



# MONTHLY NEWS

WORLD-CLASS TECHNOLOGY. UNRIVALED LOCAL SERVICE.

## NOVEMBER 2021

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## GIVING BACK

Concern for Community is the 7<sup>th</sup> Cooperative Principle and a standard VC Co-op lives by. We are invested in the communities we serve and giving back is a priority. It is a way in which we stand apart from our competition. We give back to our members in many ways and monetary donations are only a part of what we provide. In the month of October, we gave back 1.4 million to our members in capital credits, which made an economic impact to the communities in which we live. Every year we give donations to: our local food pantries, toys for Christmas, school donations, booster clubs, Vernon County Fair, sportsman's clubs, law enforcement, fire departments, community developments, VFW, the Kickapoo Valley Reserve and the list goes on. "National Night Out" was an event that we not only gave a donation, but our employees served food and volunteered for the evening. Two bikes were also donated for the cause. During COVID, we worked with our local schools to provide internet connections to students who were without. Our employees worked diligently to make sure every student that needed the internet for school was given access. We annually donate notebooks for the "Stuff the Bus" campaign. Scholarships are given every year to students or members continuing their education. November is a month to give thanks and we are grateful to be able to give back to our members and the communities in which we live.

"Giving Tuesday" is on November 30th and a global day of recognition to make an impact on our local communities. Whether it be a donation to a local non-profit or donating your time to a worthy cause, consider giving on this day.



## FROM THE CEO

In 1964 the Beatles released the song "A Hard Day's Night". While John Lennon's lyrics may not all be about working hard and had various somewhat sketchy interpretations, I will take the first 4 lines at face value. "It's been a hard day's night. And I've been working like a

dog. It's been a hard day's night. I should be sleeping like a log." That has to be what the 60's seemed like for the employees and directors of VC- Co-op. Things did not come easy. The manager resigned; a temporary manager was appointed. A new manager was hired, and he lasted only 32 days. A temporary manager was appointed, and a new manager was hired. He passed away after only 7 years in the job. Jerome Espe was appointed manager and he became the first long-time manager of the cooperative. In 1960, a few years after the purchase of the LaFarge Telephone Co., the members voted to move the headquarters from Viroqua to LaFarge. Wisconsin State Law required an office to be located in a part of the serving area and the co-op did not serve Viroqua. Much to the disappointment and protest of the members, the president overruled the vote to advisory only and the headquarters stayed in Viroqua. After that, the cooperative purchased the Westby Telephone Co. for \$109,000.00 in 1961. Plans to move the headquarters to Westby were executed and completed in 1963. Hmmm? Today, if you look at the top of the Borgen's Café building in Westby, you will see Westby Telephone Company engraved in the stone at the top of the building. The Yuba Telephone Co. was then purchased for \$12,700.00 in 1967, after a highly competitive bidding and negotiation process against the Hillsboro Telephone Co. Following that transaction, Wood Farmers and the Fox Ridge Switchline companies joined the newly formed Yuba Exchange.

The 1960's were a time when major upgrades to cable plants and central office switching were being made. Party lines were upgraded from 8 to 4 customers sharing a telephone line. Direct dialing calls were becoming the norm, including calls between towns. Aerial lines were being buried. The cooperative was spending double and triple the amount on upgrades than they spent on purchasing the various companies. Some things never change. With all the spending the cooperative had its neck stretched out a little too far. Times were lean. Vernon made an application with USDA-REA to purchase Monroe County Telephone Co. for \$3,500,000.00. That territory stretched from Cashton to Cataract and also included Sparta, Norwalk and Wilton. It was turned down. Interestingly enough, just this summer, Monroe County and many residents are lobbying us to apply for broadband grants and build into that county with our services. That would have been a huge addition and I wonder what things would be like today if it had happened. An offer was also made to purchase Coon Valley Farmers Telephone Company, but that too was not accepted. I feel that the current cooperative is aggressive, but not like they were in the 60's.

Hopefully the last line in the chorus, "But when I get home to you. I'll find the things that you do. Will make me feel alright", sums up the 60's. After all the attempts, failures, and hard times, the cooperative persevered and turned out alright.

