VOICE of the Valley

GARDEN VALLEY TECHNOLOGIES

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Annual Meeting Highlights

Garden Valley Technologies (GVT) held its 117th Annual Membership Meeting in-person at the Win-E-Mac School in Erskine on June 7, 2022. 125 members and guests attended the meeting and 216 people viewed the meeting on GVTV and our Live Stream. Entertainment was provided by "Windblown".

The Annual Meeting began at 10:30am with an invocation, Presentation of Colors by Erskine American Legion Post 596, and Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the business session with confirmation, by Secretary James Ferden, that a quorum was present. Secretary 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 session included reports from President Byron Ness, Treasurer Allen Paulson, and CEO/General Manager Tim Brinkman, who provided updates on Cooperative business. Highlights include an overview on the financial health of the Cooperative and an announcement that Garden Valley Technologies will be 100% fiber-to-the-home in the summer of 2022.

Personnel & Administrative Manager Sue Rasmussen reviewed By-Laws information relating to Director qualification and voting; the election of Directors for Districts 1, 4, and 7 was held following the recess for district caucuses. Incumbent Director Byron Ness was elected to fill a 3-year term as Director for District 1 *(Beltrami, Fertile, and Maple Bay exchanges)*. Incumbent Director James Ferden was elected to fill a 3-year term as Director of District 4 *(McIntosh, Winger, and Oklee exchanges)*. Incumbent Director Allen Paulson was elected to fill a 3-year term as Director of District 7 *(Bagley, Minerva, and Shevlin exchanges)*.

GVT employees were available to answer questions about the Cooperative's many products and services.

Attendees were entered into a drawing to win several door prizes. A list of all prize winners is listed on the inside. In addition to attendee prizes, we also drew one lucky member's name from all GVT members to receive a $150 GVT Bill Credit. The winner was **Chester Nelson** from Bagley.

Byron Ness
District 1 | Beltrami, Fertile, Maple Bay

James Ferden
District 4 | McIntosh, Oklee, Winger

Allen Paulson
District 7 | Bagley, Minerva, Shevlin

News & Events

Holiday Closings

GVT business offices will be closed in observance of the upcoming holidays:
Monday, July 4 - Independence Day
Monday, Sept. 5 - Labor Day

Visit us at the Fair

Polk County - July 6-10
Pennington County - July 13-17
Marshall County - July 20-24
Clearwater County - Aug. 3-7

Annual Reports

2021 Annual Reports are available to members upon request.

Submit a testimonial today:

If you've had a great GVT experience, we'd love to hear all about it! **www.gvtel.com/testimonial**

Congratulations & Thank You

We would like to congratulate the following employees for their years of loyal and dedicated service with Garden Valley Technologies.

Jeff Lund | District Representative | 25 Years
Dawn Kreitzer | Service Representative | 20 Years
Bernice McKeever | Service Representative | 20 Years
Lisa Stuhaug | HR Generalist & Wellness Coordinator | 20 Years
Scott Guillemette | Construction Lineperson | 15 Years
Derek Lambert | District Representative | 5 Years

Personnel News

With the summer construction season ramping up, we have hired several temporary constructions workers.

Welcome to the GVT team! Mark Schmitz, Tahlor Ose, Austen Hanson, Chad Parsley, Caleb Pahlen, Pat Paquin, Hunter Pahlen, and Tommy Revier.

Billing Information

Universal Service Charge

Effective July, 2022, the amount of the Federal USF Charge (FUSC), appearing on your bill each month, may change as a result of an expected increase in the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) universal service fund contribution factor from 23.8% to 33%. The Federal Universal Service Fund Program is designed to help keep local telephone service rates affordable for all customers, in all areas of the United States.

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 will increase from 8.8298% to 12.243%.

$1.5 million GVT Capital Credits Paid

In May, Garden Valley Technologies issued more than 17,500 checks to members totaling approximately $1.5 million in allocated capital credits. This capital credit payout represents a percentage of the capital credits allocated for 2002 and 2021.

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, 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.”

Over the last 15 years GVT has paid out over $18-million in capital credits to our member-owners. In addition to providing residential and business members with advanced integrated communications and technological solutions at competitive rates, we believe that the payment of capital credits is another advantage of being part of a member-owned cooperative.

