VOICE of the Valley

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GARDEN VALLEY TECHNOLOGIES

July 2023 | Volume 73 | No. 4

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New Thief River Falls Retail Location

GVT is excited to announce the opening of our new retail store location in Thief River Falls. Newly situated in a prime and easily accessible location at **1412 3rd Street West**, our store aims to serve customers with its impressive range of technology products, inviting atmosphere, and excellent customer service.

Upon stepping foot into our new location, customers will be greeted with an impressive and spacious layout that accommodates a wide array of technology focused products including laptops, printers, cellular phones and accessories, as well as unique gift items.

At the heart of all three of our retail stores is a commitment to providing exceptional customer service. Our knowledgeable and friendly staff are passionate about assisting customers, answering questions about our services, and ensuring an enjoyable experience for everyone who walks through our doors. Whether you need assistance picking out the right cellular plan and phone, or want to see a demo of our new GVT Stream service, our dedicated team is always ready to lend a helping hand.

As an active member of the Thief River Falls community, GVT is committed to fostering positive relationships. Our new location also features a co-working space called Spark Hub. This space will fill a need in the local business community by offering an affordable office space solution for entrepreneurs, small businesses, and people who work from home. High-speed Internet, private and open desk spaces, conference rooms, and 24/7 access are all features of this co-working membership model.

We look forward to welcoming you into our new space. Watch our social media for details as we celebrate the grand opening of our new retail store location and Spark Hub in August.

News & Events

Holiday Closings

GVT business offices will be closed in observance of the upcoming holidays:

Tuesday, July 4 - Independence Day

Monday, Sept. 4 - Labor Day

Visit us at the Fair

Polk County - July 5-9

Pennington County - July 12-16

Marshall County - July 19-23

Clearwater County - Aug. 2-6

Annual Reports

2022 Annual Reports are available to members upon request or can be viewed on our website: **www.gvtel.com/about-us**

Submit a testimonial today:

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

Happy Retirement

Service Office Coordinator Sue Kronschnabel retired as of June 1, 2023, after serving the Company for over 31 years. Sue's passion for serving our customers has been a staple in her GVT career. She took on challenges with enthusiasm, was constantly learning and sharing her knowledge, and she played a big role in training many CSR's throughout the years. She was a "go-to" in the Service Office and her "do what you have to do and get the job done right" attitude has served this Company well. ***We all wish you the very best in retirement, Sue, congratulations!***

Congratulations!

Service Representatives

Meet the newest members of our GVT Customer Service Team, **Lauren Agnes and Kathy Osland**, both from Erskine. Lauren is a Part-Time Service Representative in our service office and Kathy is a Part-Time Retail Service Representative on our retail store team. **Congratulations to you both and welcome to the GVT family!**

Personnel News

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

Welcome to the GVT team! Mark Schmitz, Chad Parsley, Caleb Pahlen, Hunter Pahlen, Tommy Revier, Jeremy Groshong, Kolton Stuhaug, Jonas Spry, and Zachary Luckow.

Congratulations & Thank You

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

Dawn Burbage | Service Representative | 25 years
Laura Walker | Facilities Technician | 25 years
Jordan Cote | Project Management Specialist |15 years
James Ferden | Director | 10 years
Larry Djernes | Director | 5 years
Ronald Kiesow | Director | 5 years

Billing Information

Universal Service Charge

Effective July, 2023, 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 29% to 29.2%. 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 10.759% to 10.8332%.

GVT Allocates Over $2 Million in Capital Credits

In May, GVT issued 19,116 checks to its members, totaling $2,085,917.43 in allocated capital credits. This payout represents 50% of the remaining unpaid capital credits allocated for 2002 and 12% of 2022's capital credits.

Capital credits are one of the many benefits of being a GVT member. As a cooperative, GVT operates at cost, which means that any excess revenues are allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits. Timothy Brinkman, CEO/General Manager of GVT, said, "As a member-owned cooperative, it's rewarding to see these dollars go back to people in our local communities. Unlike a private company or corporation, our members earn money back for every dollar they spend with us."

