

704 East Main Street  
Lake Mills  
Iowa 50450



*Annual  
Report*

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Winnebago Cooperative Telecom Association

September 2018

## IT'S TIME FOR THE WCTA Annual Meeting

It's September, which means the kids are back in school, the temperature is starting to get a little cooler, and the WCTA Annual meeting is just around the corner! The Cooperative will be holding its 68th Annual Meeting on Thursday, September 20th, at the Lake Mills High School gym beginning at 6:30p.m.

During the meeting, members will hear reports from President Mark R. Johnson and General Manager Mark Thoma that will bring you up to speed on what your Cooperative has been up to this past year. It's also a chance for you to learn more about local and national telecommunications issues and see what the future holds for WCTA and its members.

A total of four 43in 4K TVs will be given away at the meeting. One for the mail ballot prize and three Grand Prize Attendance Prizes. Cookies and refreshments will be served following the meeting.

The ballot, prize envelope, and attendance card will be sent in a separate mailing. **When completing your information, please note the following:**

- The Mail Ballot and included yellow return envelope must be returned together, in the designated envelope.
- The Attendance card should not be returned with the Mail Ballot. Please bring it to the meeting.

WCTA is YOUR Cooperative. Come to the meeting and find out what your Cooperative has been doing this past year and vote for your Directors. Please mark your calendar for September 20th. We hope to see you there!

### Entertainment Showcase

This year's entertainment will feature Gary Tyson who conducts a Comedy Variety show featuring comedy magic, musical comedy and stand up. Gary has toured extensively throughout the United States and Canada and is celebrating 45 years as a full-time entertainer, including appearances at Hollywood's Magic Castle, Nashville's Grand Ole Opry and thousands of venues coast to coast. Laughter truly is the best medicine!

We hope you'll join us for his performance!



# Be sure to VOTE!

*Watch for the ballots and prize cards  
which will be mailed to you next week.*

# Directors' Report

Our thanks go out to all the WCTA members and our employees for another fantastic year!

At WCTA our mission is to provide our members innovative products, exceptional value, and first-class customer service through positive and dedicated employees, while sharing our successes with our members and the communities we serve.

The seven-member Board is elected from the membership to set policy and govern the Cooperative.

**Dividend Payment:** Earlier this year the Board approved a \$500,000 dividend payout. The amount represents 6.48% of the remaining allocated dividends set aside for the years 1997-2000. Approximately 8,000 checks were issued in June.

**Industry Regulatory Update:** Net Neutrality rules were approved by the FCC in 2015. The intention was to keep the internet open and fair. Under the rules, internet service providers were required to treat all online content the same. They could not deliberately speed up or slow down traffic from specific websites or apps, nor could they put their own content at an advantage over rivals.

Recently the FCC repealed the net neutrality rules barring internet providers from blocking or slowing down access to online content. The FCC also eliminated a rule barring providers from prioritizing their own content. In the absence of FCC rules on these actions, providers will be required to publicly disclose any instance of blocking, throttling or paid prioritization. It will then be evaluated based on whether the activity is anti-competitive.



L to R: President Mark R. Johnson, Larry Foley, Vice-President Stephen Thorland, Jerry Ouverson; Secretary/Treasurer Mike Stensrud, Curt Helland, and Dale Meinders.

**Construction Updates:** As in past years, WCTA has continued its work to extend fiber optic delivered service to all locations within its serving area. 2018 projects included fiber optic installation in the urban communities of Conger, Emmons, Scarville, Twin Lakes and a portion of Northwood with the new fiber drop count increased by another 830 units. Having completed the construction planned in those communities, conversions of subscriber locations from old copper to new fiber optic service is on-going. In addition to this year's urban work, WCTA also added an 82 mile "express" fiber project to augment fiber counts to interconnect exchanges within its service area and work towards creation of a diverse path back to upstream providers. Looking ahead to 2019, plans include completion of fiber construction in all its remaining copper served areas and officially achieve its goal of being a 100% fiber optic service provider.

