VOICE of the Valley

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GARDEN VALLEY TECHNOLOGIES

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GVT HEADQUARTERS

The new GVT headquarters addition and remodel project is wrapping up and we're excited to share the finished product with all of our members. We were hoping to have a large Open House event, but due to the current COIVD-19 restrictions and wanting to keep our office, employees and members as safe as possible, we will have to postpone an in-person celebration. Instead, we'll be sharing several pictures and updates in the October Issue of Voice of the Valley.

115th VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The 115th Annual Membership Meeting looked much different this year. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, and to keep our members and employees safe, we held our first-ever Virtual Annual Meeting. The virtual format included voting by mail for a By-Laws Amendment and Director elections. Members could join by Zoom, phone call, Live Stream or Local Channels. The meeting was also conducted in two separate meetings; the first meeting on June 30th to announce the By-Laws Amendment voting results and the second meeting on July 28th to announce the Director election results.

Continued on inside

News & Events

Holiday Office Closings

GVT business offices will be closed in observance of the **Labor Day** holiday: **September 7**

2019 Annual Reports

Annual Reports are available to members upon request.

COVID-19

GVT's COVID-19 Updates
www.gvtel.com/covid-19-update

GVTV Channel Line-ups

Visit our website to view all of our GVTV Channel Line-ups at www.gvtel.com/video/gvtv-channel-line-ups. We offer hundreds channels in both standard definition and high definition, plus over 50 GVTV Everywhere channels.

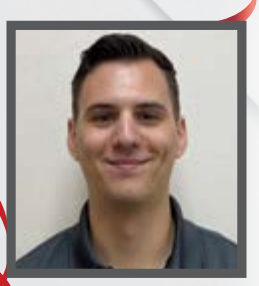
Follow us on Social Media

Personnel News

With much work to be done in our service area, we have hired an additional Temporary Construction Worker and two new Temporary Installers. **Collin Brekke** began working in our construction department on June 25, 2020. **Chris Venem** and **Jacob Johnson** joined GVT on July 6, 2020, and will be installing services to our members. Congratulations Collin, Chris, and Jacob. We also welcome back our returning temporary construction crew personnel: **Chad Parsley, Mark Schmitz, Tahlor Ose, Blake Derosier,** and **Austen Hanson**.

Network Supervisor

Congratulations to Network Technician **Steve Holzer** who began his new position as Network Supervisor on May 17, 2020. Steve has been with GVT for over 25 years and is excited to take on this new challenge. Congratulations Steve!



Network Technician

Nick Swanson, of rural Shevlin, was selected to fill a Network Technician position on June 17, 2020. Nick joins GVT with a strong background in networking technology, Cisco, troubleshooting, technical support, and system maintenance. Nick held the position of Data Network Specialist in the US Marine Corps prior to joining GVT. Welcome to the GVT family Nick!

Network Technician

Installer-Repairperson **Corey Tice** has been selected to fill a Network Technician position in our Network Operations department on June 29, 2020. Congratulations Corey!

Marketing & Communications Manager

Heidi Haaven, of Fertile, was selected to fill the new position of Marketing and Communications Manager on April 24, 2020. Heidi joins the GVT family with extensive marketing experience specializing in data-driven research and digital marketing technology. Congratulations Heidi and welcome to the GVT family.

Installer-Repairperson

Denton Nikolayson, of Erskine, was selected to fill an Installer-Repairperson position on June 17, 2020. Denton joins GVT with a very strong background in customer service and sales, having owned and operated a local business, experience with high- and low-voltage wiring and security systems, along with working hands-on with customers in our service area. Welcome to the GVT family Denton!

Installer-Repairperson

Jon Anderson, of rural Clearbrook, was selected to fill an Installer-Repairperson position on July 9, 2020. Jon joins GVT with over 34 years of experience in the telecommunications industry, extensive experience in the installation and maintenance of security systems, and strong customer service skills. Welcome to the GVT family Jon!

Part-Time CSR

Carly Swanson, of rural Shevlin, was selected to fill a Part-Time Customer Service Representative position on July 6, 2020. Carly joins GVT with a solid background in technology and customer service having worked as a Data Systems Administrator with the US Marine Corps. Welcome to the GVT family Carly!

BEST WISHES!

After more than 25 years with GVT, **Mark Thompson** elected early retirement effective on August 4, 2020. Mark began his career with GVT as an Installer-Repairperson and worked his way up to the Network Supervisor position he held for the past 11 years. Mark played a key role in many of GVT's projects that helped make GVT a technology leader in the telecommunications industry. Mark's knowledge and experience as a supervisor in the Network Operations department, and as a member of the GVT team, will be greatly missed.

Mark, your GVT family wishes you all the best!