This payout marks nearly $18-million of capital credits paid out by GVT to its members over the last 15 years. Along with providing residential and business members with advanced integrated communications and technological solutions at competitive rates, GVT believes 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.

FORCE OF THE FUTURE

Annual Meeting Highlights

Garden Valley Technologies *(GVT)* held its 118th Annual Membership Meeting in-person at the Win-E-Mac School in Erskine on June 6, 2023. 185 members and guests attended the meeting and 267 people viewed the meeting on Local Content Channels and the GVT website. Prior to the meeting, entertainment was provided by "Windblown" while serving donuts, coffee and lemonade. GVT employees were available to answer questions about the Cooperative's many products and services. Lunch was served immediately following the meeting and was catered by Erickson's Smokehouse from Fertile, MN.

The Annual Meeting began at 10:30am with an invocation, Presentation of Colors by Erskine American Legion Post 596, and the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the business session with confirmation, by Secretary Al Paulson, that a quorum was present. Secretary Paulson 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 Arlene Novak, Treasurer Lee Hoaas, and CEO/General Manager Tim Brinkman, who provided updates on Cooperative business. Highlights included an overview on the financial health of the Cooperative, reaching the milestone of 100% fiber-to-the-home, launching GVT Stream, and new Internet speed tiers.

The proposed By-Laws amendments were presented by corporate attorney, Chad Felstul, Pemberton Law, P.L.L.P., Fergus Falls, MN. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept the proposed By-Laws amendments which dispensed with ballot voting. The approved amendments: provide more options regarding the manner, method, and location of the Annual Meeting; include voting by electronic means when determining the quorum necessary for transacting business; allow for three different voting methods *(in person, mail, or electronic means)* and remove voting done by acclamation, standing, or raising of hands; create a nomination process to become a candidate for the Board of Directors and process for filling a vacancy when no person is nominated; provide for renumbering of Sections within Article III; and require approval of at least two-thirds of all eligible members entitled to vote regarding disposition of fixed assets.

The election of Directors for Districts 2, 5, and 8 was held following the recess for district caucuses. **Incumbent Director Lee Hoaas** was unanimously elected to fill a 3-year term as Director for District 2 *(Brooks, Erskine, Mentor exchanges)*. Incumbent Director Casey Holland and Mark Worshek were both nominated for the District 5 Director position which required a ballot vote by all members present at the meeting to determine this Director seat. **Incumbent Director Casey Holland** received the most votes and was elected to fill a 3-year term as Director of District 5 *(Fosston and Lengby exchanges)*. **Incumbent Director Jim DeVries** was unanimously elected to fill a 3-year term as Director of District 8 *(CLEC & National Members, including Bejou, Thief River Falls & Warren exchanges)*.

Attendees were entered into a drawing to win several door prizes. A list of all prize winners is listed below. **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 Mr. Jody Gudvangen from Fertile.** All meeting attendees also received a stainless-steel popcorn bowl with the GVT logo etched on it.

Lee Hoaas
District 2 | Brooks, Erskine, Mentor

Casey Holland
District 5 | Fosston, Lengby

Jim DeVries
District 8 | CLEC & National Members, including Bejou, Thief River Falls & Warren

