



***Wishing You Peace and Joy  
This Holiday Season!***



## MONTHLY NEWS

WORLD-CLASS TECHNOLOGY. UNRIVALED LOCAL SERVICE.

### DECEMBER 2022

Top News Inside

- Happy Holidays
- **NEW** Starz Rate
- Cyber Security
- Employee News
- Tech Gifts for Christmas

***Happy Holidays from all of us at Vernon Communications Cooperative. As the year comes to an end, we would like to wish our members a happy, healthy holiday season. In a year filled with challenges, we're grateful for your support as we continue to provide you with the latest technology and reliability you expect. As we continue to grow in the new year, we wish you a joyous Christmas season!***



Christmas is upon us and because of the rising cost of almost everything, it can be a hard time for some families. Vernon Communications has provided Bethel Butikk with toys for those in need. Donations were taken until November 25th and Vernon matched every toy for the cause. Vernon employees also contributed toys for the collection box. Last year, Bethel Butikk provided 250 children with toys for Christmas. This year will be no different. It is estimated that number will be the same or higher this season. Parents of children are able to select toys for their children for "Operation Christmas" between the dates of December 5 - 16th at Bethel Butikk. There are other ways to help this Christmas season. Local food pantry's in Cashton, De Soto, La Farge, Viola and Viroqua are also taking monetary donations as well as food and clothing. Volunteers are always needed. This year, there is a demand for winter coats. By donating new or gently used coats, you can assure children will keep warm this winter. Giving is what the Christmas season is all about, so consider the gift of compassion.



## ENTERTAINMENT NEWS

Get Starz for just **\$10.00 per month.**

**starz**

We have just lowered the price of Starz! See visionary original series and curated hit movies.



*Before she was Queen, she was Elizabeth. Don't miss Queen Elizabeth II's heroine origin story in becoming Elizabeth!*



*The sixth season of "Outlander" sees a continuation of Claire and Jamie's fight to protect those they love, as they navigate the trials and tribulations of life in colonial America.*

### LOCAL CHANNEL 14

*"Learning to Fish, Stream Trout"* was professionally produced in our own back yard around the La Farge area. This is an educational program on how to trout and fly fish, by the "National Wild and Turkey Federation". See the beautiful streams and scenery of our Driftless Region and get an education too! *See guide for the schedule.*



**Conservation on Tap**, by the Valley Stewardship Network presents... Jason Freund, who talks about climate change, flooding and stream manipulation in the Driftless Area. This series takes place the first Tuesday of every month at the Historic Fortney Hotel.

## CYBER SECURITY



KnowB4

### Shop Safely Online this Holiday Season

This time of year we are all shopping for that perfect gift for our loved ones. Buyer Beware! Cyber criminals are continuously looking to find ways to scam you.

#### Here are some tips to prevent you from being scammed: Never install unfamiliar software

There are hundreds of shopping apps out there. Some of these apps may be malicious, so only use apps that you know and trust. When you download software or apps, be sure to download from verified sources such as the App Store or Google Play. You can verify that an app is legitimate by reading the app's reviews, checking the number of app downloads, and looking up the app's developer.

#### Verify attachments are safe before downloading them

A common tactic among cybercriminals is to create phony email notifications from a retailer or postal service. These notifications often include a malicious attachment. The cybercriminals may claim that there was an update to your order or that your package has been delayed, but you'll have to download the attachment to find out more. Don't fall for this trick! Before you open the attachment, contact the retailer or postal service to verify that the notification is legitimate. You can also look up your order directly on the website where you made the purchase. **Verify links before clicking.**

#### Watch out for malicious advertisements, otherwise known as malvertising

Malvertising is when cybercriminals use ads to spread malware or to trick users into providing sensitive information. When online shopping, only click on an ad or link from a reputable source, such as a retailer's official social media profile. To be extra careful, use your browser to navigate to the store's official website to shop instead.

