

# UPGRADE & SAVE

## *Black Friday Offer*



## MONTHLY NEWS

WORLD-CLASS TECHNOLOGY. UNRIVALED LOCAL SERVICE.

## November 2023

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### UPGRADE AND SAVE FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

The holidays are just around the corner, and that means it's time to start thinking about all the gifts you need to buy. But don't forget about your internet connection! If you're planning on adding any new electronics to your household this holiday season, you'll want to make sure you have enough bandwidth to support them all.

And lucky for you, we're running the sweetest Black Friday offer! For this month only, if you upgrade to our Family Internet (100/100 Mbps), we'll give you your first month **FREE** with a 3-month commitment. That's right, you heard it. Your first month will be completely **FREE** as long as you agree to keep our Family Plan for a minimum of 3 months.

So, if you're looking to upgrade your internet connection, or if you're just looking for a great deal, don't miss out on our Black Friday offer. With this offer you can expect:

- **Faster speeds:** With 100/100 Mbps speeds, you'll be able to stream multiple HD videos at the same time, play online games without lag, and download large files quickly.
- **More bandwidth:** Our Family Internet plan is perfect for families with multiple devices and users. You'll have enough bandwidth to handle everyone's online needs at the same time.
- **Reliable service:** We offer 24/7 customer support, so you can be confident that your internet will be there when you need it.

**What are you waiting for?** Upgrade to our Family Internet plan today so you don't get left out in the cold this holiday season with frozen screens and unhappy kids.

**Call us today to get in on our Black Friday offer or visit our website to submit a request to upgrade online.**



SCAN ME



## FROM THE CEO



We often get asked, why are television prices so high? TV prices are high for a number of reasons, but the primary reason is the cost of programming. TV programmers, such as sports leagues (think ESPN, Big 10, etc), and networks such as CBS, TNT, NBC, etc., charge cable and satellite companies high fees for the right to carry their content.

These costs are ultimately passed on to you the consumer in the form of higher TV bills.

Another reason for high TV prices is the popularity of sports entertainment. In fact, sports programming is a major driver of TV costs. Sports rights are extremely expensive, and TV programmers are willing to pay a lot of money to secure the rights to broadcast sporting events. This is because sports programming is very popular with viewers, and it can attract high advertising rates. News and the cost of high salaries paid to actors and actresses are another driver of expensive programming. Think about the salaries of these performers and how much they get paid. Someone has to recoup those charges, and that is the consumer.

Last, most TV programmers have established requirements for what channels need to go into each package. We often get asked why we can't offer an "a la carte" channel package where you choose the channels you want? The rules are set by the programmers on the specific type of package their network can be in. VC Co-op does not have the option to place those channels into their own package.

While we have no control over the cost each TV programmer chooses to pass onto us, we do work with several partners such as Midwest Video Solutions (MVS) and National Content & Technology Cooperative (NCTC) to help negotiate licensing and agreements to keep the impact of rising costs as minimal as we can. Even so, we know how frustrating these increases can be on you, so we've outlined a few things you can do if the cost of TV is getting beyond your reach.

- Switch to streaming: Streaming services such as Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime Video can be more affordable options than cable or satellite TV. However, it's important to note that streaming services may not offer all of the same channels and content as cable or satellite TV. The elimination of set-top-boxes can help save money.
- Contact your local officials: You can contact your elected officials and advocate for policies that would make TV more affordable. For example, you could support policies that would require TV programmers to sell their content on an a la carte basis.
- Downgrade your current package to a less expensive alternative and stream other options that suit your needs.

## CYBER SECURITY



During the month of October, VC Co-op ran some Facebook posts giving away items to celebrate Co-op month. Unfortunately, a scammer created a brand new page that looked just like our Facebook page. Their goal was to bait our fans into giving out their personal information. By commenting back to those who entered the giveaway saying they had won would direct them to click a link. While this replicated page looked just like the VC Co-op Facebook page, it was in fact, not our account and unless you looked deeper into the page, no one would have known it was not legitimate. After receiving some calls about winning, we realized we have been the recipient of identity fraud!!

This is common practice for scammers who do this for a living and know exactly what they are doing. Please note: **WE WOULD NEVER ASK YOU FOR PERSONAL INFORMATION OVER FACEBOOK.** It is unfortunate that we live in a world where we need to constantly be on the lookout for suspicious behavior.

### This is what we learned:

If you suspect that you have been the victim of identity fraud on social media, go to the impersonating profile or page.