Adult Prize Winners:
Jean Plante *($25 American Express Card);* **Bonita Shaver** *($50 Amazon Gift Card - Olsen Thielen);* **Barb Schulstad** *(15 Pro Nitro Golf Balls - Unitel);* **Arlen or Shirley Hanson** *(GVT Thermos);* **Eugene Proulx** *($30 Ace Hardware Gift Card);* **Rob Hole** *(GVT 4-in-1 Fast Charger);* **Sylvia M Larson** *($50 Amazon Gift Card - Olsen Thielen);* **Delane Schamberg** *(GVT Sweatshirt Blanket);* **Gary Novak** *($25 American Express Card);* **Dave Hamre** *(GVT Duffle Bag);* **Marvin Neste** *($30 DQ Gift Card);* **Anthony Maruska** *(GVT Streaming Basket);* **Gladys Luecken** *($25 American Express Card);* **Cherie Lerfald** *(GVT Thermos);* **Patty Piche** *($50 Amazon Gift Card - Olsen Thielen);* **Steve Haaven** *(GVT Sweatshirt Blanket);* **Rosann Burslie** *(15 Pro Nitro Golf Balls - Unitel);* **Kristi Plante** *($50 BP Gas Gift Card);* **Paul Mahlen** *(GVT 4-in-1 Fast Charger);* **Bonnie Berg** *($50 Amazon Gift Card - Olsen Thielen);* **LaDawna Anderson** *($30 Ace Hardware Gift Card);* **Barry Brovold** *($25 Walmart Gift Card - Pinnacle Marketing Group);* **Patricia Proulx** *(Floral Arrangement).*

Kid Prize Winners:
Pavel Snegirev *(Ranger Rugged Speaker);* **Raisa James** *(LCD Writing Tablet);* **LJ Philips** *(FlashFlight Light Up Disc/Frizbee).*

Three Local Students Awarded Scholarships

Through Telecom Foundations

Garden Valley Technologies is pleased to announce that three local students have been awarded scholarships through the MTA and FRS Scholarship Programs.

The Minnesota Telecom Alliance (MTA) announced that they received 123 scholarship applications from across the state and two winning students are from the Garden Valley Technologies service area. **Paige Michalski** *(Warren-Alvarado-Oslo High School)* and **Kimberly Hitchen** *(Fertile-Beltrami High School)* were selected to receive $2,000 scholarships for the 2023-2024 academic year from the Minnesota Telecom Alliance Foundation.

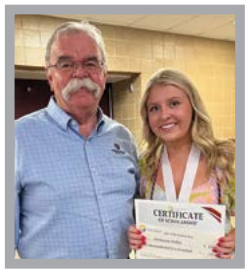
Page Michalski is graduating from Warren-Alvarado-Oslo High School and plans to attend Oregon State University. She is the daughter of Carrie & Jay Michalski. Kimberly Hitchen is graduating from Fertile-Beltrami High School and plans to attend the University of North Dakota. She is the daughter of Chad and Kari Hitchen.

Page Michalski pictured with GVT Director Jim DeVries

Kimberly Hitchen pictured with GVT Director Byron Ness

To be eligible for the MTA scholarship, applicants must be attending post-secondary education at either a university, college, or technical college, be a Minnesota resident, and the applicant's family must subscribe to at least one service from a MTA member company; in this case, Garden Valley Technologies. The panel reviewed each application and scored the applications based on the applicants' grades, academic achievements and extra-curricular activities.

In addition, **McKenna Melbo** of Bagley has received a $2500 scholarship through the **Foundation for Rural Service (FRS).** Founded in 1994, FRS is the philanthropic arm of NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association, of which Garden Valley Technologies is a member.



McKenna Melbo pictured with GVT Director Al Paulson

The FRS Scholarship Program awards one-time scholarships to students from rural communities for their first year of college, university, or vocational-technical school. Each student is sponsored by an NTCA member-company that also contributes a portion of the scholarship award. This year FRS awarded a total of $124,000 for 42 scholarships to students across the country.

In awarding these scholarships, Tim Brinkman, CEO and General Manager of GVT said, ***"We are happy to have this chance to make an investment in these 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 three of the winners are from our service area."***

FRS YOUTH TOUR

We're thrilled to have recently sent **Ava Halvorson** of Goodridge and **Kya Morinville** of Brooks on an unforgettable journey to Washington, D.C.! With the FRS Youth Tour, these two students got a firsthand look at the telecommunications industry and explored some amazing historical sites. Hear directly from Ava and Kya about their adventures in the nation's capital!