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-us.** If your name is on the list, call us at 800-448-8260.

FRS Community Grant Program

Now Accepting Applications

Supporting Your Communities

The 2022 Community Grant program sponsored by the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) and Garden Valley Technologies is open. **The deadline to submit applications is August 1, 2022.**

As part of its ongoing commitment to rural communities across the country, FRS offers aid for communities served by NTCA members through its annual Community Grants Program. These grants are designed to provide support to a variety of local efforts to build and sustain a high quality of life in rural America.

Applications for these grants are accepted each spring ranging from $250 to $5,000. The grants awarded support a variety of projects concentrated in four major categories:

1. Business and Economic Development
Devise a plan to turn your community into a global phenomenon by growing small or existing businesses, developing new ones, and implementing a job creation program that attracts key talent from your community or from skilled individuals interested in relocating to small town America.

2. Community Development
Develop an outreach program that helps to promote advancing technology skills of your community members, incorporates innovation into learning, raises the visibility of your community's talent and artistry, and places your town on everyone's bucket list as the place to visit.

3. Education
Support advances in education by helping your schools get technology (computers, smart boards, etc.) in the classroom, build resources for curriculum development, strengthen extracurricular activities and programs, and promote distance learning programs.

4. Telecommunications Applications
Show how you plan to turn your community into a technological powerhouse by promoting the implementation and use of broadband-enabled applications for telehealth, education, government services, safety and security, and efficient energy distribution and use.

FRS provides priority to projects that:

- Could be fully funded by the grant maximum of $5,000 or have at least 75% of the project currently funded.
- Technology and broadband-enabled focused projects.
- Have a long-term impact for the community and its residents.
- Promote community participation and engagement.
- Create a more sustainable rural community.

FRS will not award projects to:

- Individuals
- Scholarship Programs
- International Organizations
- Lobbying and Political Activities
- Ticketed Events
- Infrastructure/Building Campaigns
- Capital Campaigns
- Endowments
- Event Sponsorships
- Community Food Programs
- Loan Repayments
- Religious-Based Activities
- For-Profit Businesses

To submit a Grant Request, fill out the Application Guide located on the GVT website: **www.gvtel.com/about-us**

Email completed application to **marketing@gvtel.com** or drop it off at one of our locations in Bagley, Erskine or Thief River Falls.

Deadline to apply is August 1, 2022.

Annual Meeting prize winners were as follows:
Joanne Stingen, Goodridge *($100 GVT Retail Store Gift Certificate)*; **Barbara Kilpela**, Bagley *($50 GVT Retail Store Gift Certificate)*; **Hazel Trogstad**, Fosston *(GVT Gift Basket - $50 value)*; **Susan Johannessohn**, Lengby *(Heated Coffee Mug from GVT)*; **Bonnie Underdahl**, Fosston, **Albert Mehrkens**, St. Hilaire, **Mabel Helgeson**, Winger, **Myra Kaste**, Maple Bay *(GVT Duffel Bag)*; **JoAnne Bradley**, Brooks, **Shirley Gunderson**, Bagley, **Atton Theis**, Bagley, **W Bruce Eskeli**, Plummer, **Audrey Hemmingsen**, Erskine, **Delores Strandlien**, Shevlin, **Marvin St. Germaine**, Fosston, **Doreen Norgaard**, Shevlin *($25 Amazon Gift Card Olsen Thielen)*; **Joanne Tilleraas**, Fertile, **Donald Vaa**, McIntosh *($25 AMEX Card NBC)*; **Harlan Strandlien**, Shevlin *($25 Arco Gift Card CNS)*; **Wayne Trandem**, Erskine *($25 Ness Café Gift Certificate CNS)*; **Melody Berg**, Lengby *($25 The Deuce Gift Card CNS)*; **Gary Iverson**, Goodridge *(Floral Arrangement by Fertile Garden Center)*; **Alanna Willis**, Bagley, **Braxton Baird**, Leonard *(Kids Prize - Headphones)*.

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Bagley
105 Main Ave. N.
M-F 9am - 5pm

Erskine
206 Vance Ave. S.
M-F 8am - 5pm

Thief River Falls
1517 US HWY 59 S.
M-F 8:30am - 5pm

Specializing in technology products and accessories like laptops, tablets, cellular and more.