115th VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Continued from front page

The Virtual Annual Meeting on June 30th was filmed at the Win-E-Mac School in Erskine. The meeting was called to order at 10:30am with an invocation and Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the business session with confirmation, by President Byron Ness, that a quorum was present. Secretary Jim Ferden also reviewed the Official Notice of Meeting and presented the minutes of last year's Annual Meeting for approval by the voting members. The business meeting included reports from President Byron Ness, Treasurer Allen Paulson, and CEO/General Manager Tim Brinkman, who announced that the **By-Laws Amendment passed in a vote of 1043 For and 43 Against**. Therefore, the ILEC area will be divided into eight districts which will contain as nearly as practical equal numbers of members and the CLEC area will be represented by one district. Brinkman also provided an update to members on how they could nominate and vote for Directors in Districts 2, 5, and 8 and explained that we would reconvene the Annual Meeting on July 28th to announce Director election results.

Members then received a second mailing with nominee bios for Districts 2, 5 and 8 and a ballot they could fill out and mail back to GVT. On July 28th, the 115th Virtual Annual Meeting was reconvened at 2:30pm at the Win-E-Mac School. President Byron Ness called the meeting to order and thanked Director Jerry Freitag for his years of service on the board and congratulated him on his retirement. CEO/General Manager Tim Brinkman then announced the Director election results: **Incumbent Director Lee Hoaas** of Erskine was elected to fill a 3-year term as Director for District No. 2 *(Brooks, Erskine & Mentor exchanges)*. **Incumbent Director Casey Holland** of Fosston was elected to fill a 3-year term as Director for District No. 5 *(Fosston & Lengby exchanges)*. And new **Director Jim DeVries** of Bejou was elected to fill a 3-year term as Director for District No. 8 *(CLEC & National Members, including Thief River Falls & Bejou)*.

We want to thank all of our members who took part in this year's Virtual Annual Meeting. We know it was a different format and we appreciate the flexibility and great voting response.

Lee Hoaas
District No. 2
Brooks, Erskine, Mentor

Casey Holland
District No. 5
Fosston, Lengby

Jim DeVries
District No. 8
CLEC & National Members, including Thief River Falls & Bejou

Congratulations & Thank You

for your loyal and dedicated service to Garden Valley Technologies.

30 YEARS
Steve Olson Service & Operations Manager

25 YEARS
Jeff Genereux Cable Splicer

20 YEARS
Marc Plante Construction Lineperson
Chris DuChamp Outside Plant Engineer

15 YEARS
Kristen Branstner Service Representative
Tim Moser IT Help Desk Technician

10 YEARS
Jason Breckel Network Technician
Ron Hanson Construction Lineperson

5 YEARS
Garrett Rock Construction Lineperson
Matt Anderson Installer-Repairperson
Pat Mullan Installer-Repairperson
Tim Brinkman CEO/General Manager

COVID-19 Update

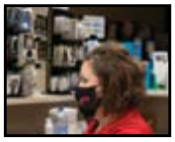
As a member-owned cooperative, Garden Valley Technologies takes the safety of our employees, members, and the communities we serve very seriously. We are following recommended protocols, as outlined by the CDC and the Minnesota Department of Health, and we will continue to do everything we can to help our members during these challenging times.

Over the past five months we have implemented many special assistance programs for our residential and business customers, provided free Wi-Fi in our local communities, and offered live streaming of local church programming. Just recently, we launched the GVT Internet Assistance Plan which allows Internet service to become more affordable for qualifying subscribers.

We continue to provide services to our members with safety in mind.

- GVT retail locations in Bagley, Erskine, and Thief River Falls are open with limited access. Please remember to wear a mask when you come to our store.
- For installations and service calls, a signed waiver that informs the customer about our procedures for entering a subscriber's home is required before an appointment is scheduled. Our technicians are practicing recommended protocols to protect our members, themselves, and co-workers.

Thank you for your understanding during this unique time and we thank you for your business, now and in the future.



Internet Assistance Program

The FCC's Lifeline program and Garden Valley Technologies are working to make communication services more affordable for members. We recently launched the GVT Internet Assistance Plan to help lower the cost of Internet service for qualifying subscribers. By combining the GVT Internet Assistance Plan credits with the federal Lifeline credit, members can receive our Internet service for as low as $5.00 per month.

This credit has already been added for all subscribers that are currently enrolled in the federal Lifeline program and have active Internet service. To find out if you qualify or to request an application, go to **checklifeline.org or call 800-234-9473**. Once you receive confirmation that you qualify, call GVT at 800-448-8260 to be enrolled and begin receiving the monthly discount.

INTRODUCING Ultimate Managed Wi-Fi

Ultimate Managed Wi-Fi

gives you an instant snapshot of your home or small business network. Through the GVT WiFi app you can view all the connected devices on your network, set up enhanced parental controls and keep your network safe from viruses and malicious websites.

Available for iPhone®, iPad® and Android devices.

Download on the App Store · Google Play

$12.95/mo.

Sign Up for Ultimate Managed Wi-Fi and get 60 DAYS FREE!

60 days free Ultimate Managed Wi-Fi offer is available to new or existing customers. After the promotional period, $12.95/mo. 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.

GVT MEDICAL ALERT SYSTEMS

Combining Peace of Mind with Independent Living

CaretakerSentry device includes a base station and a waterproof pendant with a range up to 600 feet and can be worn on a lanyard, wrist, or in a pocket.

