

MONTHLY NEWS

June 2026



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

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Heart of the Driftless Photo Contest Winners

The Grand Prize winner of the "Heart of the Driftless" photo contest is, Mike Leis! Mike will receive a \$100.00 bill credit on his VernonCom bill statement for "Quiet Start". The Animal category winner is Deborah Warren, and she will receive a \$50.00 bill credit for "Three Baby Squirrels in a Tree". The Kids category winner is Susan Brodnax

for "Santa and Granddaughter Getting a Tree", and she will also receive a \$50.00 bill credit. Mike Leis is the winner of the Landscapes and Scenic Views category for "Early Morning Silhouette".



Kids - Susan Brodnax



Landscapes and Scenic Views- Mike Leis



Animals - Deborah Warren



Grand Prize - Mike Leis

From The CEO

Greetings!

Welcome to another busy month of developments at your local broadband cooperative! Spring has finally arrived and we've been actively working on the fiber expansion projects in Norwalk, Wilton, Ontario, Sparta, and Leon. All of these projects are scheduled to be complete by August of 2026 and will expand our serving



area to new communities that desperately need quality broadband. Due to grant requirements, these areas were overlooked in the past. To date, BEAD has still not been deployed and the question remains as to how effective it will ultimately be.

In related news, I spent some time in Washington D.C., as well as locally, speaking with policymakers

on the importance of the Universal Service Fund (USF) and the reform it needs. For those of you that are not familiar with USF, the fund was designed to help rural providers support equitable service for equitable rates when compared to urban providers. Since the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the mechanism for this fund has been a "tax" on traditional phone service. This means for every dollar spent on traditional service, a small tax was applied to fund USF, which was used to achieve more rural parity. The initial official charge was 3.9% in 1998, and prior to that, in 1996-97, the official rate had not yet been established. Today, the charge is approximately 37%! With diminishing phone lines across the U.S., the charge needed to increase in order to continue the program. Our ask of Congress is to direct the FCC to provide a plan to reform USF so that it relies less on traditional phone service. There are several ways this can be done, one of which is moving the funding mechanism from phone to broadband. Another, is to ask big tech companies to contribute to the fund.

Ms. Tara Johnson, State Representative of Wisconsin District 96, recently stopped by our office to discuss broadband and the cooperative. Ms. Johnson's territory extends from the South side of La Crosse, East to Hillsboro, South to Readstown, and West to De Soto. All of Vernon County lies within her district, so she has an acute interest in all of the fiber providers of the county and what they do for members like you. It was a positive conversation with regards to the BEAD program, state grants, and the continued need for exceptional broadband in rural areas of the state.

I want to say thank you to anyone that attended the cooperative's recent virtual annual meeting. I hope you were able to glean good information from the meeting.



We hope you can make it to our member appreciation picnic in Genoa as we will once again partner with Vernon Electric Cooperative on June 10th. We hope you'll stop by to say hello and enjoy a bite to eat on us.

Thank you for being a member of the Cooperative!

Garin

June is Dairy Month



For generations, Wisconsin dairy farmers have been hosting dairy breakfasts, showcasing family farms in our communities. These breakfasts offer a great opportunity to connect with our local farmers and get a firsthand look at how our food is produced. Here is a list of local breakfast events.

Crawford County

(June 6, 2026)

Payne Rock Acres
25653 Roach Lane
Eastman, WI 54626

Monroe County

(June 6, 2026)

Trescher Town-View Dairy
829 Cashton Ave.
Cashton, WI 54619

Vernon County

(June 13, 2026)

Fleming Farms
S2095 Volden Rd.
Westby, WI 54667



**Member
Appreciation Picnic
Wednesday, June 10, 2026**

We look forward to seeing you at the second annual joint picnic, hosted by Vernon Electric and VernonCom. This will be held at the pavilion in Genoa from 11 am - 1 pm. Food and beverages will be served for this member event.

