

# 2021 Heart of the Driftless

## PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS



GRAND PRIZE WINNER  
*Photo by: Dino Baschiera*



## MONTHLY NEWS

WORLD-CLASS TECHNOLOGY. UNRIVALED LOCAL SERVICE.

## JUNE 2021

### Top News Inside

- 2021 Heart of the Driftless Photo Contest
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- Retirements
- Employee recognized for 30 years of service
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- 2021 Officers selected for Director positions



EVENT- Runner-up  
Photo by:  
Todd & Barb Gartzke



PEOPLE -Runner-up  
Photo by:  
Jennifer Miller



LANDSCAPE -Runner-up  
Photo by:  
Linda Ziegler

The **2021 VC Co-op "Heart of the Driftless" Photo Contest** brought an astounding number of local photographers to light by presenting their photos to the contest. The contest presents photos of what Rural Living means and the categories were: *Events, People, and Landscape*. There were many beautiful photos that depict the wholesome, beautiful area we live in. The selection was not an easy choice.

### HERE ARE THE WINNERS:

**Grand Prize**  
*Dino Baschiera "Rays of Sunshine"*

**Event Runner-Up**  
*Todd & Barb Gartzke "Sunrise Syrup Making"*

**People Runner-Up**  
*Jennifer Miller "Boy with Calf"*

**Landscape Category Runner-Up**  
*Linda Ziegler "Golden Sunset through Pampas Grass"*

*Thank you to everyone who submitted photos for this contest.*





## FROM THE CEO

2021 is looking better for all of us who missed attending public events due to COVID-19. We are hopeful that area celebrations will return, and we plan on participating in them once again. The kickoff for local community celebrations is the Norwegian Heritage event, "Syttende Mai" in Westby. Although it was not the usual celebration, the 53rd Annual celebration did not disappoint. We were pleased they were able to make use of our new "Fellesskap Square", which means "Community Square" for the celebration.

We use an "Objective and Key Results" (OKR) process for many of our projects. One Board of Director's OKR is to be better neighbors in the communities we serve. You will begin to see improvements to our properties, and hopefully more community involvement. Fellesskap Square is one of them. We recently made landscaping improvements at our Yuba property and are currently in the same process in Genoa. Some other projects include: new and quieter generators, heating and cooling units, better lawnmowing and snow removal. We are committed to serving our local communities by helping make events successful.

*Have a great summer and we hope to see you in person.*

## SYTTENDE MAI



## 30 YEARS OF SERVICE



On May 1st, **Scott Haakenson** celebrated 30 years of employment with the cooperative. He previously worked summers at the cooperative while attending college for five years. Scott is the "Controller" of VC Co-op, which means he manages the consolidation of all financial data necessary for accurate accounting. He was recognized for his years of service on May 20th at an employee meeting.



214 N. Main St. Viroqua, (608) 638-2030.

## Website Design

*Build A Custom Website That Reflects Your Brand.*

Local Designers & Support

Cutting Edge Design

Maintenance & Hosting

eCommerce & Online Payments

Increase Traffic

Build Brand Recognition

## EMPLOYEES RETIRE



Jim Hanson



Steve Lueck

*Two long-time employees have put in their hats and have said good-bye!*

**Jim Hanson** a "Member Service Technician" worked for the cooperative for 15 years. He specialized in low voltage wiring, commonly referred to as structured cabling. He focused on small and large businesses, schools, and business phone system applications.

**Steve Lueck** was with the cooperative for 29 years as a "Central Office Technician". Steve's occupation would add and remove translations from our voice switch, take care of special circuits, our DC power plant and fiber optic networks.

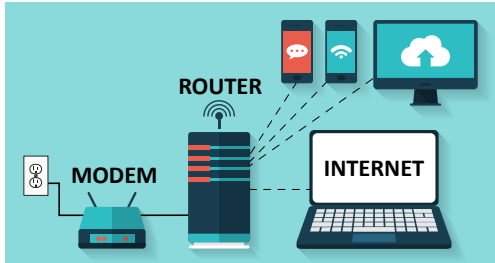
These two employees left us with a combined total of almost 45 years of employment and valuable work experience! **We wish them all the best in retirement.**



## TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

### What is “Wi-Fi” and what equipment do I need?

Wi-Fi is a wireless radio technology that allows devices such as computers, smartphones, tablets, printers, video cameras, smart TVs, streaming devices (e.g. Amazon Fire TV Stick and Roku) and other “smart” devices to interface with the internet. Although, wired Ethernet connections are typically faster and more secure, you are better off with a wireless connection if you want to move around your home, using laptops and other mobile devices. Wireless also eliminates the clutter and cost that cables bring.