## WCTA Employees

*WCTA Employees are committed to providing the best service possible to our members. Our employees live and work in the communities we serve. They volunteer for fire and ambulance departments, city councils, school and civic organizations. Each one of our employees delivers quality customer care and we appreciate their service.*

Arends, Ron	Technician	Lucas, Jason	Business Systems Specialist
Arneson, David	CAD Operator	Miller, Randy	Network Operations Technician
Belica, Kris	Technician	Nitcher, Dylan	Technician
Boysen, Ross	Technician	Nitcher, Tyler	Account Representative
Buhmann, Heather	Account Representative	Obermeyer, Heidi	Account Representative
Caylor, Clay	Technician	Pederson, Jeff	Business Solutions
Chodur, Deb	Account Representative	Peterson, Katie	Account Representative
Ducommun, Chad	Operations Assistant	Pins, Marty	Controller
Eastvold, Tom	Technician	Piper, Mike	Network Operations Technician
Eaton, Chris	Inventory/Purchasing Coordinator	Renneker, Rob	Operations Manager
Fritz, Evan	Marketing Coordinator	Rentz, Josh	Network Operations Technician
Hagen, Sarah	Accountant	Ringham, Jayne	Customer Service Manager
Hanna, John	Construction Foreman	Savoy, Steve	Network Administrator
Hanson, Tess	Marketing	Sletten, Neal	Engineering Manager
Henderson, Melanie	Account Representative	Smith, Jamie	Assistant Engineer
Holtan, Jason "Kirby"	Technician	Tegland, Travis	Technician
Johnson, Aaron	Office Network Administrator	Theisen, Austin	Technician
Johnson, Greg	Technician	Thoma, Mark	General Manager
Joynt, Ryan	Operations Assistant	Thompson, Angie	Account Representative
Kesler, Ryan	Network Operations Technician	Thompson, Scott	Construction
Klebsch, Bob	Plant Administrator	Thoreson, Eric	Accountant
Kloster, Chad	Field Operations	Walz, Gene	Network Operations Technician
Kroger, John	Regulatory Manager		



# General Manager's Report

by Mark Thoma

Just like that, the 2017-2018 telecom year has come and gone. The Director's report updated you on a couple of important topics so I encourage you to read that section. I've got a few additional items to cover so read on for a quick review of what's been happening at WCTA.

**Remodel Update:** If you've stopped in our office at all over the last year you might have noticed a few changes to the inside and outside of our property. Now that we've torn down the wallpaper and re-carpeted the whole facility, we're replacing old desks with new standing desks to provide another option for employees to be healthy at work and replacing older partitions so that our Account Representatives have better access to our members that walk into our office. Starting earlier in the summer, we started to repaint and re-side some of our outside sheds to replace the fading yellow paint that you may have noticed as you drive by our office in Lake Mills.

**Fiber Conversion Update:** Over the past several years, WCTA has been working on converting customers from copper cable to newly placed fiber optic cable. Fiber optic cable has the advantage of allowing WCTA to offer higher bandwidth Broadband packages, improved digital TV services, and generally a better customer experience than with traditional copper cable facilities. The main benefit to fiber optic cable is its ability to provide much more flexibility in the services that can be offered due to the higher bandwidth rates that are unachievable with copper telecommunications plant.

During the 2018 construction season, WCTA has been plowing fiber optic cable in the communities of Emmons, Conger, Twin Lakes, Scarville, and a portion of Northwood. After the cable has been placed, fiber splicing, equipment placement, and provisioning of the new system will occur. Customer conversions to the new plant will start during the late fall to early winter months and will continue throughout the year.

**iWireless:** Earlier this year T-Mobile announced that it is accelerating its geographic expansion efforts in Iowa though a definitive agreement to acquire the remaining interest of Iowa Wireless ("iWireless") from Aureon. For WCTA, this was the best time for us to exit the wireless industry and sell our wireless assets to iWireless. T-Mobile has announced that all iWireless accounts must be switched over to a new carrier by September 30th, 2018.

