

# Connections

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## INSIDE:

Polar Donates  
to FCHC Endowment  
Fund - Page 2

Call Termination  
Issues - Page 3

New Employee  
Evan Sommer - Page 3

Construction Bid - Page 3

Directory Advertising  
Sales - Page 3

Director Applications - Page 4

New Director  
Cynthia Hejl - Page 4

2011 Eagle Award - Page 4

USF Reform - Page 5

CPNI Privacy  
Notice - Page 5

## Polar Awards \$5,000 in Grants to Area Schools

Polar Communications recently awarded three schools in their service territory a total of \$5,000 in Polar Technology Grants. Polar's Technology Grant provides funding for K-12 schools enabling the purchase of hardware, software, contracted services and other technologies that target student achievement through technology integration. Applicants were required to submit their proposals, including an overview of their project abstract, goals, narrative, and budget information. Accredited K-12 schools in Polar's service territory were eligible to apply. Polar Communications awards up to \$5,000 per year, with each grant ranging from \$500-\$2,500.

Schools winning the 2011-12 Polar Technology Grants were Fordville/Lankin Public School - \$2,000 for their "STEM & Robotics" project, Midway Public School - \$2,000 for "iPads to Support a STEM Classroom" project and Lakota Elementary School - \$1,000 for their "Sound ON!" classroom sound enhancement project.

*Polar is proud to invest  
in our schools and the  
community, providing  
value for the future!*



**Photo 1** - Polar Board Member Jon McMillan, Fordville-Lankin Superintendent Michael O'Brien and Technology Instructor Robert Anderson



**Photo 2** - Midway Superintendent Roger Abbe, several Midway 3rd Graders, 3rd Grade Teacher Jen Thompson, and Polar Board Member Jon McMillan.



**Photo 3** - Lakota 1st Grade Teacher Jennifer Moats, Principal Bette Nelson, and Polar Board Member Lori Dahl.



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# Polar Donates \$25,000 to First Care Health Center Endowment Fund

Polar Communications Board of Directors recently approved a donation to First Care Health Center's Endowment Fund in the amount of \$25,000. The donation was directed to the First Care Health Center Charitable Endowment Fund at Dakota Medical Foundation, which was established recently by First Care Health Center. Contributions to this fund will be used to support health-related charitable initiatives, programs, and projects in support of the mission of First Care Health Center, with an emphasis on access to health care and improving the health of the people in the Park River region.

Through the generosity of Polar Communications' \$25,000.00 donation to the First Care Health Center Charitable Endowment Fund, Dakota Medical Foundation provided a \$4,000 match. Polar is proud to continue to support facilities that are vital to the health care in our rural area.



L to R: Louise Dryburgh, CEO First Care Health Center; Ike Meberg, Polar Communications Director; and Jay Skorheim, First Care Health Center Board Chair.

## Notice to customers using BEC modems

If you are using a BEC modem (see photo) you may currently be getting the benefit of wireless capabilities from that modem. When your home is cut over to the Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) technology, the BEC modem will no longer be capable of transmitting a wireless signal. During this transition, Polar Communications is offering a one-time offer to purchase and install a wireless router, in this case for \$29.95, normally \$84.95.



If you have a BEC modem and would like to take advantage of this offer, please contact our service center so we can make arrangements to change it during your cutover to FTTH. You can reach us by calling 1.800.284.7222 or email us at [service@polarcomm.com](mailto:service@polarcomm.com). We are open Monday-Friday, 7:30AM-6:00PM and Saturdays, 8:00AM-4:30PM.



# Calls Not Getting Through?

Polar strives to provide excellent service at all times. However, people who live in rural areas all around the country are reporting that calls to them are not getting through, or they are receiving calls with poor quality.

The problem starts with the carrier used by the customer who makes the call, not Polar. The problem can only be resolved by the carrier used by the customer who makes the call.

This nationwide epidemic is negatively affecting local businesses, public safety, and our relationship with our customers. Rural carriers have complained to the FCC and state agencies. The FCC has created a task force to investigate and address the issue, and rural telco advocates are encouraging swift and severe action against all of the providers at the center of the problem.

We are hopeful the large nationwide providers involved in these issues, or the FCC, will act quickly to address these problems. In the meantime, here's what you can do:

- Ask for the name of the long-distance carrier used by the person trying to reach you.
- Call your local provider and give them details. Include the name of the carrier used by the caller so we can contact the carrier on your behalf to try and resolve the issue.
- Go to [www.fcc.gov/complaints](http://www.fcc.gov/complaints) to file an informal wired telephone service complaint with the FCC against the carrier used by the person trying to call you, not Polar, and encourage the caller to do the same.

