

GRAND PRIZE



Animals



Landmarks
Scenic Views



MONTHLY NEWS

WORLD-CLASS TECHNOLOGY. UNRIVALED LOCAL SERVICE.

June 2023

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Events

The "Heart of the Driftless" photo contest received so many beautiful photos, the task of picking only 3 was almost impossible. The photos taken by members from this contest reflect the wholesome, natural beauty of the Driftless Region and the people and area in which we live.

The grand prize winner is Tahmara Hendrickson with "Red fox kit looking into the camera". She will receive a \$100.00 credit on her VC Co-op statement. The animal category winner is Corina Greenland with the "Boy and his puppy". The landmarks and scenic views category winner is Ted Wichelt presenting "Scenic Timber Coulee Creek". Susan Brodnax is the winner of the events category, "Granddaughter picking apples". All of the category winners will receive a \$50.00 credit on their VC Co-op statement.

The 2024 VC Co-op calendar will also have 12 photos from this contest, so stop by our office in December to pick up your 2024 calendar.

Last, the front cover of our 2023 Directory will have a photo from the contest. Stay tuned for the viewing of the front cover in our July issue of this newsletter.

Thank you to everyone who sent in photos for this contest.

FROM THE CEO



Greetings and welcome to June! We're already six months into the year, but it feels like we're just getting started! I hope you came out to enjoy the Syttende Mai festivities in Westby.

Last month, you may have heard me discuss some of our Fiber-To-The-Home (FTTH) grants, and some of our upcoming projects during our annual

meeting, but in case you missed it, I thought I'd touch base with you here.

We're currently working on completing our Crawford County FTTH project. We anticipate finishing this project late this Summer. Once completed, we'll turn our attention to the two grants we were awarded in Monroe County. We plan on finishing those by the end of 2024.

You may ask yourself why we're participating in these grants? Grants are a great way for us to expand broadband to areas in need of reliable highspeed internet service. The Grants help us make a positive case for expansion. There are families and businesses near us, both in Crawford and Monroe Counties specifically, that still have download speeds of less than 5mbps and upload speeds less than 1mbps! Can you imagine trying to complete a video call with your friends and family, or a business video call, or you or your kids playing online games on those speeds?! Although broadband can be used for entertainment, it poses a significant impact to those families that have kids in school, parents going back to college online, or those that are working from home or have home businesses. Sufficient broadband speeds can change their lives. We believe in expanding broadband to those fellow rural Wisconsinites near to us and we'll continue to look for grants and programs that help us do this.

Next month, I hope to have more information to share on an upcoming Federal Grant program called the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment program, or BEAD.

Warm Regards,
Garin Mayer, CEO

Remember.... Call Before You Dig



A fiber cut can wipe out service to you and your neighbors for extended periods of time. The cost of a fiber cut can be devastating.

Call 811 or scan the QR code before you dig!!

CYBER SECURITY



Most of us have a smartphone, but how many of us really think about the security threats faced by these mobile devices? Mobile devices are vulnerable to many different types of threats. The bad guys are increasing attacks on mobile devices and targeting your phone using malicious applications. Using these methods, they can steal personal and business information without you having any idea what's going on. Even if you've downloaded a security or antivirus application, securing your smartphone goes beyond these services. Improving your mobile security practices is your best defense against the privacy and security issues associated with your mobile device.

How can I improve my mobile security practices?
Always remember these best practices to minimize the risk of exploits to your mobile devices:

- Ensure your phone's operating system is always up to date. Operating systems are often updated in order to fix security flaws. Many malicious threats are caused by security flaws that remain unfixed due to an out of date operating system.
- Watch out for malicious apps in your app store. Official app stores regularly remove applications containing malware, but sometimes these dangerous apps slip past and can be downloaded by unsuspecting users. Do your research, read reviews and pay attention to the number of downloads it has. Never download applications from sources other than official app stores.
- Ensure applications are not asking for access to things on your phone that are irrelevant to their function. Applications usually ask for a list of permissions to files, folders, other applications, and data before they're downloaded. Don't blindly approve these permissions. If the permission requests seem unnecessary, look for an alternative application in your app store.
- No password or weak password protection. Many people still don't use a password to lock their phone. If your device is lost or stolen, thieves will have easy access to all of the information stored on your phone.
- Be careful with public WiFi. The bad guys use technology that lets them see what you're doing. Avoid logging in to your online services or performing any sensitive transactions (such as banking) over public WiFi. Connecting to your home WiFi is best.