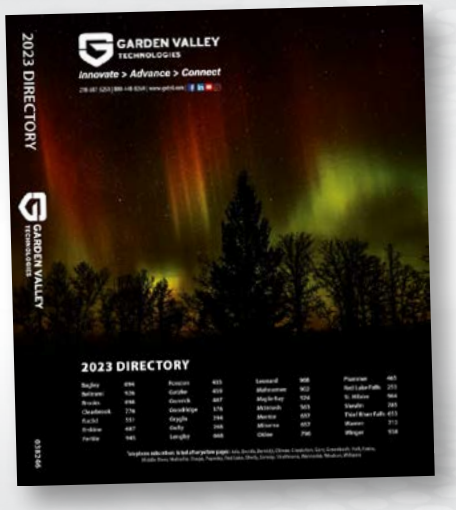
"I loved going to Washington DC, it was an awesome experience! I got to meet new friends, who I probably would've never even seen before, while having tons of new experiences. Some of my favorite things on the trip include going to the Smithsonian National Museum of American History and seeing old objects that were well known throughout US History, from First Ladies dresses as old as Dolley Madison's to Dorothy's Ruby Slippers. My other favorite was visiting the capitol building, it felt surreal seeing it in person, and the tour was great! I got to see famous monuments, which was very cool to see what everything symbolizes, and how much detail the people who make them put into it. It was cool seeing my state at some of these memorials, and that even though I live far from Washington DC, Minnesota is just as important there as it is here. We also ran into Bernie Sanders on the crosswalk, when we were walking to our bus, which was so crazy, since I've only seen him on TV. I had so much fun on this trip, and if I had the chance to go back, I would without a second thought. I'd like to give a big thank you to GVT for giving me the opportunity to go on this trip, and to FRS for making everything run smoothly. I would highly recommend this to anyone else who is thinking about going!" said Ava Halvorson.

TESTIMONIAL

Our experience with GVT has been exceptional. The team that connected our Internet service went out of their way to make everything work properly and were willing to come back to our home if need be. We are grateful for the efficient and experienced people that represent GVT.

Naomi Z. | Thief River Falls

Have you had an amazing GVT experience?
Share and tell us all about it! If your testimonial makes it into our future marketing material, you'll be eligible for a *one-time* **$10 credit** on your GVT invoice!
Submit your testimonial at **www.gvtel.com/testimonial**



Marketing that makes an impact!

Advertise in the 2024 GVT Telephone Directory and on localsolution.com

Marketing/Sales Consultants are in our area now!

Greg Meyer

Kelly Gordon

Melissa Schwartz

Contact Pinnacle today!
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Pinnacle Marketing Group

GARDEN VALLEY TECHNOLOGIES

COVER CONTEST

$100.00 Cash Prize

Deadline:
July 31, 2023

Learn More:
www.gvtel.com/directory-cover

We no longer accept printed photo submissions.

Repair Service

HALF OFF the month of August

Doesn't matter how you broke it.

We can fix it.

Call 800-448-8260 for additional information.

Computer, Smart Phone & Tablet Repair Service

1-hour minimum. In-shop repairs only. Discount applied to labor, not equipment. Restrictions may apply.

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

Contact Us

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

Internet Support 24/7/365
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7:00am - 8:30pm Monday - Saturday
11:00am - 6:30pm Sunday

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

Board of Directors

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

SMART RURAL COMMUNITY®
GIG-CERTIFIED PROVIDER

GARDEN VALLEY TECHNOLOGIES
206 Vance Avenue South | PO Box 259
Erskine, MN 56535

Stop in to check out the many great products we have on SALE for the month of July!

Styles, colors and quantities of products vary at each location. Offers available while supplies last.

Retail Store Hours

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

www.gvtel.com |