## THANK YOU VETERANS

**November 11<sup>th</sup> is a day we pay special tribute to our Veterans. We would like to honor all who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces and thank you for serving our country.**



**Here is a special recognition of our employee Veterans.**



**John Hickok** - In Oct. 1973 John was assigned to the 527th Military Intelligence Unit in Kaiserslautern Germany as a "Wheel Vehicle Mechanic". He arrived just in time to experience "Oktoberfest"! Although far from home, he really enjoyed sightseeing and skiing while in Germany.

During his time in Germany, he received the *Good Conduct Medal*, *National Defense Service Medal*, was promoted to SGT. (E-5), and met his wife Brigitte. They were married in February of 1977, and reassigned to Ft. Gordon, GA. for Field Radio Repair school. After graduating 2nd in his class, he was reassigned to the 10<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group at Ft. Devens, MA. During his time at Ft. Devens, he took part in two training missions to Lakenheath AFB, England...and two training missions to Volk Field in Wisconsin. He received a 2<sup>nd</sup> Good Conduct Medal, and the Army Commendation Medal. On Nov. 15, 1979 John received an honorable discharge from the Army.



**Gunnar Gretebeck** - In September of 1993, he began basic training for the U.S. Air Force. From 1994 - 1997, he was stationed in Colorado Springs at the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), which is located inside Cheyenne Mountain, where there is lack of daylight. He spent time in Germany at the Air Force Base (AFB)

Spangdahlen from 1997 - 1999, where he did crypto and network systems, along with aircraft mapping systems for planes (F16, F15, A10 Fighter). After he left the Air Force, he began contracting for the military from the years of 1999 - 2005.



**Kevin Karowski** - Went to Fort Jackson South Carolina in November of 1996 and graduated from basic training at the end of January in 1997. He got on a bus the next day to Fort Lee Virginia for Advanced Individual Training (AIT) for the next 3 months, specializing in setting up medium and large military tents. He moved back to Viroqua and was employed

by the National Guard one weekend a month, for the next 5 years. His unit also traveled to Germany for a 1 month trip to specialize in field exercise and training.

**We would also like to recognize the following Veterans serving on our VC Co-op Board of Directors.**



From left, Miles Bohland, Brad Gabrielson, Marty Stenslien and Steve Woodhouse



## TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

### What is Multi-factor Authentication?

Multi-factor Authentication, or MFA, is an authentication method that utilizes multiple pieces of evidence to verify access to an account. The pieces of evidence used in MFA are: knowledge (something only you know, like a password), possession (something only you have, like a onetime passcode (OTP), and inherence (something only you are, like a fingerprint). MFA shouldn't be confused with 2-Factor Authentication (2FA), because MFA uses all 3 factors, whereas 2FA only uses 2. That said, using 2FA is inherently more secure than relying solely on a password to authorize access to an account.

#### Multi factor authentication



### Why do I need MFA?

To put it simply, passwords are very insecure. Most people are overwhelmed by the ever-evolving digital world and the need for strong, unique passwords, so they begin reusing or slightly modifying the same password for all their accounts. The possibility of multiple accounts being compromised is greatly increased if a password is reused and 2FA or MFA are not enabled. While it does require additional time to set up and use, the peace of mind that your accounts are secure is worth it!

### How do I get MFA?

If your service supports it, you can usually enable it via the security options within your account. Enabling MFA will allow you to either use a third-party authenticator (TPA) app, or your phone number, to receive onetime passcodes (OTP) which are entered after your initial password. At this point, inherence authentication methods such as fingerprints are uncommon for online accounts. Typically, you will receive a long, randomized recovery code when enabling MFA. It is very important that you keep that code in a safe place; you will need it if you ever lose or damage your phone that is configured as your MFA device. It's also important to note that not all services have 2FA or MFA, so utilizing a password manager is a great way to keep track of strong, unique passwords for those scenarios.

