

MONTHLY NEWS

September 2024

Connecting our members with exceptional communication solutions with ease and integrity.



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Here are some interesting statistics from Forbes on websites in 2024.

1. There are about 1.09 billion websites on the internet in 2024. Every day the increase of 252,000 new sites are being added to the online world.
2. A new website is built every 3 seconds!
3. 71% of businesses have a website. This is attributed to the impact of COVID-19. Ecommerce and working from home has created opportunities for businesses and employees.
4. 48% say the number one way they decide on the credibility of a business is determined by the web design.
5. The average click through rate is 6.64% across all industries - This is an indicator of effectiveness of online ads. The success of these ads is capturing audience interest.
6. 47% of users won't wait longer than 2 seconds for a website to load.
7. Websites that load slowly cost retailers \$2.6 billion in sales each year. A slow loading website can have a significant impact on a retailer's bottom line. The importance of ensuring a website is optimized for speed and performance to prevent lost revenue
8. The average time spent on a page is 54 seconds.
9. 88% of users won't return to a site after a bad experience.
10. 61% say that if they don't find what they are looking for within about 5 seconds, they will go to another site.
11. 74% of online users will return to a website that is mobile-friendly

<https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/software/website-statistics/>



We have a new look to our website! The need for a better user experience and the ease of navigation became a top priority. Information changes at a fast pace in the technology world, therefore it is important for user's to find the information they need quickly. The new site should be easier to navigate with a clean, modern look. The landing page gives a clear emphasis on a call to action and is visually more attractive. Online presence is incredibly important from an information standpoint. It's crucial to stay up to date on the latest trends and statistics in the online world. If you are a business you know how important it is to keep your website current. Information is key, as anyone looking for products, services and any kind of information, go directly online.

From the CEO

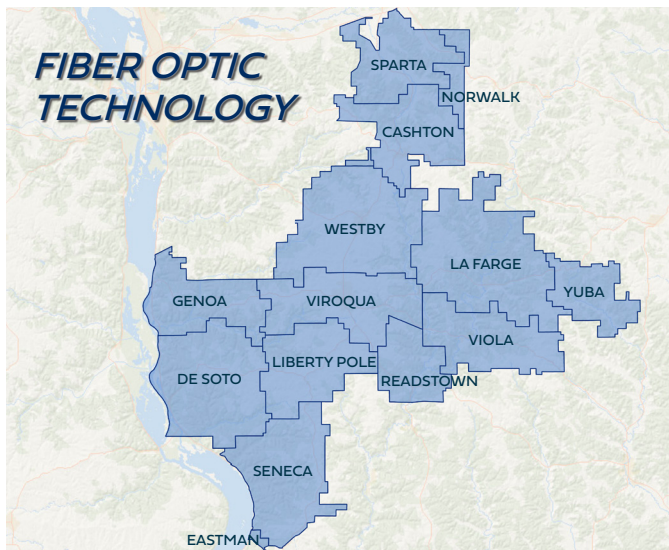
It's hard to believe that summer has come to an end. It seems that once school is in session, summer vacations come to a halt, school activities begin, and everyday life becomes more hectic. I hope you all had a great summer and were able to spend time with what matters most, family. Fall is a beautiful place here in the Driftless region, so get in the car and take a drive to see the spectacular fall colors in Wisconsin.



The Main Street construction project in Westby is making great strides and will soon be wrapped up for the season! This much-needed road repair will be a significant improvement for our community. We want to extend our sincere

thanks to the construction crew for their hard work and dedication for seeing this project through. We can't wait to enjoy the finished product!"

Our fiber construction project in Monroe county is also wrapping up. Mainline construction should be complete by the first part of September and if the weather cooperates, drops should be done by the end of the month. We are diligently connecting our members as soon as the orders come in. Residents in that area now have fiber-to-the-home in those previously underserved areas. Below is a map of our current serving area.



Cyber Security - KnowB4

Getting ready for a fall or winter vacation? If you plan to use a popular vacation rental website or application (app), such as AirBnB, HomeAway, or VRBO to find your next getaway, beware. Cybercriminals are using these services to trick you and steal your money.

How Does It Work?

The scammers often post completely fake rental listings using images they find on the internet, or they steal pictures and property details from legitimate rental listings to create their own listing with the scammers contact information. When someone inquires about a fake listing, the scammer will request a security deposit or a portion of the full rental price as a down payment. Once the scammer has your money, they'll cancel the reservation at the last minute, or you will arrive at your vacation home to find that the property is already booked, or that the property doesn't even exist.

How Do I Know It's a Scam?

Don't let the scammers ruin your vacation. Remember the following tips when you're booking your next vacation rental online:

Book official. Only use reputable websites that offer protection against fraud and have a secure payment portal.