2023 ANNUAL MEETING



Vernon Communications held the cooperative's Annual Meeting on Thursday April 27, 2023 virtually.

Board President, Brad Gabrielson called the meeting to order and gave opening remarks. Garin Mayer, CEO, presented the operations report and the status of the cooperative. The secretary's report, updates on fiber construction, grants and employee announcements were given. Scott Haakenson, Controller, gave the 2022 financial report and Attorney Dustin Von Ruden presented Bylaw changes, which were voted on and approved by members. Jana Pedretti, Member Relations Manager, announced the ten scholarship recipients who will receive \$1,000.00 towards higher education for 2023. Brad Gabrielson gave the closing remarks. Three Board of Director terms expired, and elections were held in Districts 1 (Genoa), District 2 (Readstown/Liberty Pole) and District 3 (Viola/Yuba). Election ballot results were announced and Steve Woodhouse, incumbent director for District 1, was re-elected. In District 2, David Dregne, also incumbent director, was re-elected and Daren Matthes was elected to represent District 3. Each director will hold a three-year term.

The organizational meeting following the Annual Meeting was held on Tuesday, May 9, 2023, to elect officers for the coming year. They are as follows:

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.

JUNE

- June 3** **Monroe County Dairy Breakfast**
- June 10** **Vernon County Dairy Breakfast**
- June 14** **Flag Day**
- June 18** **Father's Day**
- June 19** **Juneteenth**
- June 21** **1st Day of Summer**



LIMITED TIME OFFER

***"Life Is Fast.
Don't Wait For It."***

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Thinking about a faster speed?

Upgrade from Basic to the **FAMILY** plan and get your first month for \$54.95. Don't have internet? Sign up for the Family plan and get **\$30.00** off of your first month of service.

Basic	Family ^{Best Value}
\$54.95	\$84.95
50 Meg	100 Meg

Scan or Call
(608) 634-3136
Offer ends June 30th



SCAN ME

June is Dairy Month



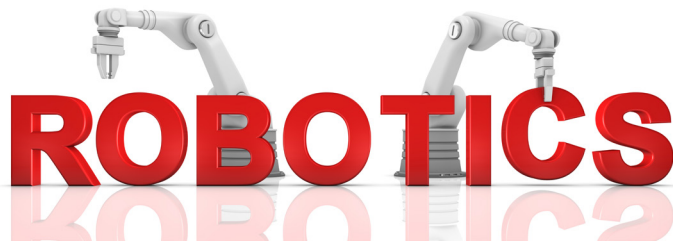
Thank you Farmers! Wisconsin has approximately 6000 dairy farms and contributes \$45.6 billion to Wisconsin's economy each year. A shout out to all the hard working farmers that keep our food supply running. Monroe County is holding their dairy breakfast on Saturday June 3rd at the Mapltwin Farms owned by Jon & Sandra Peterson and Chris & Betty Peterson near Cashton. The Vernon County Dairy breakfast is scheduled for Saturday, June 10th and will be held at the Gerald, Connie and Trent Vesbach farm near Liberty Pole. **You can help support our local farmers by attending these fun, family events.**

CLASS OF 2023



Congratulations Class of 2023

VC Co-op would like to congratulate all graduating Seniors for their success in completing high school. May your dreams come true and cheers to you for a job well done. Good luck in your future dreams.



As a sponsor of Westby Robotics, we would like to Congratulate the Westby Middle School Robotics for placing 3rd at VEX Robotics World Championship competition in Dallas, TX.

"Gunnar was the technician who came out to install internet in our house. My kids, ages 3, 2 & 5 months were home that day. Gunnar was very patient with their curiosity and gave my oldest simple tasks to help. It made him feel so special and Finley constantly talks about Gunnar. "Mom, remember Gunnar?" He says daily! It's nice to communicate with local service providers who are prompt and helpful."

Carra

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

Staying healthy is an everyday challenge and drinking water is essential. VC Co-op extends healthy options for it's employees. Employees joined a 14 day water challenge to bring awareness of hydrating their bodies. The cardinal rule says to drink 8 - 8 oz glasses of water each day, so that was the daily goal they set for themselves.



The Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Vernon County held it's "Senior Fair", on April 27th and VC Co-op was there. The fair was well attended with 330 seniors and 52 vendors at the Vernon Memorial Health building at the Vernon County Fairgrounds. There were lots of great resources for our seniors.



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



Lobby Hours:

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

(608) 634-3136 • www.vernoncom.coop