- Make sure the address is correct on the page, see if there are archive posts, or any posts at all. If you can't find it, try searching for the name used on the profile or page or asking your friends if they can send you a link to it.
- Click the cover photo - If there are no posts or information about the page, beware.
- If you're reporting a page, select "*Find support or report page.*" If you're reporting a profile, select "*Find support or report profile.*"
- Follow the on-screen instructions for impersonation to file a report.

### Below is the post from the fake Facebook page

Vernon Communications Cooperative · Follow

🌟 Congratulations 🌟

I am very excited to say...

Congratulations you have been chosen as the winner of my giveaway event Before we announce and post on our story

Follow the instructions below:

1. Please register: <https://vernon-communications-cooperative.myfreesites.net>

2. Click Continue, Return here and Comment "DONE" & Send proof of screenshot confirmation email when finished!

3. take this opportunity, if within 24 HOURS we do not receive a response, we will cancel you as the winner.

Good luck!



VERNON-COMMUNICATIONS-COOPERATIVE.MYFREESITES.NET

Home - Vernon Communications Cooperative

Like Reply Hide Send message 20m



## CO-OP MONTH

The celebration for Co-op month was busy! There were free giveaways, member appreciations in our small towns and much gratitude to our patrons. ***Thank you Members!***



It was a busy month for parades in September and the Retreat 2-way parade was the last in the month. The weather was a hot one and the crowd was sensational. There was no lack of candy for the little ones, as they captured bag fulls going both ways! Looking forward to the last parade of the year - Twinkle Fest in Viroqua! See us on November 24th.



## VETERANS DAY



Gunnar Gretebeck



Kevin Karowski

Thank you Veterans for your courage and dedication. Thank you to the Veteran families for the sacrifices that you have made today and everyday. Thank you VC Co-op employees Gunnar Gretebeck, Kevin Karowski, and Todd Tunks for serving. (Not pictured, Todd Tunks).



**November 5** - Daylight Savings Ends

**November 7** - Election Day

**November 11** - Veterans Day

**November 23** - Thanksgiving (Closed)

**November 24** - Office Closed



## AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM

The Affordable Connectivity Program is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) program that helps connect families and households struggling to afford internet service. This new benefit provides a discount of up to \$30 per month toward broadband service for eligible households. Eligible households can enroll online with the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) or by a mail in application.

### Who is Eligible for the Affordable Connectivity Program?

- Has an income that is at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines
- Participates in one of the assistance programs: Free and reduced-price school lunch program or school breakfast program. Including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision: SNAP; Medicaid; Federal public Housing Assistance; SSI; WIC; Veterans Pension or Survivor Benefits or Lifeline
- Participates in Tribal specific programs
- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year
- Meets the eligibility criteria for participating provider's existing low-income program

*You can learn more about the benefit, including eligibility and enrollment information, by visiting [www.affordableconnectivity.gov](http://www.affordableconnectivity.gov), or by calling (877) 384-2575.*



Go Green by signing up for paperless billing. It's easy, convenient and can save you money! Get a one time \$5.00 credit for signing up. Take the worry out of missing a payment, the hassle of putting a stamp on it, and running it to the post office. Automatic payment is also a great way to make sure you never miss a payment. Go to our website and sign up in SmartHub today!

## EMPLOYEE NEWS



We are very excited to welcome **Amy Swiggum**. Amy is the new Human Resource Director at VC Co-op and she began her position on September 25, 2023. Amy is a Westby native who attended college at Winona State University and was driven home by the love and dedication to the area. She and her husband, Erik, live in rural Westby with their two children. Together, they spend time doing numerous outdoor recreational activities as well as attending many events that the community and school host. Amy has

spent time working in the community for the past 11 years and is looking forward to being a helpful resource to employees at Vernon Communications Cooperative.

**Konner Krause**, has completed coursework for the apprenticeship training program for the "Broadband Service Technician" program. He completed 2,144 hours of training and education to complete the course.



Konner Krause, pictured left with Matt McGarry, Director of Operations

Konner received his certificate from the Department of Workforce Development and is now officially a VC Co-op employee. Congratulations Konner.



Employees are the backbone of our cooperative and recognizing them for their milestones are impactful. **Joan Dickman**, pictured left with Garin Mayer, CEO recently achieved 10 years of service and **Anthony Gullickson** pictured right, has earned 5 years. Joan works in Member Support and Anthony is a Member Service Technician. Congratulations to these excellent employees as we continue to serve our members with the great service they deserve.



**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)**