Employee News

Meet our new employee Taylor Freed

Taylor Freed



Taylor Freed was new to our Member Support team in April. Taylor graduated from Brookwood High School in 2024. She loves spending time outdoors, fishing, hiking, and spending time on the boat whenever possible. Taylor is an animal lover, and most of her free time is spent with her horses and two Australian Shepherds. She

also enjoys spending quality time with her family and friends. Her friendly, outgoing personality, eagerness to learn, and infectious smile make her a perfect asset to our team. Welcome Taylor!



2026 Photo Contest

VernonCom would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who entered the "Heart of the Driftless", photo contest! We were blown away by the stunning entries we received. If your photo wasn't selected as a winner this time, be sure to pick up our 2027 calendar in December to see the Driftless through the eyes of our talented community.

One Year Milestones

VernonCom recognizes employment anniversaries and milestones



Ruger Johnson just celebrated his one year employment anniversary with VernonCom. Garin Mayer, CEO, presented him with a service award for his accomplishments. Ruger locates cable all over VernonCom's serving area and now that the weather is nice he is putting on a lot of miles traveling a three county region.

Syttende Mai Parade



Syttende Mai is Norwegian Heritage in Westby, and we were there to help celebrate the festivities.



Jon Montgomery, Director of Marketing, also celebrated his one year anniversary with VernonCom. Jon has been busy educating our members and keeping them informed about our products and services to both new and current members.

Congratulations to these employees as they continue to serve our members with the best possible member support we can offer.

Business Spotlight



The secret is out! Johnson's One Stop in Seneca has been named Wisconsin's Small Business of the year for 2026 by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Wisconsin is home to half a million small businesses, which is defined as enterprises with fewer than 500 employees. This family-owned business, owned by Artie and Debbie Johnson, is the biggest small store in Crawford County! The two were recognized at a small business summit at the White House in Washington, D.C., where President Trump spoke and was the kick off to small business week. Artie and Debbie, pictured above, were presented the Small Business of the Year award by Kelly Loeffler (right), the 28th administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The store carries a full-service grocery supermarket with a fresh meat department and bakery, full line general and farm hardware, a lumber yard and building center, architectural design services, small engine sales and repair, power equipment, factory authorized service, a small tire repair and even a green house. People are always surprised at the amount of inventory that is offered in this store located in a small town of 200. This store is located at 134 Main St. in Seneca, and is centrally located between Prairie Du Chien, Gays Mills and Viroqua, covering a 20 mile radius. Go to: <https://johnsonsonestop.com/> or call (608) 734-3434.

The store is in its fourth generation of the Johnson family, which is extremely rare. The store was founded by Artie's grandfather and was originated as a general store in 1937. Artie's mother and father ran the store in the 1960's, 70's and 80's. Artie and Debbie bought the store in 2010 and is currently being run by the two of them, their three sons, and Artie's brother. Each family member has their own departments and points of interest.

They credit their success with the great employees that have worked at the store throughout the years and the community support, which has been instrumental.

VernonCom constructed fiber in the town of Seneca three years ago, which has been a pivotal step for Johnson's One Stop. They use Vernoncom's internet for point of sale and other uses.



We would like to extend a big congratulations to the Johnson family for this very prestigious award.

Check out our website for a chance to win a \$35.00 gift card to Johnson's One Stop for the month of June: <https://vernoncom.coop/business-spotlight-contest/>

Happy
4th
of July

**Our office will be closed
on July 3rd for the
Holiday**

Attention MWT email subscribers:

If you have an MWT email account you will no longer be able to access it after December 31, 2026. To ensure you don't lose access to messages or important accounts, please transition to a new email provider before this date. There are several secure, reliable, and free options available including Gmail, Outlook, Yahoo, and iCloud. We recommend selecting a provider that offers robust security features to keep your data safe.

Go to: <https://vernoncom.coop/mwtemails/> for more information.

Lobby Hours:

7:30 am - 4:00 pm (M-F)
(608) 634-3136
www.vernoncom.coop

Payment Options

Go To: www.vernoncom.coop
and click "Pay Now"
Call (855) 940-3938

EFT (Automatic
Payment) - Sign up
and get a one time \$5.00 credit.

103 N Main Street
Westby, WI 54667

