



inter face

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2020

THIS ISSUE

- 02 Contest Winners Announced
- 02 What's New with West Central TV
- 03 Scholarship Opportunities
- 04 Spotlight: Freshwater Education District

Like to Join the Nominations & Election Committee?

As a member of West Central Telephone, 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 WCTA at 837-5151 before January 20.



Annual Meeting Date Set for May 11

The 70th Annual Meeting of the Members will take place May 11, 2020, once again at the Sebeka High School. After last year's proposed Bylaw changes were accepted at the annual meeting, there are some changes that will go into effect with this meeting.

All eligible members will receive a packet containing ballots, candidate bios and other pertinent information so that they are able to vote by mail whether they plan to attend the meeting or not. This will streamline the meeting as any ballots received in the mail will be tallied by the Nominations & Election Committee prior to the meeting. Members that choose to cast their ballots in person will have their ballots counted before finalizing the results at the meeting.

Members will elect two directors to serve for a term of three years. These positions represent Verndale and Wolf Lake, which are currently held by incumbents Dale Schmith and Harvey Aho. If you are interested in representing either Verndale or Wolf Lake, you should contact our office so that we can put you in touch with the members of the Nominations & Election Committee. To learn more about the Board of Directors, read Bylaw Articles III and IV beginning on page 29 of the WCTA telephone directory.



Contest Winners Announced

Laura Niska of Menahga submitted the winning photo featured on the cover of the 2020 WCTA Directory. Laura's photo of a kayaker on Spirit Lake at sunset was stunning! The photo also represents our beautiful rural area well. Laura won \$200 for her winning entry.

October Open House winner of the Smart TV was Bonnie Wagner (pictured) while Dagmar Siltala won the Echo Dot and Jim Moeller won the wireless earbuds.

Five fabulous artists placed first in their age division in the annual WCTA Holiday Coloring Contest. The winners included Owen Hess, Brinley Lake, Charlotte Johnson, Sam Roiko and Amelia Johnson.

Bonnie Wagner with Smart TV



What's New with West Central TV

We just completed retransmission and cable negotiations for several stations including Fox Sports North, Big Ten Network, KMSP Fox, Fox News Channel, Fox Business Network and more. While each of these programmers raised rates considerably, we are happy to announce that we will not impose a rate increase this year. We can do this because we have found a lower-cost electronic program guide (EPG) provider, which reduced our costs enough on the technical side to cover most of the rate increases.

Last month, we updated your set-top box software — the first step necessary to switch EPG providers. This change resulted in an enhanced Guide. Most notably:

- Station logos are now displayed on the Guide.
- User interface has an updated look, but there are no navigational changes.
- The Restart icon was removed from the Guide to make room for the logos, but you will still press the green button on your remote when you have highlighted a program you would like to start watching from the beginning.



We have also added Pursuit Channel to the Ultimate and Complete TV2 packages on channel 132. Pursuit Channel is an American TV network that features adventures in the outdoors including hunting, shooting and fishing content from destinations all over the world. Outdoor enthusiasts — this channel is for you!

For the current channel lineup, visit www.wcta.net. If you have questions about these changes, call us at 837-5151.



**Spider-Man:
Far From Home**
Premiering January 18
@ 8:00 pm
STARZ

Following the events of 'Avengers: Endgame,' Spider-Man must step up to take on new threats in a world that has changed forever.

Starz® and related channels and service marks are the property of Starz Entertainment, LLC. Visit starz.com for airdates/times. Spider-Man: Far From Home © 2019 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. All Rights Reserved. MARVEL and all related character names: © & TM 2019 MARVEL.

Scholarship Opportunities



As an investment in our youth, West Central Telephone is committed to the future of rural Minnesota. We are pleased to announce the following scholarship opportunities and invite all high school seniors to apply.

FRS College Scholarship Program

The FRS College Scholarship program provides \$2,000 and the sponsoring NTCA member company provides \$500 for a total of \$2,500. In addition to the FRS general scholarships, FRS has the following named scholarships:*

- Staurulakis Family Scholarships
- TMS Scholarships
- Everett Kneece Scholarship
- Roger Alan Cox Memorial Scholarships
- Good Neighbor Scholarship
- Herbert and Isabel Bitz Memorial Scholarship

Scholarships are completed online and must be submitted no later than March 6, 2020. For applications and guidelines, see your high school guidance counselor or visit www.FRS.org/student.

**Submitting one application is sufficient for eligibility of all available scholarships.*

WCTA Scholarship Program

High school seniors whose parents are cooperative members are encouraged to apply for one of eight scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each. The application deadline is April 3, 2020. Our cooperative status allows us to fund our scholarship program in part through unclaimed capital credits.

Minnesota Telecom Alliance Foundation Scholarships

The MTA Foundation will award six scholarships to high school seniors graduating in 2020. Each scholarship will be in the amount of \$2,000. There are two types of scholarships this year:

- 1. One \$2,000 Telecom Scholarship:** To be eligible, applicants must be majoring in either Telecommunications or Information Technology (IT) at a university, college, or technical college and be a Minnesota resident.
- 2. One of five \$2,000 General Scholarships:** To be eligible, applicants must be attending post-secondary education at a university, college, or technical college, be a Minnesota resident, and the applicant's family must subscribe to at least one service from an MTA member company.

