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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2014

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Serve on the Nominations & Election Committee

As a member of West Central Telephone Association, you are eligible to serve on the Nominations & Election Committee. Members of the committee are responsible for appointing qualified candidates to run for directorship, collecting ballots, and verifying election results at the annual meeting held in May.

If you are interested in serving as a committee member, please contact West Central at 218-837-5151 before January 17, 2014. You may also express your interest by emailing tonym@wcta.net.



West Central
Telephone Association
We Connect You.

Wolf Lake Fiber Project Wraps Up

We are pleased to announce that we are nearing completion of our Fiber to the Home (FTTH) project in Wolf Lake, with only the actual cutover to the new fiber-optic network remaining. Once this is complete, members in the Wolf Lake community will have access to the many valuable benefits of fiber including:

- Greater reliability of services
- Faster Internet speeds
- Availability of West Central's TV service
- Money-saving triple play bundles with Internet, phone, and TV
- Enhanced home values and faster home sales that can come from having fiber access



Our FTTH network projects are a huge undertaking for West Central Telephone and most importantly, an investment in the quality of our present and future communications services. Fiber is the only technology that delivers enough bandwidth—reliably and at a low enough cost—to meet the ever-increasing demand for more robust Internet, TV, and phone service as well as other online applications.

Sign up for West Central's TV service today to make your at-home entertainment experience even more entertaining. Our TV service has an expanded channel lineup with HD available, Whole-Home DVR service, Caller ID Screen PoP, crystal-clear picture clarity, and no weather interruptions. Plus, you'll earn capital credits based on your service. Those wishing to add West Central's TV service should call today and get placed on the schedule as it's a first come, first serve basis at this time.

Call 800-945-2163 to order, or go online at www.wcta.net to choose the best money-saving package for your family.



Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics

From February 7-24, the forecast is for snow, ice, and cool competition in Russia. The Sochi 2014 Olympic Games will hold events in Biathlon, Bobsled, Skeleton, Curling, Ice Hockey, Luge, Figure Skating, Short Track Speed Skating, Speed Skating, Alpine Skiing, Cross Country Skiing, Nordic Combined Skiing, Ski Jumping, Freestyle Skiing, and Snowboarding.

You can cheer on the U.S. Olympic team via your www.WatchTVEverywhere.com account over the Internet or West Central's TV service. Impress your friends and family with your knowledge of Olympic trivia found on www.sochi2014.com. Even if you're an armchair athlete, you just might get a gold medal in Olympic trivia!



Boost your Broadband

When you use the Internet, you are uploading and downloading data. This is known as your broadband usage. Factors affecting your broadband usage include the number of devices online, the amount of time online, and what type of online activities you do.

Some online activities require more broadband usage than others. For example, video streaming takes up much more data than browsing a simple webpage.

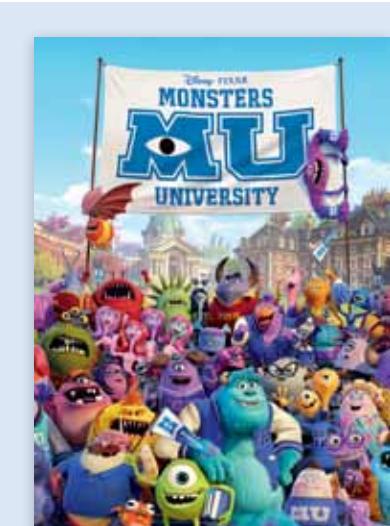


To get an idea of the varying amounts of broadband usage for different online activities, take a look at the list below. Each example requires about one GB:

- 68 YouTube videos
- 293 digital songs (mp3 files)
- 512 digital photos
- 1 hour of standard definition TV
- 7 minutes of high definition TV
- 1 hour of a movie

Some Internet providers meter broadband services and impose data caps on their Internet plans. This means their subscribers are being charged overage fees when their broadband usage goes over a certain limit. THIS IS NOT THE CASE WITH WEST CENTRAL TELEPHONE. WE PROVIDE UNLIMITED INTERNET PLANS. Our plans enable your household to download to your heart's content without ever worrying about your broadband usage.

