

IN THE LOOP

MARCH/APRIL 2019

In This Issue

- Hey Dave 2
- Smart Home Services 2
- Lifeline and TAP 3
- Directory Credit Assistance Info 3
- 2019 Directories are Here 3
- Attn: Resort Owners 3
- Veteran & Military Discount 3
- Welcome New Members 4
- Office Closed 4
- Telephone Relay Service 4

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Gardonville is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

gardonville
cooperative telephone association

YOU'RE INVITED!

Grilled Pork Chops, Annual Meeting, Prizes and More!

Join us on **Friday, April 26th**, 2019, at our headquarters in Brandon for our customer appreciation dinner and annual meeting. We'll be grilling pork chops and serving delicious fixin's from Knotty Pine from 4:30-6:30 PM. Stick around for our annual meeting and great door prizes!

See our Facebook page for more details
<https://www.facebook.com/gardonville>



HEY DAVE!

By Dave Wolf, CEO/General Manager

Hey Dave, when will our fiber-optic get connected?

Gardonville went into 2018 with an aggressive construction schedule. Our planned

work was double of 2017's effort, and our goal was to connect several hundred more locations to our fiber-optic network.

While 2018 offered a perfect storm of opportunity in things like sales demand, low

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interest rates and low fuel costs, it also offered some interesting challenges with things like a late spring, early winter, material shortages, unusual cable cuts and other setbacks.

In Minnesota, the utility construction season is dictated by mother nature. We safely get five months of warm weather and most of the dirt work that must happen takes place during that time. It's not just Gardonville that does its "dirt work" inside that window. Roads are constructed, other utilities plow their cable, field tile is dug in, basements are dug and a whole lot of other projects take place.

It's not uncommon to see multiple "dirt work" projects taking place in the same area at the same time, between the county, utilities and private contractors. It's important to note, all those little orange cable marking flags are hand set. Gardonville responded to 3,390 locating projects in 2018. Up about 22% over 2017.

The last step in our construction process is hooking up the residential homes. But what happens beforehand?

Well, in the fall of 2017, material was ordered for 2018's projects. Things like cable, pedestals, splice cases and electronics all have lead times for delivery. Some items can take up to 35 weeks to receive. This happens while we are designing projects.

Areas that are selected to be upgraded with fiber-optic cable are typically ranked by need. Each week throughout the year, neighborhood by neighborhood, performance data is analyzed. Areas with aging or failing cable plant are continuously targeted for replacement. Things like road moves, customer requests, gopher chews and other cable cut damage also impacts the ranking process.

Final designs are approved by the board of directors, contractors are hired, permits are applied for, money is lined up and we hope for a warm spring. Once spring weather thaws the ground we begin boring new pipes and plowing cable. This work takes most of the construction season. Weather can interfere with the effort, so when the sun is shining, we, like everyone else, are running wide open.

After the cable is put in the ground, we clean up and restore the disturbed ground. Then we go back through to splice the glass fibers together. This step takes most of the time. Our cables typically contain less than 288 fiber-optic strands, but it takes plenty of time to connect a glass fiber from a co-op members' house back to a serving node many miles away.

While that effort is taking place, the Gardonville customer care team are proactively calling co-op members to schedule installations. Each customer location is unique. Some require inside wire updates, an electrical outlet move, wireless router changes, phone line changes, outbuilding hookups, video services, you name it.

The technicians tend to work one area or neighborhood at a time. It's more efficient this way, but if you happen to be at the end of the list, it probably feels like an installation is taking forever.

Gardonville's team must carefully balance the cooperatives' resources to complete these projects in a safe, economical, reliable and timely manner. Each year we plan the work and work the plan, adjusting as needed to advance the effort. On top of the installations, there are roughly 22,000 customer troubles that get solved each year, so, we need to make time for that as well. The team loves the challenge and each of us thank you for your patience as we get through these projects each year. We expect all our "open" residential installs to be completed by March 1st of 2019.

Thank you for sending me this question. I appreciate any feedback and we are grateful for your continued patronage.