Additional two-way voice pendant dials and provides voice communication with emergency response center (additional fees apply).

Anelto offers monitoring & personal safety services that help seniors stay in their homes & maintain independence. This device provides leading edge technology with GPS & Wi-Fi location services.

Restrictions may apply.

Stop by our new & improved retail store in Erskine.

We have everything you need!

BOGO HALF OFF ANY CELLULAR ACCESSORY

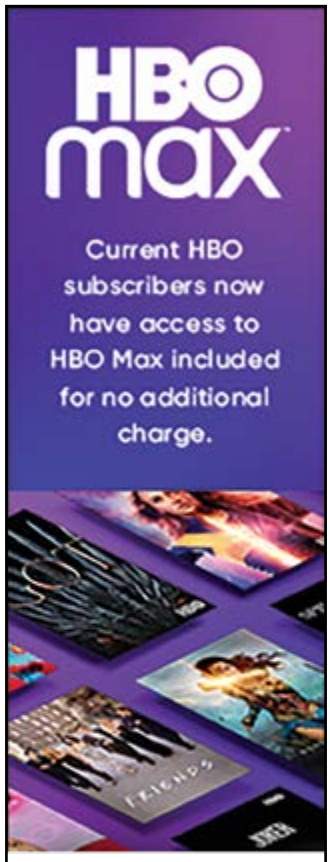
Buy One Accessory at Full Price and Get One Half Off

DEVICE CREDIT

Towards a New 4G HD Device

Restrictions apply.

Offers available in Erskine, Bagley & TRF retail locations.



Call today to add HBO 800-448-8260

Stream GVTV Local Content Channels Anywhere

Garden Valley Technologies currently has seven School & Local Content channels for our subscribers to enjoy and we are planning to implement the eighth channel this fall in Thief River Falls *(ch. 37)*. View live sports, community events, church services, city meetings, and more on channels dedicated solely to the schools and our members.

GVT is now offering another way to watch our School & Local Content channels by offering live streaming of channels 30-36 *(and soon 37)* from your PC, laptop, tablet, or mobile device. This service is free for GVT members and can be accessed using your E-Billing username and password. Non-GVT members have two options to enjoy live streaming content: subscribe to a 30-day subscription for $5.00 per month or an annual subscription for $20.00 per year. All paid subscriptions will support the School & Local Content channels and equipment upgrades.

We hope you enjoy these broadcasts which are produced and run by students and community members!

Billing Information

Universal Service Charge

The Federal Universal Service Fund Charge (FUSC) increased in July from $1.27 to $1.72 per line for most residential customers and $1.86 to $2.52 per line for single-line business customers. Multi-line business customers increased from $2.39 to $3.23 per access line.

The new FUSC amount for cellular service is calculated by multiplying the FUSC factor against your cellular plan charges. Effective in July, that FUSC factor increased from 7.2716% to 9.8315%.

More Than $2,065,000 of GVT Capital Credits Paid

Over 16,500 checks, totaling more than $2,065,000, were issued on May 14 to Garden Valley Technologies members who had service with the Cooperative in 2001 and/or 2019.

More than $18.5 million in capital credits have been authorized by the board of directors for payment to Garden Valley members over the last fifteen years.

These payments are not dividends for tax purposes because they are a return of contributed capital.

GVT Capital Credit Payout

GVT will be starting a pilot program to give members 85 years or older the option to receive 100% of their unretired capital credits. This program is limited to $2.2 million and will be determined based on years of active service. Please watch for more information coming soon.

Unclaimed Capital Credits

Capital Credit Checks were mailed in May. Unfortunately, sometimes checks are unclaimed. A list of members who have unclaimed patronage checks has been posted on our website at **www.gvtel.com/about-gv/capital-patronage.** If your name is on the list, call us at 800-448-8260.

Our deepest sympathy to the family of **Gary Kiefert**, retired Internet Help Desk Technician, who passed away Friday, July 24, 2020. Gary retired from GVT in 2018.

VOICE of the Valley

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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 Numbers

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

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

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

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

Board of Directors

Byron Ness, President | District 1
Arlene Novak, Vice President | District 3
James Ferden, Secretary | District 4
Allen Paulson, Treasurer | District 7
Lee Hoaas, Director | District 2
Casey Holland, Director | District 5
Larry Djernes, Director | District 6
Jim DeVries, Director | District 8
Ron Kiesow, Director | District 9

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GIG-CAPABLE PROVIDER GIG CERTIFIED BY NTCA

GARDEN VALLEY TECHNOLOGIES
201 Ross Avenue | PO Box 259
Erskine, MN 56535

Sign-up for Ultimate Managed Wi-Fi and get 60 DAYS FREE!
(See inside ad for additional details.)

JOIN.GVTEL.COM

Internet services available to customers located within GVT service area. Internet speeds may vary due to your location and/or equipment. Internet modem is required except when served by fiber-to-the-home. Plans are available with or without telephone service. Prices shown above require a telephone line at an additional monthly rate. Other restrictions apply.