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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2015

THIS ISSUE

- 01 New General Manager/CEO
- 02 FTTH Coming to Rural Sebeka
- 03 Scholarship Opportunities
- 04 Business Spotlight: Hub 71

Serve on the Nominations & Election Committee

As a member of West Central Telephone Association, you are eligible to serve on the Nominations & Election Committee. Members of the committee are responsible for appointing qualified candidates to run for directorship, collecting ballots, and verifying election results at the annual meeting held in May.

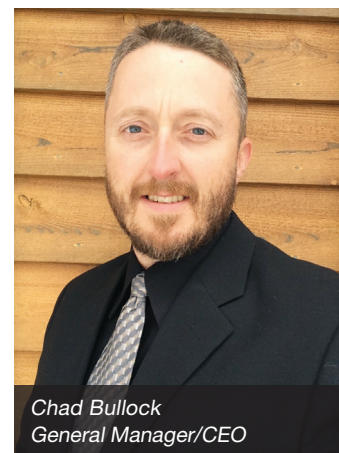
If you are interested in serving as a committee member, please contact West Central at 218-837-5151 before January 19.



Board Names New General Manager

At last year's annual meeting, General Manager/CEO Anthony "Tony" Mayer announced that after 22 years of service, he would be retiring in early 2015. February 13 is the day Tony has chosen as his last day as manager of West Central Telephone.

After interviews in the fall, the West Central Telephone's Board of Directors has named Chad Bullock as Tony's successor. Chad will take over the General Manager/CEO's position beginning January 19 and will be responsible for overseeing the complete operation of the cooperative and its subsidiaries by communicating and implementing the cooperative's vision, mission and overall direction.



Chad Bullock
General Manager/CEO

Bruce Kinnunen, President of the Board, said, "We're fortunate to have someone with Chad's education, experience, and background to assume the position of General Manager/CEO. Additionally, Chad and his wife, Amy, along with their three school-age children, have moved into the Sebeka community. We feel confident in our decision that Chad has the qualifications and ability to continue to lead West Central Telephone into the future."

With 20 years in the telecommunications industry, Chad earned his bachelor's degree in management from Bemidji State University, as well as a telecommunications degree from M-State Wadena Campus. For the past six and a half years, Chad has been the Operations Manager at Emily Cooperative Telephone Company.

Chad said, "I am truly excited to be joining an excellent West Central Telephone team. It is an honor to have been selected by the Board of Directors and entrusted with this position. Under Tony Mayer's direction, the cooperative has positioned itself as a broadband and technology leader, and I look forward to serving our members and continuing on the path of excellence for many years to come."

Please join us in welcoming Chad and his family to the community!



2015 Winning Cover Photo

Rebecca Komppa of Sebeka submitted the winning photo featured on the cover of the 2015 WCTA Directory. Rebecca's photo of many deer in the winter woods was such a perfect fit for the cover. Rebecca won \$200 for her winning entry.

There were many wonderful photos — all sent digitally or posted on our Facebook page, which made the viewing and production easier. But choosing the winning photo more difficult! Three cover layout mockups were made with photos submitted by Rebecca Komppa, Heather Schmitz, and Debbie Anderson. After consideration by employees, Rebecca's photo was chosen as the winner. Thanks to all who participated in this year's contest!

FTTH Coming to Rural Sebeka

The West Central Telephone Board of Directors approved completing the rural Sebeka fiber to the home (FTTH) project in one year, rather than phasing it out over several years. Engineering has staked 524 homes and businesses that will be converted from fiber to the node to 100% fiber to the home.

Beginning in March, we will begin setting appointments for our technicians to pre-wire the homes included in the project. The pre-wire consists of hanging the shells for both outside equipment and inside equipment, and feeding the pigtailed fiber into your home. The pre-wiring will make it much easier and quicker for the contractors to connect the new underground fiber optics to your home in late spring. Construction is slated for early May, depending on the weather and ground conditions, and availability of fiber optic cabling. We will be plowing in the back of the road right-of-way as our permits dictate, so keep that in mind when planting crops so they aren't damaged during construction.

Once this "last mile" of fiber optics from the node (equipment out in the field that houses digital electronics) to your house is installed, the entire West Central Telephone area will all have the same broadband services available including TV services, HDTV and DVR services, and faster Internet with up to 100 Mbps up and 100 Mbps down. Those in the rural Sebeka exchange can expect to be cutover to the FTTH network in early fall. At that time, TV services will be installed on a first-come, first-served basis. Given that, you may want to call us now and express your interest in the TV services in order to be placed on an installation waiting list.

Being connected to a 100% fiber optic infrastructure brings all things broadband and beyond to your home. Having a fiber-connected community and home means you can live, work, and play in beautiful rural Minnesota without sacrificing big city technology! As a matter of fact, compared to some metro areas, West Central Telephone cooperative members are ahead of the broadband race. All of our services — telephone, Internet and digital TV — are delivered over your new fiber optic broadband connection!



**Captain
America:
The Winter Soldier**
Premiering January 23

starz

Captain America faces an insidious plot within S.H.I.E.L.D., and with colleague Black Widow, takes on his most powerful nemesis yet. The Winter Soldier! With Robert Redford.

Visit starz.com for airdates/times. STARZ and related channels and service marks are the property of Starz Entertainment, LLC. Captain America: The Winter Soldier © Marvel. All Rights Reserved.

Color Contest Winners are Announced

Six fabulous artists placed first in their age division in the annual WCTA Holiday Coloring Contest. The winners were: Luke Huhta, Joanna Lehto, August Aho, Bailee Lillquist, McKayla Pearson, and Abigail Blair.