*If you'd like more information and/or assistance with general account security, password management, and MFA, feel free to contact **Vernon Tech Center** at: 608-638-2030.*



## WINDOWS 11

**Windows 11 upgrade is now available for eligible Windows 10 PCs and on new PCs.**

**Stop in at the Vernon Tech Center to see if your PC qualifies for the upgrade.**

[VERNONTTECHCENTER.COM](http://VERNONTTECHCENTER.COM)

## ENTERTAINMENT NEWS



**Joy Miller** grows organic vegetables at Keewaydin Farms with her husband, Rufus Hauke. She studied Farm and Food Justice, while earning her master's in liberal arts from Johns Hopkins University. Joy will discuss her graduate research project, "Socially Responsible Food and Ethical Food Consumerism" on local channel

14. This community-based research project examines values toward socially responsible food and practicing ethical food consumerism in the Driftless region. In this program, she also introduces the Driftless Curiosity project, her farm's land-based learning nonprofit with a mission to deepen people's connection to the land.



**Luke Zahm** is the owner of the Driftless Café in Viroqua and host of the Wisconsin PBS television show, "Wisconsin Foodie". During the program Luke reflects on his life-long residency in Vernon County and the importance of preserving and promoting Wisconsin culture. You can view this on local Channel 14.



### HBO & Cinemax Thanksgiving FREE PREVIEW:

**7-Days - Tuesday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> - Monday, November 29<sup>th</sup>.** During this window you can see blockbusters such as: *Wonder Woman 1984*, *The Little Things*, *Judas and the Black Messiah*, *Tom and Jerry*, *Godzilla vs. Kong*, *Mortal Kombat*, *Those Who Wish Me Dead*, *The Conjuring: The Devil Made Me Do It*, and *In The Heights* along with new episodes of *Succession*, *Insecure* and *Curb Your Enthusiasm*

## Upcoming Events

**November 7**  
Daylight Savings Ends



**November 11**  
Veterans Day  
*Our office will be closed to honor of our Veterans*



**November 25**  
Thanksgiving  
*Our office will be closed*



**November 26**  
Twinkle Fest Parade in Viroqua  
Parade begins @ 7:00 PM  
*See us there.*



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)



## Pumpkin Torte



**Crust:**  
24 crushed graham crackers  
1/3 C. sugar  
1/2 C. butter

**Cream Cheese layer:**  
2 beaten eggs  
3/4 C sugar  
8 oz. cream cheese

**Pumpkin layer:**  
2 C pumpkin  
3 egg yolks  
1/2 C sugar  
1/2 C. cream  
1/2 tsp. salt  
2 tsp. cinnamon  
1 envelope plain gelatin  
1/4 C cold water

**Crust:** Mix cracker crumbs, 1/3 C. sugar and butter in a 9 x 13 pan and press until firm.

**Cream Cheese layer:** Mix eggs, 3/4 C. sugar, cream cheese, and our over crust. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes.

**Pumpkin:** Cook pumpkin, egg yolks, 1/2 C. sugar, cream, salt and cinnamon until mixture thickens. Remove from heat. Mix gelatin in 1/4 C. cold water. Stir until dissolved. Fold into pumpkin mixture and cool. Beat 3 egg whites, 1/4 C. sugar and fold into pumpkin mixture. Pour over cooled crust. Top with whipped cream or cool whip.



"Season of Giving" is just around the corner and VC Co-op will be accepting toys for those in need. Christmas is a special time, but for many families it can be challenging. Every child deserves toys for Christmas and we can help. Drop off any new toys to our office until December 1, 2021 and we will deliver them to Bethel Butikk. Families can then go pick out toys for their children. Bethel Butikk will be open for toy selections on December 6th. With your help, we can make Christmas a time to remember for every child in need. *We will also take canned food items for local food pantries.*

**10 Digit Dialing Update** - The FCC has updated the 10-Digit dialing and details are posted on our website.  
**See Details - [www.vernoncom.coop](http://www.vernoncom.coop)**

When submitting a payment without a provided envelope, the U.S. Postal Service will not deliver to our office unless P.O. Box 20 is in the address line above the city.