Smart Home Services

Did you know Gardonville offers a service to our residential customers called Smart Home Services? We're taking the guess work and frustration out of setting up your techie toys and devices so you can move on to enjoying them!

Call our dedicated Smart Home Services line at (320) 834-7000 to get in touch with an expert. Explain what you're needing assistance with and we'll provide you with a quote and schedule an appointment, often within 24 hours.

This is a full-service service! We'll get your device set up, create an account if necessary, install apps, connect it to WiFi, set up your email and more. The best part is, we'll teach you how to use it!

Some examples of devices include: sound bars, smart TVs, tablets/laptops, routers, Amazon Echos, Blu-Ray players, Apple TVs/Fire TVs, smart home apps like garage door openers, door locks, thermostats and so much more!

Lifeline & Telephone Assistance Program

What is the Lifeline Program?

The Lifeline Program is a federal program that provides a monthly benefit on home or wireless phone or broadband service to eligible **cooperative members**.

The Lifeline benefit can lower the cost of your monthly phone or internet bill. Only one benefit is available per household; either phone service (home or wireless) or internet (home or mobile), but not both.

If you are eligible, apply for a benefit through a participating company in your area.

There are two ways to qualify for the Lifeline Program:

One: Income-Based Eligibility

If your household's income is at or below 135 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, you may be eligible for a Lifeline Program benefit.

135% of the 2019 Federal Poverty Income Guidelines:

Household Size:	Income:
One	\$16,862
Two	\$22,829
Three	\$28,796
Four	\$34,763
Five	\$40,730
Six	\$46,697

For each additional person, add \$5,967

Two: Program-Based Eligibility

If someone in your household participates in one of these federal programs, you may be eligible for a Lifeline Program benefit:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps
- Medicaid (Medical Assistance)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA) or Section 8
- Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit
- Tribal Programs (and live on federally-recognized Tribal lands)

One Benefit Per Household

Only one Lifeline Program benefit (either wireless or landline telephone, home Internet or a cell phone data plan) is allowed per household. The definition of a "household" is anyone living at an address (including children, etc.) who share income(s) and household expenses.

Telephone Assistance Program

The Telephone Assistance Program offers an additional monthly discount on your phone bill. Eligibility requirements are the same as Lifeline and is only available to **cooperative members**.

2019 Directories are Here!

The 2019 Vikingland Regional Directory is here! If you haven't received one yet, pick yours up at either of our offices!

Feel free to bring in your old directories so we can recycle them for you.



Attn: Resort Owners

Is it time for a network tune-up? Give Tessa a call at (320) 834-5151 for full review to make sure your resort's network is running effectively and efficiently!



Veteran & Active Military Discount

As a small token of gratitude to our veterans and active military personnel, we offer half off your installation fee. This discount applies to voice, TV & internet services. Simply mention this discount when you call to schedule your installation.

Thank you for your service!

*Offer applies to standard installation on new services. Excludes Viasat.

Directory Assistance Credit Information

If you receive an incorrect telephone number from Directory Assistance, you are entitled to a credit for that Directory Assistance charge. You must use the same dialing pattern to request the credit that you used to make the call. For example, if you dialed 411 for Directory Assistance, you need to dial the same number to request the credit. This

will ensure that the proper provider issues the credit.

You may request up to three credits. You will need to inform the provider which listing was incorrect, so the correction can be made. A credit equal to the incorrect charge will appear on your bill.

Welcome New Members!

BRANDON

Red Rock Pork, LLC524-2035
Christensen, Dennis &
Sharon524-2464

EVANSVILLE

Berscheit, M.....948-2251

GARFIELD

Zarbok, Allen.....834-2443
Dropik, Dean & Julie.....834-2145

MILLERVILLE

Nelson, Grant.....876-2069
Mahs, Jayne.....876-2157

Office Closed

Our offices will close at noon on Friday, April 19th in recognition of Good Friday.

Brain Buster

What is the only letter in the alphabet that does not appear anywhere on the periodic table of elements?

Answer

Name - Please Print

Jan/Feb Brain Buster

What has four teeth and a tail, but no arms and legs? **A fork.**

Last month's winner is Roger Roers. Stop in at either our Alexandria or Brandon office to get your goody bag, Roger!