### Worldwide Cyber Crime Statistics

- The UK has the highest number of cyber crime victims per million internet users and the country with the next highest number is the USA. This is up over 40% from 2020.
- 1 in 2 North American internet users had their accounts breached in 2021.
- In 2021, an average of 97 data breach victims occurred every hour worldwide.
- 2021 saw an average of \$787,671 lost every hour due to data breaches.

*These numbers are expected to rise in 2022. It is increasingly more important than ever to make sure precautions are taken while using devices online.*



## HALLOWEEN



Halloween was fun for the little ones, but these "Pink Ladies" and one "Woopie Cushion" were all decked out for the occasion.



## December Highlights

**December 21** - Winter Solstice  
**December 25** - Christmas Day  
**December 26** - Our office will be closed  
**December 31** - New Year's Eve  
**January 2, 2023** - Our office will be closed

## TECH GIFTS FOR CHRISTMAS

*Looking for a great gift for that special someone? The gift of technology is always a winner! Check out these tech gifts for everyone on your list:*



**Equa Smart Water Bottle** - Perfect for hydraters. A discrete LED rim will flash at regular intervals to remind you to drink, and you can connect the Equa bottle to a smartphone app to track your water usage throughout the day.



**Apple AirTag** - A cost-effective and reliable way to never lose sight of your commonly misplaced items. Always losing your keys? This device allows you to track the location of the AirTag wherever you put it.



**Kindle Scribe** - This 10.2 inch tablet from Amazon takes the reading experience of an e-reader and adds a magnetic pen you can use to make annotations, scribble notes, make lists and journal entries and doodle. The display is easy on the eyes for long reading and has a battery life that lasts for months.



**Eufy RoboVac** - A self charging vacuum cleaner that cleans hard floors to medium pile carpets. The slimmest RoboVac (2.8") that increased suction to 1300PA and delivers up to 10 minutes of suction.



**Meta Quest 2 VR Headset** - A virtual reality headset that offers entertainment, with a high-resolution display, comfortable wireless play.



**Samsung Galaxy Watch 5** - An upgraded stylish and sturdy smartwatch that is great for that fitness buff that likes to keep track of their daily exercise routine. A health app lets you track important biometric data and comes in different colors and bands.



**Apple Watch Series 8** - This Apple Watch features an innovative sensor that tracks overall wellness, takes an ECG anytime, and measures your blood oxygen level with a sensor and app. Crash detection connects you to emergency services in a severe crash.



**Infant Optics DXR-8 Video Baby Monitor** - An award winning portable baby monitor that is easy to carry around. It provides continual video feed with up to 700 feet of range, and a camera you can control from afar with pan, tilt and zoom, along with a 10-hour battery life.



## VETERAN'S DAY

VC Co-op's office was closed for business on Veteran's Day to pay respect to those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. An employee education day was held at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. Veteran Speaker Lonnie Muller from La Farge gave a captivating presentation on his service to our country. Veteran employee's Gunnar Gretebeck and Kevin Karowski were recognized as employee's who have served the American military. Brad Steinmetz, a retired history teacher also from La Farge, gave an educational talk on the history of the Kickapoo dam project. A webinar was viewed to keep our employees educated on Cyber Security and employee updates were given.



**For the best internet experience, make sure you have a good working router.**

**Gigaspire Wireless Router**  
\$6 per month

### Advantages:

- Receives Gigabit broadband data
- High-performance system (Wi-Fi 6)
- 6x6 streams of Wi-Fi



## EMPLOYEE NEWS



**Patty Johnson** was recognized for her 5 year service to the cooperative on Veteran's Day, November 11, 2022. CEO, Garin Mayer recognized her during the team building day at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. You may see Patty's smiling face in our office as she is our front desk Member Support Technician.

## FIBER CONSTRUCTION

Frost and snow accumulation is the deciding factor for the end of fiber construction for the winter. Once the ground freezes with a hard frost, we stop construction until spring. Our construction season begins when the road bans are lifted in the spring. The end of construction is quickly approaching, which on average is around Thanksgiving time.




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103 N Main Street  
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**Lobby Hours:**  
8:00 am - 4:30 pm (M-F)

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