If your family streams many movies and TV programs each month, often uses several devices simultaneously, or enjoys online gaming, you may want to boost your Internet speed. Now you can boost your upload speed from the standard 1 Mbps to 6 Mbps for an additional \$10 per month. If you are unsure of what plan is right for you, give us a call—we'll help you choose the right speed for your family.



Monsters University
Premiering February 21
starz

The early days of Mike and Sully—they meet at Monsters University, where everyone learns how to scare. But they weren't best friends yet, and team to compete in the Scare Games!

Visit starz.com for airdates/times. STARZ and related channels and service marks are the property of Starz Entertainment, LLC. Monsters University © Disney/Pixar. All Rights Reserved.

Color Contest Winners

Five fabulous artists placed first in their age division in the annual WCTA Holiday Coloring Contest. The winners include Sasha Kangas, Kaitlin Heller, Jolene Pickar, Gabrielle Hartley and Cory Kangas.

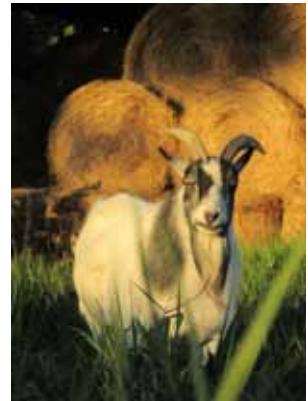
A heartfelt thanks to all of the schools, parents and children who participated and make this contest special for our kids!



2014 Winning Photo

Elizabeth Pierson of Sebeka submitted the winning photo featured on the cover of the 2014 WCTA Directory. Elizabeth's photo of the goat with the round bales stacked high behind it was so unique, and had such great lighting courtesy of the sun, it made for a very interesting cover. Elizabeth won \$200 for her winning entry.

There were many wonderful photos—all sent digitally or posted on our Facebook page, which made the viewing and production easier, but choosing the winning photo more difficult. Three mockups were made with photos submitted by Sara Olson, Heather Huwe, and Elizabeth Pierson placed in the cover layout, and after consideration by employees, Elizabeth was chosen as the winner. Thanks to all who participated in this year's contest!



Apply Now: Scholarships

As an investment in our youth, we're committed to the future of rural Minnesota. We're pleased to announce the following scholarship opportunities and invite all high school seniors to apply.

The FRS College Scholarship Program awards 30 scholarships in the amount of \$2,000 each to winning applicants across the nation, with a \$500 match by the sponsoring telco. By partnering with the FRS, West Central Telephone is able to make the scholarship program available to high school seniors in our area. **Applications for the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) Scholarship are due in the WCTA office by February 21, 2014.**

Students may also be eligible for four FRS Staurulakis Family Scholarships valued at \$5,000 each or two TMS Scholarships for \$1,500 each. Students who are majoring in math, science, engineering, or medicine are given preference for the FRS Staurulakis Family Scholarships.

For applications and guidelines, see your high school guidance counselor or download the application from the FRS website at <http://www.frs.org>.

Additionally, high school seniors can apply for West Central Telephone's Scholarship Program which will award up to eight high school seniors a scholarship in the amount of \$1,000.

The deadline for the WCTA Scholarship applications is April 7, 2014.

Our scholarship program has been established to encourage youth in our area to further their education after graduating from high school and is made possible through unclaimed capital credits checks. Because of our cooperative status, we are able to use these funds to benefit the scholarship program. At this time, there is over \$74,000 funding the scholarship program.



These scholarships are another example of a cooperative member-benefit, and as such, would like to see all high school seniors apply—there are typically only 18 to 20 applicants each year. The scholarship is not income or need-based, and although applicants should have at least a "C" GPA, they do not need to be top of their class. Simply complete the online application, write a brief essay on your chosen topic, and submit by the deadline. The scholarship can be found at www.wcta.net.

