needed.

Our IT Services include:

- Office 365 and business email solutions
- Managed IT Services
- Network security solutions including Firewall and Unified Threat Management (UTM)
- Cloud migration and management
- Computer sales and service
- Computer network service
- Virus removal and prevention
- Network infrastructure and documentation
- Backups
- Ongoing IT support services
- Brother Printers and all-in-ones that can reduce your overall printing costs

If you are interested in meeting with us to discuss a solution for your business, **we'd like to offer you a free site survey**. A site survey is a free consultation in which we meet you at your business and discuss what you feel your technology needs are. We will then collect some basic information about how you're utilizing your current technology and determine next steps on how we can best support you. **Contact us today: 218-687-4202**

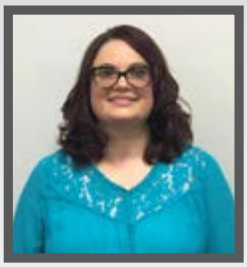
GVT participates in the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Reverse Auction

Garden Valley Technologies recently participated in the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) Reverse Auction which is a program from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) designed to encourage broadband deployment in rural, high cost areas. The FCC budgeted $16 billion in funding nationwide over ten years in Phase 1 of the reverse auction. Phase 1 bidding began in late October and concluded in late November 2020 with $9.2 billion being awarded to 180 companies over 10 years of the program. The remaining funds will be allocated into Round 2 for another reverse auction.

Garden Valley Technologies took part in the RDOF program as part of a consortium with three other area companies. Being part of a consortium gave us the opportunity to save money and bid on a larger area. Ultimately, GVT has been awarded $2,792,139.40 over 10 years to build out to 492 locations in designated census block areas. Maps with the specific census block areas that have been awarded to GVT will be made available on our website within the next few weeks. These areas include locations west and south of our current service area, including areas west of Thief River Falls and outside of Mahnomen. These projects will be phased over the next six years and GVT will have to meet specific deployment milestones over that period. GVT will keep our members up-to-date on planned projects and next steps with RDOF.

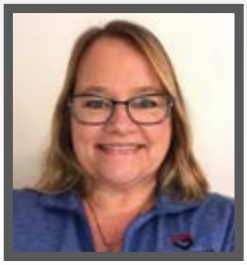
It is only through programs like this that GVT can continue to help serve our neighbors who live in unserved areas and continually request our services . We continue to monitor and participate in various programs such as RDOF, the Minnesota State Border-to-Border (B2B) Grant program and others to assist in reaching these unserved areas. GVT has received two previous B2B grants and has applied for another in 2020. We are currently awaiting award announcements by the Office of Broadband which should be within the next few weeks. Please visit our website for additional information.

Personnel News



Janitor

Congratulations to **Rachel Moser** of rural Lengby who was selected to fill the position of Part-Time Janitor effective December 15, 2020. Congratulations Rachel and welcome to the GVT family!



Happy Retirement

Administrative Assistant **Sue Lorentz** has announced her retirement, effective May 1, 2021, after serving the Company for over 22 years. Sue's happy and caring demeanor draws people in and she is known for her can-do attitude and being so easy to work with. Sue is excited to start the next chapter of her life, to enjoy time with her family and travel. Sue, thank you for your dedicated service to the Cooperative! We all wish you a happy retirement, congratulations!

- Automated Data Protection
- Ransomware, Malware and Virus Protection
- Managed Off-site Backups
- Monitored by GVT IT Techs
- Fast, Local Restores
- Customer Defined Encryption

Call Today 218-687-4202

Billed 15.99/month after 60 day free trial ends. Restrictions may apply. Limited time offer.

BILLING UPDATE

Due to annual rate increases from our programmers, GVTV video subscribers were notified that it was necessary to make rate adjustments to the a la carte and bundled video services effective with the February 2021 bills. For additional information about GVTV service, including discounts available for bundling services, please call us at 800-448-8260.

UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND CHARGE

The Federal Universal Service Fund Charge (FUSC) increased in January from $1.76 to $2.07 per line for most residential and $2.57 to $3.02 per line for most single-line business customers and from $3.31 to $3.88 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 January, that FUSC factor increased from 10.0541% to 11.7978%.

TEXT MESSAGE NOTIFICATION

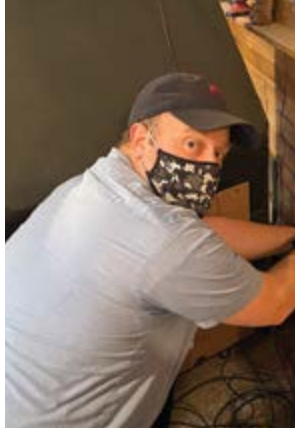
Beginning in February, if your account is subject to disconnect because of a past due balance, we will send a text message notification in addition to the notice on your invoice. Only customers who have provided a cellular phone number will get text alerts. If you would like to make sure we have an up-to-date cellular phone number on file or would like to opt-out of receiving text message notifications from Garden Valley Technologies, please call us at 1-800-448-8260.

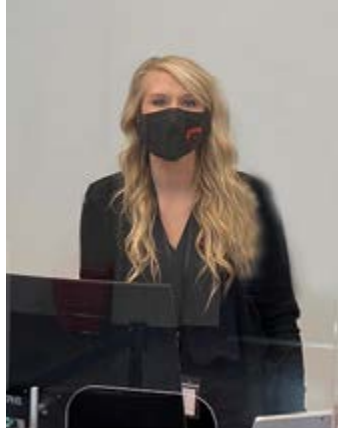
SERVICE INTERRUPTIONS

If any of your GVT services *(phone, TV, Internet, etc.)* are out of service or impaired, we want to hear from you immediately. Remember, we offer 24/7 service to answer your calls.

SNOW REMOVAL CAUTION

Please use caution around telecommunications cabinets and pedestals during snow removal.





Thank You

Frontline and Essential Workers

We want to thank all of the dedicated essential workers that are keeping our communities safe and functioning. **We see you. We appreciate you. And we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.**

GVT would also like to recognize and thank our employees who are installing services, repairing essential equipment and helping the public in our retail stores. **We appreciate the lengths you go to everyday to serve our communities.**

Congratulations & Thank You

for your loyal and dedicated service to Garden Valley Technologies.

15 YEARS

Jay Anderson District Representative
Sam Finseth Network Technician

10 YEARS

Corey Tice Network Technician

5 YEARS

Christina Derby Graphic Design Supervisor

VOICE of the Valley

Published by Garden Valley Telephone Company
An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Retail Stores & Office Hours

Erskine: Monday - Friday 8:00am - 5:00pm
Bagley: Monday - Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm
TRF: Monday - Friday 8:30am - 5:00pm

Contact Us

Customer Support 24/7/365, Business Office, Retail Stores or Service Requests
800-448-8260, 218-687-5251, or
888-879-4968 *(GV Long Distance)*
www.gvtel.com

Internet Support 24/7/365
877-546-7495
Email: helpdesk@gvtel.com

IT Services M-F 8:00am - 4:30pm
218-687-4202
Email: ITServices@gvtel.net

Live Chat www.gvtel.com
7:00am - 8:30pm Monday - Saturday
11:00am - 6:30pm Sunday

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

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SMART RURAL COMMUNITY

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Install *(up to 3 TV's)*
24/7 Technical Support
Access to GVTV Everywhere
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One month free GVTV Programming and free install is valid to new customers who meet credit qualifications and commit to a 2 year commitment. 3 months free offer is available to new or existing customers who currently do not have the services active or previously active on their account. Ultimate DVR Service will be added automatically and billed to your account after the promo period. Offers end March 31, 2021.