



MONTHLY NEWS

WORLD-CLASS TECHNOLOGY. UNRIVALED LOCAL SERVICE.

March 2023

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After a long winter, we are all anxious to get outside and enjoy the Spring air. Signs of an early Spring are upon us and with that comes outside yard work. For your safety, it is very important to call Diggers Hotline when doing outside work to prevent unwanted utility line damage, no matter how large or small. VC Co-op's fiber optic cable is buried underground and a fiber cut is very expensive to repair and can create an outage not only for you, but your neighbors as well. You may think you know where the utility lines are buried on your property, but the landscape and depth of the lines can change due to erosion, previous digging projects and uneven surfaces. A fiber cut can be very costly to the homeowner and, by calling Diggers Hotline it can prevent an unwanted bill. Anytime you use a shovel warrants the call. If you are planting a tree, building a deck, even planting a new garden, you want to save time, money and peace of mind by taking 10 minutes to call Diggers Hotline or file online at ***DiggersHotline.com***.

Take these easy steps to avoid a utility cut:

- **Notify** Diggers by calling 811 or an online request 3 business days before the work begins.
- **Wait** 3 business days for utility companies to respond to your request and mark your property. Planning is key.
- **Confirm** that all utility operators have responded to your request by comparing the marks. (On average, between 7-8 utility operators are notified for each request).
- **Respect the marks** on your property while digging during the project. If you are unable to maintain the marks during the project, contact Diggers for a relocate.
- **Dig carefully.** Avoid digging 18 inches on all sides of the marker.

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NEW DIRECTORY



Vernon Communications has a new publisher for our Directory. **Pinnacle Marketing Group** is the company we have chosen to publish our new directory. They are based in Bemidji, MN and have been in business for 29 years, providing 300 directories in 35 states, in both print and digital forms. If you have advertised with us in the past, the Pinnacle sales team will be reaching out to you soon.







ROBO CALLS

Unwanted "Robo Calls" are on the rise. Not only are they annoying, but some are illegal. Here are some tips from the FCC to avoid phone scams.

FCC | CONSUMER CONNECTIONS

What You Can Do



-  Put your mobile and landline numbers on the national Do Not Call Registry. Visit [donotcall.gov](https://www.donotcall.gov) or 1-888-382-1222 from the number you want to register.
-  Research apps, services or devices that help block unwanted calls.
-  Don't answer calls from unknown callers. That could verify you have an active line. Never call back an unfamiliar number – it may lead to a scam.
-  Spoofed caller ID numbers may trick you into answering. If you answer a spoofed call, hang up immediately. Do not respond to even simple questions or requests.
-  Scam callers may pretend to represent an organization, business or even a government agency. Never reveal any personal or financial information unless you can independently verify the caller.
-  FCC rules offer protection against unwanted calls and texts. File a complaint with the FCC to help us determine where to take action. Visit [consumercomplaints.fcc.gov](https://www.consumercomplaints.fcc.gov)



Find web resources and learn more at www.fcc.gov/robocalls

CYBER SECURITY



Every year, the bad guys take advantage of innocent taxpayers, like you, who are patiently waiting on their tax return. Last year, the IRS noticed a significant increase in phishing attempts to steal money or tax data, therefore you must be on high alert.

How it Happens: Tax Scams and Malicious Activity

The bad guys have a number of tax-related tricks up their sleeves when it comes to stealing your money and/or sensitive information.

Here are a few examples of sophisticated tax scams that have been found in the wild:

- Scammers send emails posing as tax service companies by spoofing emails and using stolen logos. Once you respond to the email with personal data or tax information, they can pocket your hard-earned money.
- Similar to the scam above, the bad guys send look-alike emails containing hyperlinks that lead you to malicious websites or fake PDF attachments that download malware or viruses to your computer.
- Tax scams aren't limited to email! Be on the look out for callers posing as IRS representatives claiming you owe money that must be paid immediately. The callers typically threaten arrests, deportation, or suspension of business or driver's license.

Keep in mind, these are only a few examples and these scam artists are constantly coming up with new ways to fool you.

How Do I Know it's a Scam?

Always remember the following during tax season, and all year long:

- The IRS will always mail a bill before calling you about taxes owed.
- The IRS will never ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.
- The IRS will never immediately threaten to arrest you for not paying taxes owed.
- The IRS will always offer the opportunity to question or appeal the amount owed before demanding your payment.
- The IRS does not use emails or text messages to discuss personal tax matters, such as taxes owed or tax refunds.

Only share sensitive data over email when there is no other alternative and you're certain the recipient is valid.

