

A Look Back 2023



Staff



NEW Construction



Supporting our local Schools



Advocates for Broadband



Award



NEW Employees



Donations



MONTHLY NEWS

WORLD-CLASS TECHNOLOGY. UNRIVALED LOCAL SERVICE.

January 2024

Top News Inside

- Looking Back at 2023
- Food Pantry Donations
- Scholarships Available
- New Billboard



Member Appreciation



National Night Out



Local Chamber of Commerce Events



Viroqua Wine Walk

As we stand on the cusp of a brand new year, January's promise of new beginnings feels especially charged after a year like 2023. It was a year where our commitment to our local communities unfolded with construction in Crawford and Monroe counties. This has fueled our passion for economic development as we enter into 2024 brimming with enthusiasm. We have exciting initiatives on the pipeline, aimed at fostering growth and prosperity in the areas we serve. Monroe County will be the focus for construction beginning in the spring. As changes evolve we will continue to do what is right for our great cooperative. **Let's make 2024 a year to remember!!**

THANK YOU MEMBERS

As we step into the new year, we are filled with immense gratitude for our members. You are the heart and soul of our cooperative, and your trust and support is what fuels our mission to connect our rural communities with the power of technology.

The past year has been one of immense growth, and we're incredibly proud of the progress we've made together. We've witnessed firsthand the power of mutual support, both within our cooperative and the communities we serve. Your continuous engagement and feedback have been instrumental in shaping the direction of Vernon Communications, and we're honored to play a role in fostering the collective well-being of our region.

Looking ahead, our vision for the year remains steadfast: To continue serving you, our members, with the best-in-class service you've come to expect. This commitment encompasses two key pillars:

- **Unparalleled reliability and speed:** We're constantly striving to provide you with the fastest, most reliable internet service possible. This year, we'll be implementing a series of network upgrades to ensure that you have access to the latest technology and the seamless online experience you deserve.
- **Exceptional customer service:** We believe that personal connection matters. As a local cooperative, we're dedicated to providing you with the best possible customer service, delivered by friendly and knowledgeable staff who understand your unique needs.

Beyond our core service, we're also thrilled to be working on a major construction project in Monroe County. This initiative will extend our fiber infrastructure, bringing reliable internet access to over 1,200 residents who have previously lacked this essential resource. For many, this project will be life-changing, opening doors to opportunities in education, healthcare, and even remote work. It's a privilege to be able to bridge this digital divide and contribute to the advancement of our communities.

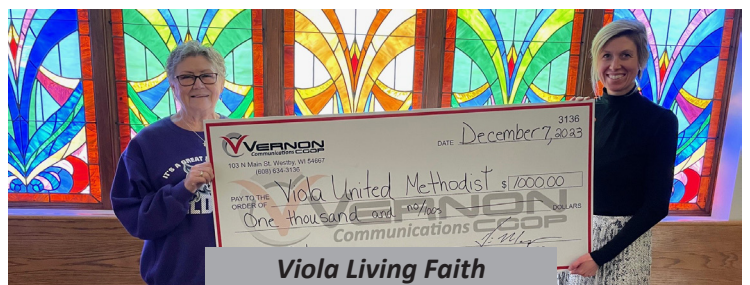
Finally, we remain committed to giving back and investing in our collective future. We believe in the power of community and the importance of addressing the most critical challenges we face together. We'll continue to dedicate substantial resources to supporting local initiatives and organizations that are making a tangible difference in the lives of our neighbors.

As we look at the year to come, we do so with renewed excitement and unwavering dedication. We're grateful for the opportunity to serve you, and we're honored to be a part of this vibrant and resilient community. Together, let's make 2024 a year of remarkable success and shared prosperity.

A New Year, new opportunities, and deep gratitude from our Vernon Family

FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS

Food Pantry's are critical resources for many people and donations can make a significant impact on the ability to serve the community. \$1000.00 was donated to 6 local food pantry's to help supply their shelves with the items they need to help with food for the upcoming year.



