

IN THE LOOP

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2023

gardonville
cooperative telephone association

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800 Central Ave N, Brandon, MN
410 30th Ave E 106, Alexandria MN
Office: (320) 834-5151
Toll Free: (888) 236-3574
Help Desk: (320) 834-5155
Fax: (320) 524-2785
Email: hello@gardonville.net
Hours: Monday-Friday
8:00 am-4:30 pm

www.gctel.com



Gardonville is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Two Grants Awarded FOR AREAS IN DOUGLAS COUNTY

On June 28th, Governor Tim Walz and Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan announced another round of Border to Border Grant recipients. Gardonville applied for two grants and won both! 214+ households in the "Buckskin" project and 122+ households in the "Carlos" project will be getting fiber-optic connectivity.

The entire Gardonville team works hard to bring these unserved areas high-speed broadband while continuing our fiber upgrade in our cooperative area. We're very grateful to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development for this win for our community!



Hey Dave

BY DAVE WOLF, CEO/GM

Hey Dave, How is the 2023 Construction Season Going?

Our “fiber--optic” construction season has been going well. We entered 2023 with a detailed construction plan, our warehouses were filled with construction inventory, our contractors were lined up and financing was figured out. We started digging around April 24th, and the dry summer that followed was favorable for construction.

What are Some of the Challenges?

The cost of doing anything is going up by the month. Fuel, labor, cable, trucks, tractors, you name it. Everything costs more. Interest rates are much higher as well. Our dollar doesn't go nearly as far in 2023, so we must be extra careful with our investments.

We don't enter a season with one large project. We have dozens of smaller and mid-sized projects in the hopper. Each project has its own unique challenges. River, wetland, railroad, bike trail, pipeline, power, roadway, and sewer crossings may each require their own permit or easement process. Sprinkle in road projects, roundabout projects, ditching, or other public works projects, add in other utility projects, top it off with new housing developments and other private projects, it gives you an idea of how many things need to be considered before the first foot of cable gets plowed. Many of our projects are in a design phase for up to three years before we pull the trigger.

Our construction season is five to seven months long. Having limited time to get our work done also adds to the challenge.

How do Projects Get Decided?

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 through our gctel.com/myfiber webpage, gopher chews and other cable cut damage also impacts the ranking process.

Are Gophers Really a Problem?

Yes! You can help by encouraging your township to raise gopher bounties or create a unified bounty rate across the townships in Douglas County. We seem to get more “rodent chews” in the Ida, Moe and LaGrand townships. Keep in mind, Gardonville will match your township gopher bounty! Some trappers generate an extra \$2,000 per year by trapping gophers in our co-op area. Call our office for more details.

What's in Store for 2024?

Gardonville was recently awarded two “Border to Border” grants by the state of Minnesota. Those dollars will help us bring fiber-optic broadband to over 336 homes around Carlos and rural areas to the west of Carlos between Lake Miltona and Lake Carlos. Keep an eye on our website for details.

How Can I Help?

I mentioned our gctel.com/myfiber webpage earlier. It's a good place to learn about progress with existing projects, proposed projects, or to let us know you'd like your neighborhood to be constructed. Also, if you are having trouble with your broadband connection, please let us know. Typically, the culprit is poor performance from the router inside your home. Consider checking out our Whole Home WiFi service. For \$9.95 per month, we'll install (for free) equipment that ensures WiFi coverage throughout your home. We'll monitor it, keep it updated and repair it if your WiFi is not working.

Thank you for sending me this question! As always, I am interested to hear from our patrons. Have a question? Send an email to heydave@gardonville.net



Child Care Assistant

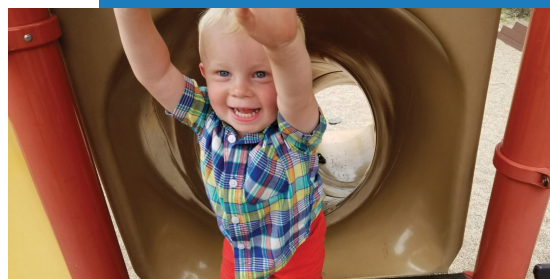
LITTLE PEEPS DAYCARE IS HIRING!

Our goal is to enhance the lives of every child that attends Little Peeps by encouraging learning, creativity, physical activity, and free play. The Child Care Assistant position has consistent day shift hours, Monday-Friday and all training will be provided.

Apply at: gctel.com/about-us/careers

Essential Responsibilities:

- Maintain a safe and nurturing play environment
- Monitor children during activities and free play and interact with them to enhance their learning
- Prepare and serve meals
- Work with the director to maintain communication with parents
- Light cleaning throughout the day to keep areas sanitary and safe



Farewell, Summertime

We soaked up as much summer fun as we could. From an Outdoor Movie Night to Art in the Park, the Douglas County Fair, the Brandon Car Show and Youth Outdoor Activity Day, plus the Garfield, Brandon and Evansville parades.

