

Scholarship Winners

West River Cooperative Telephone Company (WRCTC) and Grand Electric Cooperative teamed together for the 12th year to award \$500 scholarships to graduating seniors from area school districts. Winners have been awarded their certificates at the Academic Awards programs at their respective schools.

Graduating seniors receiving the \$500 scholarships are:
 Newell School District – Dakota McTaggart, son of Lance and Colleen McTaggart, Newell;
 Lemmon School District – Lyndse Baumgarten, daughter of Chad and Celena Baumgarten, Lemmon;
 Bison School District – Megan Serr, daughter of Kelly and Barbie Serr, Bison;
 Faith School District – Wyatt Lutz, son of Dave and Kitty Lutz, Faith and Harding Co. School District – Ckyler Floyd, son of Ron and Cindy Floyd, Ludlow.

WRCTC and Grand Electric sponsor this scholarship program to help serve as an investment in the economic future of our rural area. It is used to recognize and encourage the 456-2339 academic achievements of students.



Dakota McTaggart
Newell School



Lyndse Baumgarten
Lemmon School



Megan Serr
Bison School



Wyatt Lutz
Faith School



Ckyler Floyd
Harding Co. School

Co-op Day for KIDS!

Friday, June 21 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at WRCTC and Grand Electric!

All children are welcome to join us for a fun-filled day of learning about cooperatives, playing games, jumping in a bounce house, safety demonstrations and MUCH MORE! FREE LUNCH INCLUDED!



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inside this issue

Manager's Column	2 & 4
Retirement Open House.....	2
Lifeline Information.....	3
Promotion.....	3
Call Before You Dig.....	4
New Members.....	4
Find Your Number	4

Congratulations to these outstanding students. WRCTC and Grand Electric wish you the best of luck!



The Manager's Column
by Jerry Reisenauer

Access Recovery Charge to Increase

Over the last few days we have seen, once again, just how forgiving Mother Nature can be. After several months of drought, almost every part of our service area got a three-day rain. Most reports of precipitation I have heard are two inches or more. While that will not guarantee a great year for our farmers and ranchers, it certainly will get the crops, grass 244-5522 and hay off to a good start and hopefully there will be more rains to come.

In April's Manager's Column, I tried to outline how we generate revenue here at West River. There are several integral parts to the revenue stream that provide not only revenue that is used to maintain our existing system, but also provide an ongoing revenue stream. This stream will assure the necessary funds are available to retire the debt that we have acquired, and will acquire, to complete the replacement of the existing copper-based plant with a new fiber-based system. I have had a few calls from members who question the need to replace the existing system. The existing copper-based system was installed between

1950 and 1975. The system was expected to have a 20 to 25 374-3233 year lifespan. Through a very aggressive maintenance program we have extended the life of the existing plant to over 30 years. While the existing copper system is still suitable to carry voice-grade calls, the capacity to carry data needed for businesses and Internet Protocols is extremely limited. In 2003, we began a construction program to move to a fiber-based system that is capable of providing the bandwidth (speed) that our members will need today and in the future. Over the past several years, we have constructed almost 3,000 miles of fiber backbone. We currently have approximately 650 788-2839 miles of plant that has reached the end of its useful life and needs replaced. Over the next four to five years, we will complete the installation of the new plant and will have a state-of-the-art Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) system to all West River members.

Now, back to the main question: How do we generate the revenue needed to service the debt that we have

(continued on page 4)



Retirement Open House for *Gladys Jackson*

You're invited to celebrate this special occasion to honor Gladys for her 36.5 years of service to WRCTC and Grand Electric! Come enjoy a piece of cake before attending Grand Electric's Annual Meeting!



**June 7, 2013 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Grand Electric Employee Room, Bison, SD**

Lifeline: Affordable Telephone Service for Income-Eligible Consumers

Background

Lifeline is a government benefit program that provides discounts on monthly telephone service for eligible low-income consumers to help ensure they have the opportunities and security that telephone service affords, including being able to connect to jobs, 375-3470 family, and 911 services. Lifeline is supported by the Federal Universal Service Fund (USF).

What Benefits are Available Under the Lifeline Program?

Lifeline assistance lowers the cost of basic monthly local telephone service. An eligible customer will receive a discount of \$9.25 per month. Federal rules prohibit eligible low-income consumers from receiving more than ONE Lifeline service per household. That is, eligible low-income consumers may receive a Lifeline discount on either a wireline or a wireless service, but may not receive a Lifeline discount on both services at the same time. Additionally, only ONE Lifeline service may be obtained per household. "Household" is defined as any individual or group of individuals who live together at the same address as one economic unit. An "economic unit" is defined as "all adult individuals contributing to and sharing in the income and expenses of a household." Lifeline support is available to eligible low-income consumers living in group living facilities. Lifeline applicants may demonstrate when initially enrolling in the program that any other Lifeline recipients residing at their residential address are part of a 866-4663 separate household.

