



## MONTHLY NEWS

WORLD-CLASS TECHNOLOGY. UNRIVALED LOCAL SERVICE.

### February 2021

#### Top News Inside

- From the CEO
- Vernon Tech Center - Digitizing
- Heart of the Driftless Photo Contest
- Director Positions
- Scholarships
- Save the Date - Annual Meeting
- Tax Season

## WORKING FROM HOME

Our homes have become an office, class room, work space and entertainment center for our families. The outbreak of COVID-19 fostered an environment in our homes to be a catch all for employment and education. Homes across the nation have tried to balance issues that come while working from home. Working remotely is increasingly becoming a normal part of the workplace environment, instead of a concept. Some employees may never see an office setting again due to the ease, convenience and cost of an office. Being organized is the key to making this work and having a reliable and secure internet connection is essential. Computers, software, monitors, keyboard, mouse, cameras, and telephones are all resources that are needed to make the home office setting work. Other necessary office supplies are an ergonomic chair, chair mat, file cabinets, monitor arms and lighting. Your employer may require a VPN or a network that you don't control so you can access servers or websites that store confidential information, meant only for internal use. These are all essentials for working from home. Sooner than later, work and school needs to move off the kitchen table.

#### *Here are some tips for working at home:*

- Set a schedule and maintain regular hours
- Create a routine
- Set ground rules for family and workspace
- See company policy on breaks
- Create a dedicated office space (*off the kitchen table*)
- Show up to virtual meetings
- Over-communicate and inform individuals in your home of rules while working at home



## FROM THE CEO, ROD OLSON

Cooperatives are formed by people to solve a problem. VC Co-op was originally formed to bring telephone service to unserved areas.

We have come a long way in providing services that are critical for the communication needs of our members since 1950 when the cooperative was formed. Members are the core of our business and keeping our members happy starts with our employees. If our employees are happy, they will go the extra mile to provide the excellent care our members deserve. Our industry reinvents itself every couple of years - that's all the longer equipment lasts. It's a process of continual education. We provide different forms of education for our employees to keep them up to date on technology and the industry. Some examples are: Weekly and monthly employee meetings, committees have been formed to keep our ideas fresh and new, employee news and continuing education are all ways that have been provided with employee input. Bringing in speakers to educate our employees on topics that can bring awareness to issues that can help serve our community are also key. An example is the Vernon County Sheriffs Department has educated our employees on different topics, and a retired Vernon Manor employee brought awareness for us to serve our elderly population. 2020 was a difficult year for all of us and the employees of VC Co-op rolled with the punches and supported our members with quality Customer Service. We never skipped a beat. *We look forward to serving you in 2021.*

## TAX SEASON SCAMMERS

*Thousands of people each year fall prey to scams losing millions. The most common scams are by phone, email, text message and postal mail.*

**Here are some tips to be on the lookout for a scam:**

**Spoofing** is a common way in which fraudulent calls can be placed. They fake a phone number to look like it is coming from the IRS.

**Never give personal information over the phone.**

**Email** - An email can look like it is coming direct from the IRS using their logo or legitimate tax software. Links in the email can direct you to a site that looks legitimate. *Never open links unless you know it is a reliable source.*

**Text Message** - If you receive a text message from the IRS, it's a scam. *Delete it immediately.*

**Mail** - can be hard to determine legitimacy. The IRS will have either a notice number or letter number on the top or bottom right corner of the letter. *If there is no notice number or letter, it is likely the letter is fraudulent.*

## Convenience in bill paying

Have you ever considered **SmartHub**? It manages your account online or with your mobile device. Take the worry out of bill paying and manage your account with easy access. *It's safe, secure and easy.*

- **No more calling in payments or writing checks.**
- **No more stamps.**
- **View statements online.**



Visit our website [www.vernoncom.coop](http://www.vernoncom.coop) and select My Account

## SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR DIRECTOR POSITIONS

A nominating committee has been selected to seek individuals to run for director seats to represent **District 4 (Viroqua exchange), District 5 (De Soto exchange) and District 6 (Westby Rural & Cashton exchange)**, in 2021 for three year terms. Any member interested in being considered for a nomination to serve as a Director, please contact Rod Olson at: (608) 634-3136 or [rolson@vernoncom.coop](mailto:rolson@vernoncom.coop).

## SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE



VC Co-op offers scholarships to members and dependent children wanting to further their education. Information can be found on our website at [www.vernoncom.coop](http://www.vernoncom.coop).

**Application deadline is**

**February 12, 2021** and recipients will be announced at VC Co-op's Annual Meeting on April 22, 2021.



*The Vernon Tech Center located at 214 N. Main St.*

*Viroqua digitizes your photos, so you never have to worry about losing those priceless family memories.*

*Vernon Tech Center can be reached at (608) 638-2030.*

**Digitizing**

*In-house so your treasured photos and video never leave the premises*

- Photos and Negatives
- VHS and VHS-C Tapes
- Slides
- Competitive Prices
- Quick Turnaround



## TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

There's an App for just about anything these days. As the New Year begins, a fresh start and putting 2020 behind us can be much easier with the right tools to help keep us on track. Whatever your enjoyment may be, eating right, exercising, meditating, sleeping, travel, there is an App for you! Here are a few:

**3 Minute Mindfulness** – This App helps relieve stress and anxiety by helping you breath properly. There are different breathing exercises for different occasions and weekly programs to help build good habits.

**MyFitnessPal** – Helps with weight loss. This App is a calorie tracker. If you eat something, it will tell you how many calories you have just consumed. If you need to burn calories after eating that cheesecake, it will tell you how many calories you need to burn. This App also give you recipes to help you stay on track with your diet.