PHOTO CONTEST



READ ACROSS AMERICA



Read Across America is celebrated every year to encourage and stress the importance of reading to children. This is sponsored by the National Education Association (NEA) and begins on Dr Seuss's birthday, March 2nd. Ebooks are a great way to get your children to read and also use technology. Reading boosts memory skills and helps reduce stress.

The 2023 VC Co-op Annual Meeting

*will be held on Thursday, April 27th at 1:00 pm.
This year, the meeting will be virtual. More information will come in the April newsletter on how to pre-register.*

March

- March 12** **Daylight Savings - Spring Forward 1 hour**
- March 14** **March Madness begins**
- March 17** **St. Patrick's Day**
- March 20** **First Day of Spring**

Diggers Hotline

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To be prepared when calling Diggers Hotline, you will need the following information:

Contact Information

- Your name, phone & email
- Address, Street, City, State, Zip code
- Field contact and phone number
- Who is the work being done for




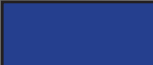

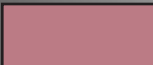

Dig Site location

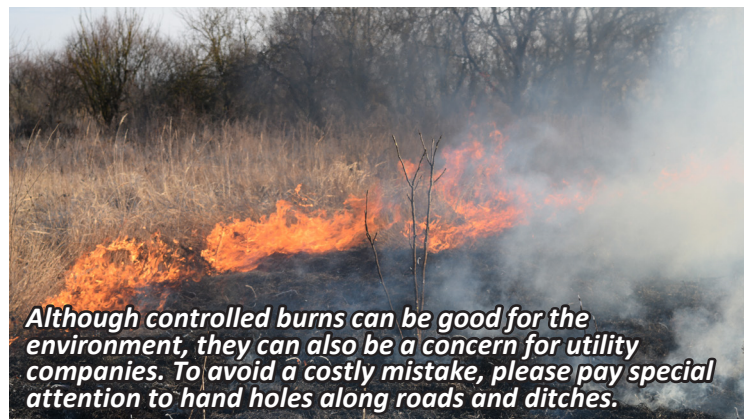
- City/place and County
- Address of the dig site
- Side of the street
- Nearest intersecting road

Dig Site Information

- Start date
- Work type
- Marking instructions

Once Diggers Hotline has been called and the utility companies have marked your property, their lines are indicated with flags. The flags are color coded with the respective utility as follows:

	Electric
	Gas, Oil, Petroleum or Gaseous Materials
	Communication, Cable TV, Alarm or Signal
	Water, Irrigation and Slurry Lines
	Sewer and Drain Lines
	Temporary Survey Markings
	Proposed Excavation



ENTERTAINMENT

If you are a basketball fan, you love March! **March Madness** begins on March 14th and ends on April 3rd. The 2023 games will air on TBS, CBS, TNT, and truTV channels. The first four rounds will air on truTV. The second round coverage will be on CBS, TNT, TBS and truTV. The Sweet 16 and Elite 8 will air on TBS and CBS. The Final Four Saturday, April 1st and the championship game on April 3rd will air on CBS. Fill out your brackets and cheer on your favorite team(s) in March.



LOCAL CHANNELS



COMMUNITY
CONSERVATION:
FROM WISCONSIN
TO THE WORLD

Join Executive Director,
Dr. Teri Allendorf for a

Conservation on Tap Talk

February 7th at 7pm | Hotel Fortney in Viroqua

The Valley Stewardship Network hosts a free speaker series monthly. Join us to hear Teri talk about the latest conservation efforts and current projects.

See the **NEW Conservation on Tap by Valley Stewardship Network** on Local Channel 14. The series presents experts on various aspects of the Driftless area ecology and conservation. See guide for scheduled times.



Highlights of the **100th Annual Snowflake Ski Tournament** can be seen on local channel 14.

SmartHub makes bill paying easy!



SmartHub:
Easy online access to
your VC Co-op account

- View and pay your bill
- Access billing and payment history
- Update account information
- Visit vernoncom.smarthub.coop to sign-up

EMPLOYEE NEWS



Coming in March... The new billboard on the North side of Viroqua will showcase our Member Support Team. They provide the excellent service our members expect. Technology is ever changing and this team has a great deal of knowledge to share with our members. They can help you with your communication needs, large or small. They are as follows: *Front row: Angie, Jen. Back row: Tracy, Joan, Patty, Therese, Terri.*



For peace of mind and to protect the ones you love, consider LifeAid. As low as \$25.00/MO.

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



103 N Main Street
Westby, WI 54667



Lobby Hours:

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

(608) 634-3136 • www.vernoncom.coop