To create a wireless network, you need to subscribe to internet service provided by VC Co-op, a modem and a router placed strategically within your home. VC Co-op provides and installs the modem free of charge to our members. The router is the magic box that lets you distribute your internet service provided through the modem to a variety of devices throughout your home.



### Should you purchase or lease a router?

There is no simple answer, but here are some questions to ask yourself:

- ***Are you technically proficient enough to install it and troubleshoot issues?***
- ***Are you prepared to ensure your router stays secure with firmware updates?***
- ***Do you want to purchase a new router every 3-4 years?***

If you answered “no” to the above questions, then leasing a router from VC Co-op may be the ideal option for you. We install the router to optimize the network for all your devices, guarantee the fastest internet speed, and reduce network congestion. VC Co-op offers free tech support and proactively monitors and updates the router. Advanced network protection and updates improve performance and security.

If you answered “yes” to the above questions, stay tuned next month for more information on purchasing a router.



**What is Ransomware?** Ransomware is a type of malicious software that cyber criminals use to block you from accessing your own data. Hackers can lock up computer systems by encrypting data and paralyzing networks, in turn demand a large ransom to unscramble it. The digital extortionists encrypt the files on your system and add extensions to the attacked data and hold it hostage until the demanded ransom is paid. A recent ransomware attack by a Georgia based company called Colonial Pipeline was affected in May and created public fear and panic of a gas shortage.

## ENTERTAINMENT NEWS



### **The Conjuring: The Devil Made Me Do It Movie. June 4.**

Based on a chilling true story, paranormal investigators Ed and Lorraine Warren risk their lives to prove the innocence of the accused and the existence of evil forces in the first U.S. murder trial where demonic possession is being used as a legal defense.



### **In the Heights Movie. June 18.**

The scent of a cafecito caliente hangs in the air just outside of the 181st Street subway stop, where a kaleidoscope of dreams rallies this vibrant and tight-knit community. At the intersection of it all is a likable, magnetic bodega owner who saves every penny from his daily grind as he hopes, imagines, and sings about a better life.

**June 14**  
**Flag Day**



**June 20**  
**Summer Solstice**



**June 20**  
**Fathers Day**



**103 N Main Street**  
**Westby, WI 54667**

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

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



## **Grilled BBQ Chicken with Homemade BBQ Sauce**

8-10 skinless chicken drumsticks

1 Tbsp. olive oil

### **Spice Mix**

2 tsp. smoked paprika

1 1/2 tsp. salt

1 tsp. each (chili powder, onion powder, garlic powder, brown sugar)

1/2 tsp. each (chipotle chili powder, dried thyme, pepper)

### **BBQ Sauce**

1 C. ketchup

1/4 C. molasses

1/4 C. packed brown sugar

2 Tbsp. seedless blackberry preserves

2 1/2 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar

1 1/2 tsp. reserved spice rub (from above)



### **Instructions**

1. Whisk together all of the spice mix ingredients. Remove 1 1/2 tsp. to a saucepan to use later in your BBQ sauce.
2. Drizzle chicken with 1 Tbsp. olive oil and rub it all over the chicken. Sprinkle the chicken with half of the spice mix and rub into the chicken. Turn chicken over and sprinkle with the remaining spice mix (it will seem like a lot, but use it all.). Rub spice mix into chicken. Let chicken sit for 30 minutes at room temperature.
3. Add all of the BBQ sauce ingredients to the saucepan with the reserved 1 1/2 tsp spice mix. Whisk together and simmer for 5-10 minutes for the flavors to blend.
4. Preheat the grill to high heat. Add chicken and sear uncovered for 5 minutes, turn chicken over and sear an additional 5 minutes. Cook through and add the BBQ sauce when the chicken is almost done.

## **TRY AUTOMATIC PAYMENT**



**GIVE IT A TRY  
FOR A SLICE  
OF PIE**

Sign up for automatic bill payment on Smarthub and receive a coupon for a **FREE slice of pie** from Borgens Cafe in Westby.

Smarthub sign-up is easy as pie, visit [vernoncom.smarthub.coop](http://vernoncom.smarthub.coop).

**Already have automatic payment?**  
We didn't forget about you!  
All members signed up for automatic payment will be entered to win an Amazon 4K Firestick.

**Hurry, the pie promotion will be gone on July 31, 2021!**



### **MOVING?**

If you know you are moving call us in advance, so you don't miss a day of service. Our technicians book out a couple of weeks and we don't want you to miss your favorite TV show or internet service.

Vernon Communications Cooperative Board of Directors held their organizational meeting following the Annual Meeting, on Tuesday, May 11, 2021 to elect officers for the coming year. Elected President is Brad Gabrielson from District 8 (La Farge). Elected Vice-President is David Dregne from District 2 (Liberty Pole/Readstown). Elected Secretary/Treasurer is Trudy Wallin from District 4 (Viroqua). These Directors will serve as officers for one year.