Make sure that the property exists. Search for the property on Google Maps or another mapping service. Scammers might use an address that does not exist, or use the address of a random company, vacant building, or parking lot.

Research the rental listing. Search online for the property owner's name and address, and look for images of the property, before you make a deposit. If you find multiple listings with different contact information, reconsider booking the property.

Read the reviews. If a property has multiple negative reviews, or doesn't have any reviews, consider a different property.

Only make payments through the official website for the rental listing. Scammers often try to get you to pay with a check, get you to wire them money directly, or use services like Money Gram or Western Union to make a payment.





We were there! Vernon County National Night Out is a well attended event put on by our local Sheriff's Department. The night is FREE for everyone. Sheriff Roy Torgerson not only volunteered for the dunk tank, but took a dip in our phishing pool. The pool is fun for the kids, but also an educational piece highlighting internet safety. VernonCom would like to thank the Sheriff's Department and all local business's and emergency personnel for sponsoring this extraordinary event for Vernon County.



Football Programming



The regular football season begins September 5, 2024. As a reminder, the NFL has decided to air certain games on streaming networks such as Netflix, Peacock and Amazon Prime. This means you will have to subscribe to those streaming

options in order to view those games.

Amazon Prime - Thursday night football games, weeks 1-17, the Black Friday game, Nov. 29, and one wild card game

Netflix - Dec. 25, two Christmas games (Week 17)

Peacock - will air (exclusively) week 1 Packers vs. Eagles game live from Brazil, and stream all games airing on NBC throughout the season.



Football Fans - Call our office for RedZone and never miss a play!

It's Back To School!



Most schools in our area began on September 3, 2024. As our young students head back to the classroom, please be mindful of bus traffic and children walking to and from school. Good luck to all students, school staff and parents. May you have a successful school year filled with learning, growth, safety and success!

Internet Speed



Now that school is back in session it's a great time to check your internet speeds! Students depend on the internet for homework, research and online classes, so you will want to

make sure your connection is the speed you need. Go To: <https://speedtest.airstreamcomm.net/> and check your speed today.

VernonCom sponsors the following parades and the Vernon County Fair.

See us there!

September 2, 2024

Readstown Labor Day Parade
(Our office will be closed)

September 8, 2024

Cashton Fall Festival Parade

September 11 - 15, 2024

Vernon County Fair

September 21, 2024

Viola Horse and Colt Parade

September 28, 2024

Retreat World's Fair



Business Spotlight



Who doesn't like ice cream? If your looking for a tasty treat to satisfy your sweet tooth, "**Ice Cream on 14**", has you covered!

In 2020, Karina Jones was inspired to start her ice cream shop from a couple of sheds. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Karina was laid off from her previous job, leading her to move back to the Readstown area where her family is from. Wanting to find something to do in the area, she saw the property for sale and thought it would be perfect for an ice cream shop. Karina completely renovated the property and turned it into the successful ice cream parlor it is today. The property became a nostalgic ice cream shop where you can enjoy a sweet treat, play yard games, and indulge in some food items. The shop offers twenty-two different ice cream flavors that you can top with hot fudge, caramel, sprinkles, fruits, nuts, and other delicious toppings. Additionally, they serve milkshakes, malts, sundaes, and root beer floats. If you are not in the mood for ice cream, they also have Chicago and chili hot dogs, pretzels, and nachos. She currently has eight employees, whom she considers family, and they all strive to make every customer feel at home.

Ice Cream on 14 is open seasonally from late May to October, depending on the weather. The parlor is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays. It is open for business on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays from 12-8 pm. On Fridays and Saturdays they are open until 9 pm.

Ice Cream on 14 relies on VernonCom internet services for its point of sale (POS) system, customer and staff Wi-Fi, and office work. Stay tuned for all the exciting developments coming soon. If you are looking for a friendly, warm place to satisfy your sweet tooth, be sure to check out Ice Cream on 14!

For a chance to win a \$35.00 gift card, go to:
<https://vernoncom.coop/spotlight/>

Employee News



Stephanie Franz



Kathy Madden



Crystal Morley

VernonCom is thrilled to welcome three new members to our staff.

Stephanie Franz - Marketing
Kathy Madden - Member Support
Crystal Morley - Accounting

We would like to extend a warm welcome to these new team members and we look forward to their contributions and accomplishments with the cooperative.

Road Construction Update

The Westby road construction project is slightly behind schedule, and the entrance to our office is still on E. State St., in Westby. This will be the main entrance to our building until construction is complete for the winter. The project will continue in the Spring, as the second portion of the project will be in its completion in the summer of 2025.



Summer hours have come to an end and our regular office hours are back to 8:00 am - 4:30 pm, beginning September 3, 2024



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.