CYBER SECURITY



Social media offers cybercriminals ample opportunities to social engineer or manipulate people to their nefarious advantage.

Many do not consider how much personal information is available online and waiting to be used against you.

- Social Media - Not Just for Socializing.
- Social media platforms are also a breeding ground for fake profile personas waiting to take advantage of you.

For instance, LinkedIn has a professional influence unlike other social media sites, often making users less cautious when connecting with strangers. When people willingly make these connections under the assumption of making professional networking contacts, criminals can lure them into divulging personal details and direct them to malicious sites. Social Engineering is a never-ending weapon for cyber criminals and social media hands them most of the information they need for successful attacks.

Cybercriminals can use a quick company search on LinkedIn to find several contacts from a company, including information such as their job positions and email addresses. This quick search gives the attacker a new list of targets to familiarize themselves with for better spear-phishing attempts. If an attacker wanted to target you personally, they could easily find your favorite hobbies or activities from one or more of your social media profiles. They could then craft a relevant spear-phishing email or text message spoofed to look as if it is coming from a company or person that you commonly interact with. Always be aware of the information you share with the world, and be cautious of how that information can result in you, or your organization being more susceptible to a compromise.

TOYS FOR CHRISTMAS



VC Co-op delivered over 100 toys to Bethel Butikk to be distributed to families at Christmas

January 2023 Highlights

January 1, 2023 - Happy New Year Our office will be closed

January 15, 2023 - Martin Luther King Jr.

MUSIC CHOICE CHANGES



Music Choice is making some programming adjustments to select music channels:

- **Indie (Channel 805)** will be replaced with Music Choice "60's"
- **Music Choice Metal channel (Channel 815)** will be replaced with Music Choice Yacht Rock
- **Music Choice Urbana (channel 838)** channel will be replace with Music Choice Relaxing Vibes
- **Music Choice Dance/EDM (Channel 804)** will be renamed Music Choice Dance
- **Music Choice Teen Beats (Channel 824)** will be renamed Music Choice Teen Hits

NEW BILLBOARD



Look for our new billboard on the North end of Viroqua

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE



Vernon Communications offers scholarships to students continuing post secondary education. Go to our website for more information and fill out the required application form and documents. **Applications must be filled out and returned to our office by February 16, 2024.**

TWINKLEFEST



What happens on Black Friday besides shopping? The Twinklefest parade in Viroqua with lights, action and excitement. Everyone is geared up for the Holidays and this parade is a kickoff to the Holiday Season. VC Co-op employees helped light up Main Street.

DID YOU KNOW YOU HAVE MANY OPTIONS FOR PAYING YOUR BILL??



Pay online

Smarthub makes bill paying easy. The ease of paying your bill and managing your account is smart by saving gas, stamps and time! Go to vernoncom.coop or download the Smarthub App today.



Automatic Payment

Make life simpler and never miss a payment by having your payment deducted from your credit card or checking each month.



Pay by phone (Debit or Credit)

Call (844) 827-4766
(Have your account number)



Pay by mail or dropbox

EMPLOYEE NEWS



VC Co-op employees donated enough money at Christmas to help 2 families with gifts for their children. Tracy Thelen pictured right, bought the gifts with the money that was collected from employees and Vernon County Human Services employee, Alison Winkers distributed the gifts to the families.



These two employees had fun wearing different hats for the 12 days of Christmas. Employees also wore ugly Christmas sweaters for the last employee meeting of the season, and we managed to squeeze in a potluck to celebrate together.



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



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

(608) 634-3136 • www.vernoncom.coop

PAYMENT OPTIONS

*Go To: www.vernoncom.coop and click "Pay Now"
Call (844) 827-4766 (Have your account number)
EFT (Automatic Payment) - Sign up and get a one time \$5.00 credit.*