2024 Phone Book Info

LIST YOUR BUSINESS

Work has begun on the 2024 Vikingland Regional Directory. Pinnacle Publishing will serve as Gardonville's publisher. Pinnacle Publishing representatives will be contacting area business customers regarding Yellow Page listings in the following months.

If you have not been contacted in prior years regarding your business listing, please call our office and we will ensure a sales representative contacts you.

CHECK YOUR LISTING

If you have telephone service with Gardonville, please check your current listing in the Vikingland Regional Directory. If you would like to make any changes, fill out the following form and send it back to our office at 800 Central Ave, Brandon, MN 56315 before October 13, 2023.

LIST YOUR CELL

If you have a landline number with us, you have the option to list your cell phone number in our directory for just \$1.00 a month. Call (320) 834-5151 to get in our 2024 edition of the Vikingland Regional Directory.



USE OUR DIRECTORY

Accuracy cannot be ensured on listings in any of the directories you may receive from other companies. However, our directory has been manually proofed in-house to ensure accuracy of our members' information. For this reason, we encourage you to use the Vikingland Regional Directory.



Calling all Snow Birds!

Gardonville offers a seasonal disconnect option for those who escape to a warmer climate during the winter. For under \$5.00 per month you can suspend your internet service for up to a year. Simply call or text (320) 524-2211 and we'll have it done the same day you request it.

DIRECTORY LISTING Print how your directory listing should appear in the phone book.

DIRECTORY ADDRESS Print how your directory address should appear in the phone book.

TELEPHONE NUMBER Enter your Gardonville telephone number.

NFL Red Zone

If you're a die-hard fan and want to see every touchdown, interception and fumble, then the NFL RedZone package is definitely for you. It's the "red meat" for NFL fans. Call or text our office at (320) 524-2211 to get it added to your Stream TV service for just \$49.95 for the NFL season.



Brain Buster

What is it called when an impersonator sends an email pretending to be a reputable company to trick people into revealing personal information like passwords and credit card numbers?

Answer

Name - Please Print

July/Aug Brain Buster

On average, what do Americans do 22 times per day? Open the fridge

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

Credit & Disconnect Guidelines

Gardonville Cooperative Telephone Association values our subscribers. Your business is important to us. As with any business, NSF checks and non-payment accounts are difficult situations and must be carefully monitored so all subscribers are treated fairly and consistently. Gardonville has adopted the following guidelines which may be modified as necessary to comply with Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and/or public law:

Monthly bills are mailed each month and are due by the 15th of the month. Payment in full is expected in our business office by the due date each and every month.

A deposit is required from any subscriber who has not established satisfactory credit/payment history with a utility company in the last six months. The deposit is held until the subscriber has established a satisfactory credit/payment history with Gardonville, at which time the deposit is applied as a credit to the subscribers' account with interest.

Satisfactory credit/payment history is defined as one year of consistent and complete monthly payments.

If payment has not been received, a **FINAL NOTICE** message will be printed on the bill statement advising the subscriber that unless payment in full is received on the past due balance or other suitable arrangement(s) are made with our office before the time of disconnection; the subscriber's services will all be subject to disconnection. This will be the only notice given before disconnection of some or all services.

Gardonville is willing to work with our subscribers to establish suitable payment arrangements, because of an emergency or who cannot pay in full. Suitable payment arrangements are not intended to exceed a limited time period or be allowed more than two times in a calendar year. The account

will become subject to disconnection if the scheduled payments are not received.

Disconnection may also occur when a subscriber issues a NSF check. The subscriber will be mailed a notice of receipt of the NSF check. The subscriber will have five business days to cover the check and NSF check charge with cash. If payment has not been received, the subscriber's account will be subject to disconnection.

Disconnection will not occur on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, but will occur on the next business day.

Once service is disconnected, payment in full along with the reconnect and late fees must be paid before service is reconnected.

If the disconnected non-pay account has not been reconnected or paid after ten days, it becomes a permanent disconnect, removing the telephone number from the directory, services from locations, closing the account and turning the bill over to a collection agency.

If the subscriber wishes to reconnect after ten days, a new application must be completed, the old bill paid in full along with the service charges for a new subscriber and a deposit before service will be reinstated.

Service charges, as listed in the Cooperative's tariff and approved by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, are assessed a reconnection fee for each service and/or upon the receipt of a NSF check.

Subscribers must have established a satisfactory credit/payment history before additional services or features are provided.

Financial assistance programs are available. Learn more at:
gctel.com/financial-assistance-programs