Remember, the deadline for the FRS scholarship is February 21, 2014, while the deadline for the WCTA scholarship is April 7, 2014. Please call Geri Salmela at 837-5151 or email your questions to geris@wcta.net.



Welcome, New Members

Aho, Marlin	538-5095
Aho, Tyrone	538-6054
Barrett, Mary	564-8370
Biksen, Esther	837-7695
Champagne, Lisa	472-3180
Dempsey, Dan	445-7961
Dickhausen, Shirley	564-0671
Etter, Zach.....	564-4265
Gray, Minnie	837-2460
Havnes, Joshua.....	564-7483
Hepola, Sarah	564-6763
Hrdlicka, Katrina	538-6069
Hub 71, Inc	837-2233
Hultgren, Carl	564-5653
Jacobson, Bruce	445-8334
Jenson, Michael	564-6008
Lowers, Kristi.....	472-6097
Mack, Conrad	837-6240
Maki, Naomi	538-6075
Makinen, Kenneth.....	538-6566
May, Julie	564-6147
Meech, Bethany	472-3463
Olson, Loretta.....	538-7842
Piri, Annette.....	837-5653
Pro Contractors, Inc	564-7704
Roiko, Brandon	564-6011
Sanders, Christine	564-6003
Shriver, Melissa.....	472-2900
Sinner, Bill.....	564-2283
Villarreal, Misty.....	564-0242
Weaver, Alan.....	445-2558
Weaver, Jolynn	564-8251
Wheatley, William.....	564-9796
White, Gene	445-3743

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: **AH Grafix, LLC**



Andrea Haverinen of Menahga is the owner and marketing engineer of a full service advertising agency that specializes in helping small businesses grow. She works with business owners who are passionate about their business, but lack the skills, time, or resources to create their own marketing materials. Marketing materials include things like logo designs, websites, social media, business cards, and other printed items.

Andrea was literally raised in her parents' home-based print shop, and she credits this upbringing for her interest in graphic design. She states, "After learning my mom's trade at her elbow, searching for artwork in the big clipart books, filing, customer service and answering phones, I attended Michigan Technological University and developed my own graphic design degree." After earning her bachelors degree, Andrea married her fiancé, Loren Haverinen, and the couple made their home in Menahga where Loren grew up. Prior to starting her own business, Andrea was employed by area newspapers Forum Communications and Marjon Printers. She then began freelancing her design skills to various print shops and local newspapers.



In early 2013, Andrea decided to rethink her business model, reaching out to ideal clients through speaking and attending chamber and similar type meetings. She's developed a proprietary system to help clients market their business faster than they would on their own. She provides her clients a consistent marketing message that effectively reaches their employees and ideal customers, because, let's face it—without customers, a business is simply out of business.

Soon to celebrate AH Grafix' one year anniversary, she credits part of her success with working hand-in-hand with Mark Hanson of West Central Economic Development Alliance (WCEDA). In fact, she feels that the mutually-beneficial working relationship with WCEDA has brought her more business than she could have imagined in her first year.

One of the challenges Andrea faces is working from home. Like many work-at-home moms, sometimes the family or household responsibilities interfere with the daily work schedule. However, one thing that is not an issue working from home is her broadband connection. "I fully appreciate how much of my work I am able to do from my own home because of WCTA's forward thinking in building their infrastructure. I COULD NOT do my work without West Central's awesome fast Internet connection. I spent a week in Silicon Valley, California, where I was unable to get connected to the Internet. With WCTA, I am able to design and send proofs via email, connect to my home computer when I'm away, and store my files "in the cloud" to share with other people."

If you would like help to realize the potential of your business through consistent and effective marketing, we urge you to give Andrea a call. You can reach her at 218-255-4130 or through email at andrea@ahgrafix.com.