Telephone Relay Service

Minnesota Relay is a free telephone service that uses specially trained communications assistants to facilitate telephone calls between people with hearing and speech disabilities and other individuals. Calls can be made to anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. All calls are completely confidential. To make a relay call dial 7-1-1. Once connected to the relay service, tell the communications assistant the type of relay call you wish to make. Or, you may dial the specific toll-free number for the type of relay service.

Types of Relay Services Available

Captioned Telephone Service (CTS): CTS uses a special telephone with a text display screen so that a person who is hard of hearing can listen to and read captions of everything the other person on the call says. You speak directly to the other person on the call, and a relay communications assistant transcribes everything the other person says into captions, which appear on the display screen of your CTS phone.

Internet Protocol Captioned Telephone Service (IP CTS): Internet-based forms of CTS are available for those who would like to use CTS on a computer, tablet, or smartphone. Go to: www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/internet-protocol-ip-captioned-telephone-service

Computer (ASCII): 1-800-627-3529. Computer users can access Minnesota Relay. Set your communications software to the following protocols: speeds ranging from 300 to 2400; 8 Bits; No Parity; 1 Stop Bit; Full Duplex. When calling at a rate of 300 or below, follow the above using Half Duplex.

Hearing Carry Over (HCO): 1-800-627-3529. HCO allows a person who can hear clearly but who has very limited or no speech capability to make and receive phone calls. Using a special text telephone, you type your conversation for the relay communications assistant to read to the other person, and listen directly to the other person's response.

Hearing User: 1-800-627-3529. A hearing person may use a standard telephone or mobile phone to place a relay call and speak with a person who is deaf, hard of hearing, or speech disabled.

Internet Protocol (IP) Relay: IP Relay combines text-based relay service with the ease of the Internet – no need for a TTY. You are able to make your relay call using a computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone. Go to: www.sprintrelay.com.

Spanish Relay: 1-877-627-5448. Spanish speaking persons with a hearing or speech disability are able to make relay calls. This is not a translation service – both parties must speak Spanish, and at least one party must have a hearing or speech disability.

Speech-to-Speech (STS): 1-877-627-3848. STS allows a person who has difficulty speaking or being understood on the phone to communicate using his or her own voice or voice synthesizer. The relay communications assistant voices your words so that the other person on the call can understand them, and the other person speaks directly to you.

Text-Telephone (TTY): 1-800-627-3529. This service allows a person who is deaf, deafblind, or speech disabled to use a TTY to communicate with the other person on the call.

Video Relay Service (VRS): VRS allows a person who uses American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate over the phone. The VRS user connects to the relay communications assistant via an Internet-enabled device with a video camera. The communications assistant relays the conversation back and forth between the parties – in ASL with the VRS user and by voice with the called party. Go to: www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/video-relay-services.

Voice Carry Over (VCO): 1-877-627-3024. VCO allows a person with a hearing disability, but who wants to use his or her own voice, to speak directly to the other party. The communications assistant then types the other party's response, which is displayed on the VCO user's text telephone.

Important Info About the Relay

Emergency Assistance: TTY callers should dial 9-1-1 directly in an emergency. All 9-1-1 centers are equipped to handle TTY calls. Minnesota Relay can process emergency calls, but this may delay the response to your call.

Filing a Complaint: Email your complaint to mn.relay@state.mn.us or call 1-800-657-3775. When filing your complaint please provide: date and time of the relay call, calling from and to phone numbers, CA's identification number and the nature of your complaint.

You may also file a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission:

- www.fcc.gov/complaints
- Voice: 1-888-225-5322
- TTY: 1-888-835-5322
- ASL via VP: 1-844-432-2275

Telephone Equipment Distribution

The TED Program provides free specialized telecommunications equipment to income eligible Minnesotans who are having trouble using the telephone due to a hearing, speech, or physical disability. For more information on the TED Program:

- mn.gov/dhs/ted-program
- Voice: 1-800-657-3663
- TTY: 1-888-206-6555
- ASL via VP: 1-866-635-008