Lifeline can also include Toll Limitation Service, which enables a telephone subscriber to limit the amount of long distance calls that can be made from a telephone.

Link Up provides eligible low-income consumers living on Tribal lands with a one-time discount of up to \$100 on the initial installation or activation of a wireline or wireless telephone for the primary residence. Tribal Lands Link Up also allows consumers to pay the remaining amount that they owe on a deferred schedule, interest-free. Federal rules prohibit eligible low-income consumers from receiving more than ONE Link Up discount at a primary residence. Eligible consumers may be eligible for Link Up again only after moving to a new primary residence. Link Up support is only offered to carriers who are building out infrastructure on Tribal lands so not all carriers may discount their activation fee. Enhanced benefits are provided to low-income consumers who live on a federally recognized Indian Tribe's reservation.

How Do I Qualify for Lifeline Discounts?

The Lifeline program is available to eligible low-income consumers in 456-2733 every state, territory, commonwealth, and on Tribal lands. You must be eligible to enroll. To participate in the program, consumers must either have an income that is at or below 135% of the federal Poverty Guidelines or participate in one of the following assistance programs:

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamps or SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8)
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- National School Lunch Program's Free Lunch Program;
- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
- Tribally-Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TTANF)
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)
- Head Start (if income eligibility criteria are met)
- State assistance programs (if applicable).

When you qualify for any of the above programs, you must complete a Lifeline Assistance Application. For more information, please contact our office at 605-244-5213 or 777.

Promotion



Pam Kolb was recently promoted to the Administrative Assistant/Benefits Administrator position. Pam began her career with WRCTC and Grand Electric on May 1, 1995 as a Customer 257-2778 Service Representative.

Pam's new job responsibilities include providing secretarial and administrative assistance for Manager Reisenauer, preparing reports for board meetings, making travel arrangements for employees and directors and coordinating human resource activities.

Pam and her husband, Jeff, farm and ranch southwest of Bison. They have two daughters, Jennifer and Alyssa and her husband Marty and one son Eric and his wife Liz. They have five grandchildren: Blake, Eli, Emma, Jaden and Addison. In her spare time, Pam enjoys spending time with family, 375-3791 traveling and gardening. Congratulations Pam!

New WRCTC Members

Bison, Meadow, Sorum

Buer, Zack 788-2826
Shinabarger, Terry 244-5639

Buffalo, Camp Crook

D & M Water Service 375-3682
Lermeney, Tex & Ashley 375-3727
Moseley, Scott & Holly 797-4552
Penn, Desirae 375-3773
Schumacher, Kelli 375-3499
Steffan, Charles & Annette 375-3944

Lemmon

Anderson Western 374-4164
Drayton, Dennis & Lynda 374-4305
Ginther, Weston & Katelin 374-4303
Goldsmith, Chris & Jennifer 374-4304
Hull, Daryl & Patricia 374-4302

Newell

Bonnet, Tyrel 456-3419
Cox, Kyle & Desiree 456-3588
Kautz, Mike 456-3675

**WRCTC will be closed
Thursday, July 4th
in observance of
Independence Day.**

Find Your Phone Number

Ten telephone numbers were hidden in the last newsletter. Those members who hunted and found their number were: Roger Gunderson, Buffalo; Roland Hoffman, Lemmon; Scott Julius, Vale; Benjamin Keller, Newell and Todd Lundberg, Meadow. Hidden in this issue are ten new numbers. If you find your number, all you have to do is notify our office. The \$10 will then be deducted off your telephone bill. New connect numbers do not count. **Deadline is June 20, 2013.**

**\$10
bill credit**

Manager's Column (cont.)

and will acquire to pay for this? Presently, we have a local service charge of \$14 per month for residential service, which generates approximately \$650,000 per year. The revenue from those who use our system and from the Universal Service Fund (USF), which includes funds for companies like West River that serve areas with high costs and are sparsely populated, was approximately \$9 million. So as you can see, the bulk of our revenue is generated by those who use our system and the USF. In November 2011, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) made a ruling that over the next few years they were going to move more of the network cost to those who own the network. To do this, they have set benchmarks for local service rates and have implemented an Access Recovery Charge (ARC) that we will be required to charge our members if we want to retain our USF funding. This charge is \$0.50 per month for residential consumers and \$1.00 per month for multi-line business customers. We implemented this charge on our consumers' bills on January 1, 2013. This charge increases \$0.50 per month for residential customers and \$1.00 per month for multi-line business customers each year for the next five years. Therefore, effective July 1, 2013, residential consumers will see their ARC increase by \$0.50 per month and multi-line business customers will see an increase of \$1.00 per month. This will be the second step of the six step increase. Every July for the next four years, the ARC 374-5337 charge will increase.

If you have any questions regarding this charge, please contact our office at 777 or 605-244-5213. I will be visiting with you next month.

**ALWAYS
CALL
BEFORE YOU
DIG**