Local Student Scholarships Awarded

Olivia Forgit pictured with GVT Director Byron Ness.

Minnesota Telecom Alliance Foundation

The Minnesota Telecom Alliance announced that they received 103 scholarship applications from across the state and one winning student is from Fertile. **Olivia Forgit was selected to receive a $2,000 scholarship for the 2022-2023 academic year from the Minnesota Telecom Alliance Foundation**, according to Tim Brinkman, Garden Valley Technologies.

Ms. Forgit will be graduating from Fertile-Beltrami High School and plans to attend the University of Minnesota Duluth. She is the daughter of Matthew and Merrilee Forgit.

In awarding the scholarship to Ms. Forgit, CEO/General Manager Tim Brinkman said, ***"We are happy to have this chance to make an investment in this students' college education. Rural communities need educated and talented young people to be our leaders of the future. It makes us all proud at Garden Valley Technologies when one of the statewide winners is from our area."***

The Foundation is part of the Minnesota Telecom Alliance, a trade organization based in St. Paul representing over forty-four telephone companies and cooperatives in the state.

FRS Scholarship Program

The Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) announced it has awarded over $120,000 in scholarships to 40 students from rural communities served by members of NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association. Two of those students are from the Garden Valley Technologies service area.

The FRS Scholarship Program awards one-time scholarships to students from across rural America for their first year of college, university or vocational-technical school. Each student is sponsored by an NTCA member company, and in this case the member company is Garden Valley Technologies.

The two students who were awarded $2500 scholarships are:

Katrina Kratzke of Fertile, graduating from the MN Virtual Academy

Caden Eckman of Fosston, graduating from Fosston HS Secondary

Katrina Kratzke pictured with GVT Director Byron Ness.

Caden Ekman pictured with Marketing & Sales Supervisor Julie Dahle.

"Providing opportunities for young people in rural communities is a core mission for FRS. We are proud to partner with NTCA member companies and generous individuals in the industry to make these scholarships possible each year. We know these scholarship recipients are doing great things and we look forward to learning about their successes," said FRS Executive Director Pam Becker.

FRS YOUTH TOUR

On my trip to Washington, D.C. I was able to enjoy many area monuments, including the National Mall Fountain which was my favorite because of the all the engraved states' name and also because I could cool down by standing in the water. I also got to hear many great speakers and tour the capital. This was a great experience I would totally comeback as chaperon if possible! I enjoyed meeting many people and seeing sites I've never seen before!

Thank you GVT and FRS for the opportunity.
Austin R. Fellman

TESTIMONIAL

The technicians called to keep us apprised of minor delays in their arrival time. The workmanship was excellent. The install and programming of the equipment was top notch. Their goal was to be sure we were 100% satisfied and understood all aspects of the Internet install. They met their goal with unsurpassed service.

Doug S., Warren

If you've had a great GVT experience, we'd love to hear all about it! If we use your testimonial in future marketing material, we'll apply a one-time $10 credit on your GVT invoice.
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Billing Information

Telecommunications Access Minnesota

On May 31, 2022, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) adopted the Department of Commerce's recommendation to reduce the Telecommunications Access Minnesota (TAM) surcharge from $0.06 to $0.04 (PUC Order in Docket No. P-999/M-22-83, issued May 31, 2022).

The TAM surcharge decrease to $.04 is effective the first billing cycle on or after August 1, 2022. The 911 surcharge will remain at $0.80, and the Telephone Assistance Plan (TAP) surcharge will remain at $0.07. Per the FCC rules, the Access Recovery Charge (ARC) will increase by $0.02 to off-set the TAM surcharge decrease.

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Greg Meyer

Kelly Gordon

Melissa Schwartz

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Pinnacle Marketing Group

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Retail Stores & Office Hours

Erskine: Monday - Friday 8:00am - 5:00pm
Bagley: Monday - Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm
(Closed 1:00pm – 1:30pm)
TRF: Monday - Friday 8:30am - 5:00pm

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Customer Support 24/7/365, Business Office, Retail Stores or Service Requests
800-448-8260 or 218-687-5251
www.gvtel.com

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Live Chat www.gvtel.com
7:00am - 8:30pm Monday - Saturday
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800-252-1166
811 *(call toll-free before digging)*

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