

IN THE LOOP

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2024



gardonville
cooperative telephone association

In This Issue

- Scholarships 2
- Financial Assistance 2
- Business Profile 3
- Do Not Call Registry 3
- Jingle Bells Recap 4
- CPNI 4
- Plan Ahead for Trapping Gophers 4

Fishing for the Cure

JOIN US ON THE ICE ON FEBRUARY 17TH

In 2006, a small team of Alexandria Industries employees whose loved-ones lost their battle with cancer, created a fun, family friendly ice fishing tournament to raise money for the American Cancer Society. The first "Fishing for the Cure" tournament hosted 112 contestants, netted \$620, and all the money raised was donated to the ACS's Relay For Life.

As the years passed, the tournament grew, bringing together people from across Minnesota, and beyond. In 2023, the tournament had 1,564 in attendance and raised a record \$125,000!

Fishing for the Cure is just one of the many community events that Gardonville participates in as a way to give back. We'll see you on the ice on Saturday, February 17!



Tickets & Info: fishingforthecure.net



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.

Supporting Higher Education

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

As your local communications service provider, we are proud to offer scholarship opportunities to graduating high school seniors whose family is a subscribing **cooperative member**. Here are the scholarship opportunities:

FRS Scholarships

The Foundation For Rural Service (FRS) Scholarship Foundation annually awards scholarships to an exceptional group of rural students for their first year of college or vocational school. FRS has awarded over \$1 million in scholarships since its inception; empowering rural students throughout the country to advance their communities with invaluable skill sets and experiences.

To apply, contact your high school counselor or go to www.frs.org for information and to apply. These applications may require the signature of the CEO/General Manager of Gardonville. Please plan to obtain the signature in advance of the deadline due to possible scheduling conflicts. **Applications are due by February 16, 2024.**

MTA Scholarship

The Minnesota Telecom Alliance Foundation will award \$1,000-\$2,000 scholarships to high school seniors. To be eligible, applicants must be attending post secondary education at either a college, university or technical college, be a Minnesota resident and the applicant's family must be a subscribing cooperative member of Gardonville.

A telecom alliance panel reviews each application and selects the finalists based on applicants' grades, academic achievements and extra-curricular activities. Preference to receive the scholarships is given to students who have an interest in telecommunications technology and rural communities.

Contact your school counselor to receive an application. **Applications must be submitted to Gardonville by the end of February (the exact date has not yet been released).**



Financial Assistance Programs

MONTHLY DISCOUNTS ON YOUR PHONE & INTERNET BILL

Lifeline Program

Lifeline is a federal program that lowers the monthly cost of phone and internet service. Eligible consumers can get up to \$9.25 off the cost of phone, internet, or bundled services. Go to lifelinesupport.org to see if you qualify.

ACP Program

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) helps low income households pay for internet service. The Affordable Connectivity Program is administered by USAC with oversight from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). If your household is eligible, you can receive up to a \$30 per

Business Profile

ALEX VIKING TOWING

For over 30 years, Alex Viking Towing has been in operation. Since its inception, Bill was the face behind the business, until two years ago when he hung up his safety vest in exchange for the retired life. At that time, Luke Larson, who was currently employed at AVT, along with AJ Smith took over ownership. Though some things have changed over the years, their goal remains the same,

"Take good care of motorists and insurance companies."

Luke, AJ and their staff of three full-time employees keep busy, especially during our unpredictable Minnesota winter months, averaging 10-15 "winch outs" per day. Alex Viking Towing also offers 24x7 roadside emergency services, unlocks, tire changes, accidents, long distance towing and jump-starts. They also take time to do extensive training with their staff to prevent vehicles from getting damaged while they work.

In the summer of 2023, they opened a second location in Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

Staying true to their local roots, AVT is a proud sponsor of the DATA Trail. They also support the Car Care Program by donating a portion of their time when they do towing for the program. The Car Care Program provides safe, reliable cars and training to those in need so they can gain independence and get to and from work.



For prompt, fast and fair service contact Alex Viking Towing at 320-763-6738. Pro Tip: save their number in your phone so you're prepared if you ever need their services! For other inquires, email them at avtowing@outlook.com.