Thank you for working with us to resolve these issues.

# Polar Welcomes New Employee Evan Sommer



Evan Sommer was recently hired as the Network Administrator Assistant for Polar. Evan's duties include assisting with the installation and maintenance of the computer network and related equipment for Polar's information service needs.

Evan graduated with a computer networking degree from the Minnesota State Community and Technical College in Moorhead, Minnesota. He comes to us from the Pembina County Memorial Hospital where he worked as the Network Administrator for four years. Evan is currently residing in Cavalier.

## 2012 Construction Bid

The board of directors of Polar Communications, at their regular board meeting on November 18th, 2011, approved the 2012 construction bid. The bid, totaling \$4.1 million, was awarded to Telcom Construction of Clearwater, Minnesota. The construction bid is a portion of the company's \$11.5 million capital budget for 2012.

The construction will involve installing fiber optic cable to the home. This technology allows Polar to extend services such as voice, high speed Internet, and video farther to reach its most rural customers. A total of 200 miles of buried cable will be installed within an approximate 6-month period. Construction will be happening in the cities of Pembina, Neche, Fordville, Adams and the city and rural areas of Fairdale and Nekoma.

## directory advertising

Sales executives from Pinnacle Publishing will be in our area soon to begin selling advertising for the official 2012-13 directory. When you advertise in the Polar directory your ad will automatically be featured in our online directory at no additional charge! All website and email addresses are linked. Both the printed and online directories are great tools to increase visibility and connect with your customers. Get the most out of your advertising investment by placing an ad in the Polar Yellow Pages! For more information regarding advertising, contact Pinnacle Publishing at 800.343.8086 or visit [www.pinnaclepub.com](http://www.pinnaclepub.com).



Kelly Gordon



Bob Hanke



Frank Mattox



Mary Peterson



Ethan Rogers

# Director Applications

Applications for the Polar Communications Board of Directors will be accepted for the election to be held during Polar's Annual Members Meeting on June 7, 2012. Positions to be filled are as follows:

District 1 – Position currently held by Ron Steinke is up for re-election.

District 2 – Position currently held by Joe Torgerson is up for re-election.

District 3 – Position currently held by Peter “Kelly” McKenzie is up for re-election.

Polar Board of Directors Nomination Procedure Steps:

1. Any qualified member meeting the requirements of Section 3, Article IV of the company by-laws may request an application and petition from the cooperative headquarters. The forms can be picked up at Polar's front desk or can be found on Polar's website at [www.thinkpolar.com](http://www.thinkpolar.com).
2. Members shall submit a completed application and a petition containing a minimum of thirty (30) signatures of cooperative members from the district in which the applicant resides. Please note that a husband and wife constitute one membership. Either spouse may sign the petition as a member; however, the signature of a husband and wife on the petition may only be counted as one.
3. Completed applications and petitions should be submitted by March 23, 2012, at 4:00 pm to Polar Communications, Attn: Shari Flanders, PO Box 270, Park River, ND, 58270. Please contact Shari at 701.284.4343 with questions or email [sflanders@polartel.com](mailto:sflanders@polartel.com).
4. All nominations by petition are subject to verification. Once verification is complete, the candidate will be notified and their name will appear on the ballot at Polar's Annual Members Meeting.

To find the service areas that make up each district, please refer to Article IV, Section 2 of the by-laws of Polar Communications found in your telephone directory.

## Polar Welcomes New Director Cynthia Hejl



Polar is pleased to introduce its newest board member, Cynthia Hejl. Cynthia resides in Arthur, North Dakota, with her husband. They have two grown daughters.

Cynthia graduated from North Dakota State University with a major in merchandising and minor in business. She has been employed at the Good Samaritan Society - Arthur for twenty years working as a volunteer coordinator. She is also helping to restore and

update the history house, the original six-bedroom house that served as the Good Samaritan Society's first center.

Some of her goals as a Polar board member include continuing the progressive development of the network and serving the customers with affordable access to telecommunication services.

*Welcome Cynthia!*

## Stacey Loftsgard is 2011 Eagle Award Recipient



Polar is excited to announce the recipient of its 2011 Eagle Award as Stacey Loftsgard. Stacey began her employment with Polar on August 11, 1997. Stacey works as a Plant Records Specialist in the outside plant department. Her duties include maintaining and mapping of outside plant facility records, customer order assignments, and automated provisioning maintenance.

Stacey was nominated for this distinguished award and voted on by her peers based on the following qualifications: goes above and beyond normal job responsibilities, will do whatever it takes to get the job done, provides new and creative ideas, shows outstanding company dedication, demonstrates teamwork and accepts challenges, is involved in the community and/or volunteer work, demonstrates outstanding customer service and/or assistance, and promotes a positive attitude.