**Elevate** – Your brain needs exercise too! This App helps increase your skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening and math. If you do the daily exercises, it increased the speed and accuracy at which your brain performs.

**myNoise** – Sleep is important for daily health and getting the rest you need can improve your overall well-being. This App helps quiet your brain by letting you fall asleep to the background sound of your choice.

**Pocket** – This App saves articles, videos and stories from any publication, page or App. Enjoy them later, on any device.

**Food Network Kitchen** – If you have a favorite TV chef, this one's for you. More than 70,000 recipes.

**Travel Plan** - The Travel Plan lets the user sync their office schedule with the app. Collects data input on your favorite destinations. Introduces you to the best times, and essential places to visit and fits them into your trip chart.



### 30 YEAR SERVICE AWARD

**Matt McGarry** celebrated 30 years of employment with the Cooperative on December 10th! He began his career as the Westby trouble shooter in the I & R Dept. In March of 1994, he started in the Central Office until 2006 when he became a Network Engineer. In 2017 he became Director of Operations.



### SAVE THE DATE

**2021 ANNUAL MEETING**  
**APRIL 22, 2021**

Due to COVID - 19, the Annual Meeting will once again be virtual, but you will be able to view it online.

*More information will come at a later date.*

### SUPER BOWL 55

DATE: **Sunday, Feb. 7, 2021**

PLACE: **Tampa, FL**

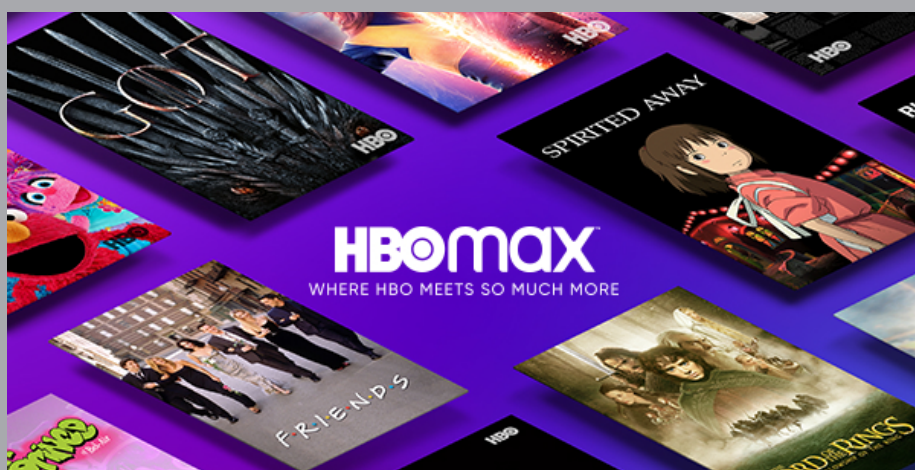
KICKOFF TIME: **6:30 pm**

TV CHANNEL: **CBS**



## ENTERTAINMENT NEWS

**HBOMax** is the new streaming service of HBO. It is included when a member subscribes to IPTV HBO. HBO Max bundles all of HBO together with a collection of movies, shows and new Max Originals. It has approximately 10,000 hours of entertainment and includes shows like: Friends, Big Bang Theory, South Park, Game of Thrones, Doctor Who and original series.



## FEBRUARY 2

*Ground Hog Day*



## FEBRUARY 5 & 6

*Snowflake Ski Jump*



## FEBRUARY 14

*Valentines Day*



## FEBRUARY 15

*Presidents Day*



103 N Main Street  
Westby, WI 54667

Lobby Hours:  
8:00am - 4:30pm (M-F)

(608) 634-3136  
[www.vernoncom.coop](http://www.vernoncom.coop)



## CHICKEN WITH MUSHROOM SAUCE

### INGREDIENTS:

2 Tbs. Olive oil (divided)  
4 Tbs. Butter  
4 Chicken breasts (halved)  
Salt and pepper to taste  
10 oz. sliced mushrooms



### SAUCE:

4 Cloves minced garlic  
1 Tbs. Wheat flour  
1 C. Chicken broth  
1 C. Heavy cream  
1/2 C. Grated Parmesan Cheese  
1/2 tsp. Salt  
1 tsp. Garlic powder  
1/4 tsp. Black pepper  
1 C. Spinach

### Instructions:

Season chicken breasts with salt and pepper on a large plate and set aside. In a large skillet, add 1 Tbs. olive oil and 1 Tbs. butter. Allow the butter to melt over medium high heat. Add chicken and cook for about 4 minutes on each side until browned. Remove onto a plate. Add the sliced mushrooms and remaining Tbs. olive oil and 1 Tbs. butter to the pan. Cook for 5 minutes. Remove from pan and set aside. **Sauce:** Add remaining butter to the pan, allow it to melt and then cook garlic until slightly browned (only for a couple of minutes). Add 1 Tbs. flour and cook until thick. Slowly add chicken broth and heavy cream. Once simmered, add Parmesan cheese and allow it to blend for 2-3 minutes. Add salt, garlic powder and pepper. Taste the sauce and adjust the seasonings, if necessary. Add spinach to the sauce and allow it to wilt. Add the cooked mushrooms back into the pan and mix them into the sauce. Now add cooked chicken and allow it to reheat for 2-3 minutes. Close the lid to help the heat stay in. Spoon sauce over the chicken. Serve immediately!

## Heart of the Driftless PHOTO CONTEST



STEP 1  
TAKE  
PHOTO



STEP 2  
UPLOAD  
PHOTO



STEP 3  
WINNER  
ANNOUNCED  
IN APRIL

### What does Rural Living mean to you?

Whether it's scenic views, friendly faces,  
or events in our area,  
we want to see your photos!

VISIT [VERNONCOM.COOP](http://VERNONCOM.COOP)

**Deadline is March 26, 2021**