A heartfelt thanks to all of the schools, parents and children who participated and make this contest special for our kids!



Scholarship Opportunities

As an investment in our youth, we're committed to the future of rural Minnesota. We're pleased to announce the following scholarship opportunities and invite all high school seniors to apply.

FRS College Scholarship Program

The FRS College Scholarship Program awards 30 scholarships in the amount of \$2,000 each to winning applicants across the nation, with a \$500 match by the sponsoring telco (for a total of \$2,500 each). By partnering with the FRS, West Central Telephone is able to make the scholarship program available to high school seniors in our area. Applications for the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) Scholarship are due in the WCTA office by February 20, 2015.

Students may also be eligible for four FRS Staurulakis Family Scholarships valued at \$5,000 each or two TMS Scholarships for \$1,500 each. Students who are majoring in math, science, engineering, or medicine are given preference for the FRS Staurulakis Family Scholarships. Additional scholarships include the Everett Kneece Return to Rural America Scholarship, valued at \$2,500, and new for 2015 — the Colt Ford Scholarship, awarding up to \$15,000.

For applications and guidelines, see your high school guidance counselor or download the application from the FRS Website at <http://www.frs.org>.

Minnesota Telecom Alliance Foundation Scholarships

The Minnesota Telecom Alliance Foundation is offering five \$2,000 scholarships to high school seniors who graduate in 2015. Scholarships are awarded after the student demonstrates successful completion of the first year of college or technical school. The application deadline is February 27, 2015, and applications must be returned to WCTA.

WCTA Scholarship Program

High school seniors can also apply for one of up to eight scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each. The deadline for the WCTA Scholarship applications is April 6, 2015.

Our scholarship program has been established to encourage youth in our area to further their education after graduating from high school and is made possible through unclaimed capital credit checks. Because of our cooperative status, we are able to use these funds to benefit the scholarship program. At this time, there is over \$79,000 funding the scholarship program.

These scholarships are another example of a cooperative member-benefit, and as such, we would like to see all high school seniors apply. There are typically only 18 to 20 applicants each year. The scholarship is not income- or need-based, and although applicants should have at least a "C" GPA, they do not need to be at the top of the class. Students need to simply complete the online application, write a brief essay on the chosen topic, and submit by the deadline. The scholarship application can be found at wcta.net.

Remember, the deadline for the FRS scholarship to be in our office is February 20, 2015. The MTA scholarship must be in our office by February 27, 2015, and the deadline for the WCTA scholarship is April 6, 2015. Please call Geri Salmela at 837-5151 or email your questions to geris@wcta.net.



Welcome, New Members

Aho, Luke.....	538-4058
Bimberg, Gary	564-3738
Busboom, Clayton.....	472-3184
Evans, Josh.....	538-6083
Fitzloff, Shannon.....	564-8636
Haehnel, Andrew	837-9456
Hess, Glenda.....	564-1471
Holmquist, Maxine.....	472-3190
Hoogakker, Damien.....	564-6092
Jarvi, Peter	564-2995
Johnson, Tammy	445-8988
Keppers, Jessica.....	472-3031
Komulainen, Cynthia.....	837-6305
Kumpula, Rebecca	564-8170
Kvamme, Brandon	445-5967
Moench, Carl.....	564-2328
Mohs, Eric	564-7888
Morris, Mary	564-6050
Ness, Maria	837-7764
Niemela, Matthew.....	837-6719
Paurus, Roger	564-6062
Pederson, Karen.....	837-6296
Pederson, Larry.....	564-1967
Rockler, Karol	472-6294
Schleder, Christa	837-6307
Schmidt, Sandra.....	564-6052
Schulte, Amy	564-6067
Scribner, Laurel.....	564-0462
Smuda, Sean	472-3188
Spirit Lake Motel & Resort ...	564-5223
Stanley, Anthony.....	445-5993
Watson, Monica	837-1961
Wesa, Doug	564-6076
West, Stephanie	837-6655
Wikman, Edward.....	564-3415
Wynn, Connie.....	564-6597
Ylitalo, Daniel.....	564-1059



BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Hub 71 in the Heart of Sebekä

Hub 71 is a full-service, family restaurant located at 3 US Hwy 71 South in Sebekä. It serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner with daily features. The majority of their food is made from scratch, with signature items like “The 71,” the “Highway 8 Burger” and “Salted Caramel Apple Pie” as crowd favorites. They proudly serve Cedar Crest Ice Cream, which is made in Wisconsin and described as “pure frozen joy.”

Inside you’ll find a spacious and inviting environment with antiques and local oddities on display — many on loan from customers — as well Mac’s Room, which is a separate area that can be reserved for up to 60 people.

What really sets Hub 71 apart from other mom-and-pop restaurants is the way they incorporated technology into their business. This includes free Wi-Fi, convenient charging ports at every table, and servers who take orders on iPads and relay that information wirelessly through the POS system directly to the kitchen.

Hub 71 is owned by Jeff and Shannon Lausten, but it’s really Shannon’s baby. When asked why she built the restaurant, Shannon replied, “I had a dream of owning a restaurant, and when Sebekä’s last sit-down café closed their doors for good, it was easy to see myself fulfilling my dream while providing Sebekä with a good, family-style restaurant.”



Shannon Lausten

The electrical wiring was completed by West Central partner, Zenergy, while West Central installed security cameras, TV, phone, and Internet services with Wi-Fi capabilities.

To enjoy a great meal served by friendly people, visit Hub 71 in Sebekä. To order carry out or catering, call 837-CAFÉ (2233). For more information on ways to use technology in your business, give West Central Telephone a call at 837-5151.