*Congratulations on this well-deserved award Stacey!*

# USF Reform Could Hurt Rural Telcos and Their Consumers

The “Universal Service Fund” – a program overseen by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and funded through contributions paid by telecom providers across the country – has been essential in making sure rural consumers like you have access to high-quality networks and affordable telecom services. But rule changes just made by the FCC, and others still being considered, put rural networks and services at risk.

The FCC’s stated goal in making these rule changes – to ensure that all of America has comparable access to the Internet – is admirable. Reliable, high-speed broadband has become the essential service of today, like electricity and telephone service were decades ago. Broadband can improve the lives of all consumers, but access is especially important for those of us living in rural America. The Internet enables farmers to monitor weather patterns and ranchers to buy and sell livestock in markets far from home. It also gives small businesses the opportunity to reach customers nationwide, offers local students the chance to take classes online, and allows doctors to remotely diagnose patients and even offer remote emergency care.

But the new rules don’t promote these objectives. Instead, they cut support revenues from the Universal Service Fund for many smaller, locally-based cooperatives and commercial telecom providers such as ours. And the rules still being considered by the FCC threaten to cut even more support for many more small telcos. It’s hard to reconcile the commentary about connecting all of America with the actual impact of the new rules and the threatened impacts of the rules still being considered. The Universal Service Fund cuts arising out of the new rules will put existing investment in rural broadband at risk, and they will chill investment in new broadband-capable networks by small companies going forward. The FCC’s cuts could also lead to increased rates for many customers for telephone, broadband and other services.

Years ago, Congress established a universal service policy for telephone service. It required that those living in rural areas have access to communications services at prices that are affordable and reasonably comparable to those available in urban areas. The Universal Service Fund is essential to carrying out this policy. But rather than supporting true universal service, the FCC’s new rules promise faster, better service to some Americans while guaranteeing lesser service at higher cost for others.

Don’t let the FCC keep our rural community on the slow side of a broadband digital divide. Don’t let the FCC adopt policies that will require rural consumers to pay higher rates for telephone service and slower broadband. Contact your congressional representatives and urge them to support regulatory action that ensures equal and affordable access to broadband for **all** Americans. Ask your representatives to help make sure that the new rules are implemented in a manner that is fair for all rural consumers and consistent with true universal service. Ask your representatives to tell the FCC to stop pressing for new rules that will only make matters worse. Contact our office to learn more about this issue and how you can help, or visit [saveruralbroadband.org](http://saveruralbroadband.org).

## CPNI Privacy Notice

From time to time Polar changes its service offerings and makes available additional features and services, which may enhance and augment the services to which you are already subscribed. In order for us to determine which customers may benefit from the new services and enhancements, we will use information about your account that is within our database, legally referred to as Customer Proprietary Network Information (CPNI), unless you restrict that use in the manner described below. CPNI includes information such as which long distance carrier and plan to which you are subscribed, calling features and plans to which you are subscribed, and the associated charges for those plans. Use of this data will allow Polar to tailor its service offerings to your individual needs.

For this purpose, CPNI data will be used by Polar Communications, its subsidiaries, and affiliates only. This data will not be shared by Polar Communications with any other outside source except as necessary and required to provide the service(s) to which you are already subscribed, and unless we are legally compelled to.

You have a right under federal law to protect the confidentiality of your account information and restrict the use of CPNI data, and we have a responsibility to protect your data. To restrict the use of your CPNI data, you must contact our business office at 701-284-7221 or [sales@polarcomm.com](mailto:sales@polarcomm.com) within 30 days of your receipt of this notice to request that we not utilize your CPNI data. Your denial of approval for Polar to use this data will not affect the provision of any services to which you subscribe. Your approval or denial of approval for the use of CPNI outside of the service to which you already subscribe will remain valid until you revoke or limit the approval or denial.





PO Box 270 • Park River, ND 58270

# CONNECTIONS

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www.thinkpolar.com

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ronald Steinke ..... Cavalier  
Beverly Jensen ..... Drayton  
Peter “Kelly” McKenzie ..... Michigan  
Amber Meyer ..... St. Thomas  
Joe Torgerson ..... Fairdale  
Eric “Ike” Meberg ..... Park River  
Jon McMillan ..... Fordville  
Lori Dahl ..... Lakota  
Cynthia Hejl ..... Arthur  
David L. Dunning ..... General Manager/CEO

## HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday-Friday • 7:30am-6:00pm  
Saturday • 8:00am-4:30pm  
24 Hour Customer Service • 284.7127

# save the date

2012 Annual Meeting  
Thursday, June 7th

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