**Cyber Security:** With more and more technology entering the home and with internet being one of our most highly-sought after products, something that is always at the forefront of WCTA's minds is how to protect ourselves and our members from potential threats. One of the most problematic elements of cybersecurity is the constantly evolving nature of security risks. Our technicians and staff are constantly monitoring our systems for threats to make sure our members are well protected, but be sure to be on the lookout yourself; don't click on any suspicious links or open and respond to emails asking for personal information. WCTA will never ask for personal information via email, we will always call and verify sensitive customer information over the phone.

# Annual Report

# 2017 Annual Meeting Minutes

The annual meeting of the Winnebago Cooperative Telecom Association was held at the High School Gym in Lake Mills, Iowa, on the 21st day of September 2017, at 6:30 p.m., pursuant to previous action of the Board of Directors fixing said place and time for holding the annual meeting and pursuant to notice.

The invocation was given by General Manager Mark Thoma, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The meeting was called to order by President Mark R. Johnson who presided during the meeting. Stephen Thorland, Vice-President, acted as Secretary during the meeting and kept the minutes thereof.

There being a total membership of 7937 members and said members present in person being more than the 159 in number (a list of which is kept on file at the WCTA business office), the President declared a quorum for the lawful transaction of any business to come before the meeting.

President Johnson asked if there were any attendance ballots to turn in, and those ballots were collected. The ballots of those voting by mail were counted earlier in the day by the Inspectors of Election. All ballots turned in at the meeting were then delivered to the inspectors who proceeded to count them. President Johnson announced the Inspectors of Election committee members: Diane Miller, Ted Thompson, Sandy Skatter, Wayne Van Veldhuizen, Daryl Sherman, and Roger Solomonson.

A motion was duly made and seconded to waive the reading of the Notice of Annual Meeting. Motion carried.

A motion was duly made and seconded to waive the reading of the September 22, 2016, annual meeting of members' minutes. Motion carried.

A motion was duly made and seconded to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2016, annual meeting of members as presented. Motion carried.

The financial report of the previous year was then presented and read by the General Manager Mark Thoma.

A motion was duly made and seconded to accept the December 31, 2016, financial report. Motion carried.

President Johnson introduced the Board of Directors and Attorney to meeting attendees.

Jerry Fjeld of the Nominating Committee then presented and read the Nominating Committee report.

The Cooperative's General Manager, Mark Thoma, presented his annual report to the members.

The President then called on the Inspectors of Election committee for the Director's election results.

The Certificate of Inspectors of Election report was presented and read by Daryl Sherman, a member of the Inspectors of Election, certifying that the following members, having received the highest number of votes cast, have been duly elected directors of the Cooperative to hold office for the term specified or until their successors shall have been elected and qualified.

Three-year term:	Curt Helland
	Jerry Ouverson

There being no further business to come before the meeting, upon motion duly made and seconded and carried, the meeting was adjourned.

Acting Secretary: Stephen Thorland

President: Mark R. Johnson



# Annual Meeting Program

**Thursday Night - September 20th  
Lake Mills High School Gym  
6:30 P.M.**

*Call to Order*

*Roll Call ..... Mark R. Johnson*

*Opening of Business Meeting &*

*Announcement of Quorum*

*Secretary-Treasurer Report....Mark Thoma*

*Nominating Committee Report*

*Election of Directors*

*Manager's Report ..... Mark Thoma*

*Old and New Business*

*Adjournment*

*Entertainment*

*Prize Drawings*

## PRIZE DRAWINGS

**3** GRAND  
ATTENDANCE  
PRIZES



**43" TV'S**

## Look for your ATTENDANCE CARD

in the ballot mailing  
which will be sent soon.

***Bring the Attendance Card  
to the Annual Meeting!***

**Members Registering  
Before 6:30 P.M.  
and  
Staying for the Meeting  
Receive:**

- ✓ ***One \$20 Meat Certificate***
- ✓ ***Attendance Gift***

**MAIL  
BALLOT PRIZE**



**43" TV**