Once completed, the application must be printed and submitted to WCTA by February 21, 2020.

2nd Year or Beyond Scholarship

Current college students are urged to apply for a \$1,000 scholarship through the 2nd Year or Beyond Scholarship. Students who graduated from high school and are from any one of the telephone exchanges of WCTA currently attending 2nd year or beyond higher education are eligible. **Past scholarship winners are also eligible.** The application deadline is May 29, 2020.

Links to all scholarships are on www.wcta.net under the Scholarships tab.

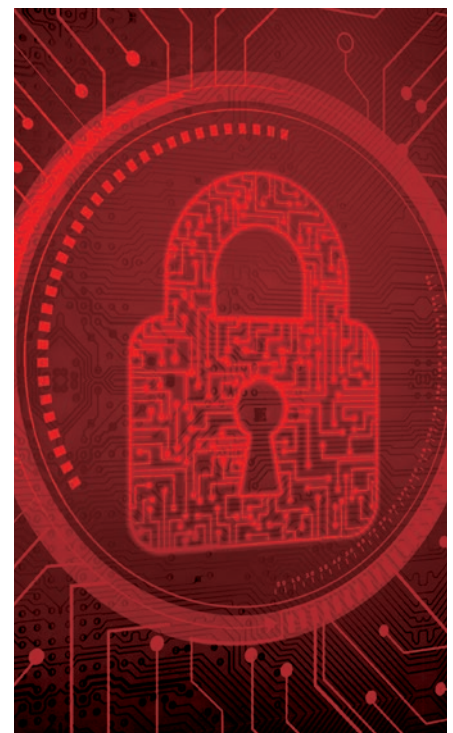
January 28 is Data Privacy Day

Given the frequency and magnitude of identity theft, it's vitally important to do what you can to protect your personal information. January 28 is designated as Data Privacy Day, which serves as an excellent reminder to stay vigilant.

The National Cyber Security Alliance offers these tips to help manage your privacy:

- **Secure your devices:** Use strong passwords, passcodes, or touch ID features to lock your devices. These security measures can help protect your information if your devices are lost or stolen and keep prying eyes out.
- **Think before you app:** Information about you — such as the games you like to play, your contacts list, where you shop, and your location — has value, just like money. Be thoughtful about who gets that information and how it's collected through apps.
- **Stay up to date:** Make sure your security software, web browser, and operating system are updated regularly, which is the best defense against viruses, malware, and other online threats.

Learn more at staysafeonline.org. Click on "STAY SAFE ONLINE" and get tips on Online Safety Basics, Managing Your Privacy, and more.



Welcome New Members

Eckert, Josh.....414-6406
Elfstrum, Jeremy414-6677
Evans, Anthony414-6582
Thompson, Reggy414-6260
Gerard, Shane.....445-4140
Steinkopf, Janice.....445-8883
Makela, Cassy.....538-6159
Muhonen, Braden538-5865
Anderson, Jody.....564-6806
Frith, Edwin564-7852
Hendrickson, Jean564-2055
Hodgden Logging Inc564-7136
Olson, Leland.....564-4288
Pickar, Tina.....564-8626
Pietila, David.....564-6483
Simpson, Marc.....564-9751
Aho, Jamie A.....629-1034
Labine, Joann629-1991
Mullenbach, Deanna629-1096
Nelson, Stephanie.....629-1999
Poepke, Lisa629-1041
Tarrell, Linda.....629-1219
Windels, Brenda.....629-1635
Hamann, Paul631-3270
Kern, Marjorie.....631-3374
Wadena County
Transfer Station631-2474
Kobliska, Jeff.....894-0015
Kobliska, Jerry.....894-1627
Raddatz, Mary.....894-2796
Soukup, Michael894-3291



BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Freshwater Education District



Freshwater Education District provides a variety of programs including rehabilitation and special education services. The District has about 140 employees throughout the school year that work at its office, at a school or at one of the five Alternative Learning Centers (ALCs). Several schools are part of the Freshwater Education District, and they provide services to Sebeka, Menahga, Wadena, Pillager, Henning, Bertha and many more school districts.

Superintendent Jerry Nesland told us that the favorite part of his job is seeing the success of his students and having staff members that truly care for their students. He also stated that he feels fortunate to have such dedicated and talented staff members.

Freshwater Cooperative was started in Staples, MN in 1968. Since that time, several related educational clusters have merged with the original group to start the joint Education District #6004. They now have a new office and special school building located south of Wadena on US 71.

Freshwater Education District uses West Central Telephone's broadband service at its brand-new office in Wadena at 2222 Industrial Drive and at its 5,700-square-foot ALC building, also in Wadena. Office hours are Monday-Friday 8:00am - 4:30pm. You can reach them at 631-3505, Ext 1001 or get more information at www.fed.k12.mn.us.

Call West Central Telephone at 837-5151 to learn about security, surveillance, internet and other technology solutions for your business.