Do Not Call Registry

A national Do Not Call Registry has been established to address unwelcome telemarketing calls. The registry applies to all telemarketers with the exception of businesses you have an existing relationship with, certain non-profit groups and political organizations.

Consumers can register their home phone number, including wireless numbers, by calling: 1.888.382.1222 (TTY call 1.866.290.4236) or at their website: www.donotcall.gov. To register by phone you must call from the number you wish to register.

The Do Not Call Registry will be effective within 31 days of your registration and will remain on it unless the number is disconnected. You can also remove your name from the list at any time by calling toll free 1.888.382.1222 from the phone number you want removed.

Phone Books Coming Soon!

The 2024 Vikingland Regional Directory will be in your mailbox soon. Please remember to recycle your old phone book!

month discount on your internet service.

If you are currently enrolled in the Lifeline Program, you do not have to apply again for the ACP. You can apply your Lifeline and ACP benefit to the same or separate services. Please reach out to Gardonville directly to enroll in ACP at (320) 524-2211.

Learn more about ACP on our website: www.gctel.com/notices-policies/acp



Plan Ahead for Trapping Gophers

Gophers. They might look harmless, but did you know they cause extensive and expensive damage to buried fiber-optic cable? A gopher chew cut costs upwards of \$20,000 and 15-24 hours to repair. You can help reduce the amount of service interrupting gopher cuts by trapping them, and earn an average of \$7 per gopher through our Gopher Bounty Match Program!

To qualify, gophers must be caught in our cooperative service area. Eligible townships include: Brandon, Erdahl, Elk Lake, Evansville, Ida, LaGrand, Leaf Valley, Lund, Millerville, Moe, Pelican Lake and Urness.



Brain Buster

How many megabits per second is data transferred over 1 gig internet?

Answer

Name - Please Print

Nov/Dec Brain Buster

What can be driven although it doesn't have wheels, sliced but stays whole?

A Golf Ball

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

Jingle Bells Recap

With your very generous donations, the Jingle Bells Telethon raised over \$108,000 that will help nearly 900 local families! Gardonville sponsors the event by helping televise the five-hour live TV show.

Pictured is Gardonville employee, Jayme and her daughter assembling food baskets that get delivered in December.



Customer Proprietary Network Information

In order to help protect your privacy regarding Customer Proprietary Network Information (CPNI), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has taken measures to strengthen the rules of providing CPNI to our customer(s). In order for Gardonville to be in compliance with the FCC rules for CPNI, we require customer(s) fill out a form and return it to our office.

According to the FCC rules, we are only able to discuss account information with the person(s) listed on the account or proven power of attorney. If account information is requested by a customer over the phone and the call is initiated by the customer, that customer will need to provide a previously set personal identification number (PIN) in order for our customer service representative to supply the requested information. The PIN cannot be historical background information that would be available to someone else, such as the last four digits of your social security number, mother's maiden name, your address, etc. If this PIN is not supplied and back-up questions cannot be answered, there are only three ways for the customer to obtain this requested detail:

- Hang up and have the CSR call back the telephone number of record.
- Have the CSR mail the requested information to the address of record.
- The authorized customer on the account must come to the telephone office and show a valid government issued photo ID.

As mandated by the FCC, these rules are for the protection of your privacy as they ensure that no one other than the authorized person is receiving account information and making account changes.

Due to the FCC rule revisions, you will also receive a "Notice of Change/Activity" form at the address of record from our office anytime changes are made to your account such as an address change, password change, back-up question used for lost or forgotten password, etc. The notice will inform you of such change or activity and if this was not made by an authorized person, please contact our office immediately.

Thank you for your assistance in ensuring we are compliant with the FCC rules for your CPNI protection. If you have any questions regarding our procedures for CPNI compliance, please contact our business office at (320) 834-5151.

CPNI Opt-Out

You have the right to opt-out of receiving internal marketing from us. If you choose to opt-out, please return a written notification or contact our office to request a form to opt-out. Once you opt-out, you will remain on this list until otherwise requested. Please note information published in the telephone directory is not considered CPNI. You need to respond only if you choose the opt-out method.