

Connections

Published by Polar Communications and its Subsidiaries

Summer 2012

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PO Box 270
Park River, ND 58270
www.thinkpolar.com

Polar Holds 60th Annual Meeting

The Annual Members Meeting of Polar Communications was held on Thursday, June 7, 2012. A total of 312 members registered during the meeting. Members and guests were served a meal prior to the meeting.

Dan Stenvold, Mayor of Park River, welcomed the attendees to Park River; Pastor Paul Kiel gave the invocation.

President Ron Steinke conducted the meeting. General Manager/CEO David Dunning and President Ron Steinke gave a joint presentation to the members.

Two directors were re-elected to Polar's board of directors. Ron Steinke of Cavalier will represent District 1, Joe Torgerson of Fairdale will represent District 2. Elected to represent District 3 is Brian Udby of Lankin. All three directors will serve a three-year term.

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Enjoying a meal before the meeting.



Members register for the annual meeting.

Director Election

Two directors were re-elected and one newly elected at Polar's annual meeting on Thursday evening, June 7th, 2012, at the Park River High School. They are Ron Steinke of Cavalier, District 1, and Joe Torgerson of Fairdale, District 2. Brian Udby of Lankin was elected to fill the District 3 position. All three directors will serve a three-year term.



*Ron Steinke
District 1 - Cavalier*



*Joe Torgerson
District 2 - Fairdale*



*Brian Udby
District 3 - Lankin*

Construction Update

Polar's 2012 construction project will upgrade the cities of Fordville, Adams, Neche and Pembina, and in addition the full exchanges of Nekoma and Fairdale, to fiber-to-the-home services. Construction began on April 23rd in Fordville. There are several phases to the construction project. Currently Polar's inside wiring contractors, Jeff Carlson Services (JCS), are rewiring homes in Fordville. This will continue for the next few months throughout the construction area.

Our contractor, Telcom Construction, is currently doing ground work in the cities of Adams, Fairdale, Nekoma and Neche, placing fiber from Polar's central office to the homes. Splicing of the fiber routes has started in Fordville and will follow through the other exchanges as fiber is placed. Cut-overs will begin in July in Fordville and continue through the middle of 2013 throughout the construction area.

We appreciate your patience throughout our construction project. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call our office.



Placing duct into the ground in Adams.



Workers pulling fiber into the duct in Nekoma.

New Summer Employees Hired

Polar recently hired two new employees to help with the summer construction work. Jeff Sagerhorn is from Battle Lake, Minnesota and is currently residing in Cavalier. Mike Foerster is from Fordville.

Jeff and Mike will be working in the plant department on the construction crew.



Jeff Sagerhorn



Mike Foerster

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2012 Capital Credits Paid to Patrons

This year Polar Communications will be returning \$462,511 in capital credits. This year's payout will be from the remaining of service year 1996 and will all be made in one payment in June. If you had service in the payout year and did not pick up your check at Polar's annual meeting on June 7th, your check will be mailed to you.



In Memory

This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Peter Kelly McKenzie.

Peter "Kelly" McKenzie, 78, Michigan, North Dakota, passed away on Monday, April 2, 2012, at Altru Hospital, Grand Forks.

Since 2003 Kelly had been serving on the board of directors for Polar Communications of Park River. He was currently serving as the secretary/

treasurer. In 2008 Kelly also began serving on the board for the North Dakota Telephone Company of Devils Lake. He served as an alternate director, along with several committee positions with the North Dakota Association of Telecommunications Cooperatives. He considered his time serving in telecommunications as his second career after his retirement from banking. He was very proud to be able to serve his community and state.

Kelly is survived by his wife Donna, three children, and six grandchildren.

Polar extends their sympathies to the family of Kelly McKenzie



SOAPnet

Due to low viewership, Disney has decided to eliminate SOAPnet from its channel offerings. Beginning Wednesday, June 20, 2012, SOAPnet (Channel 107) will no longer be available. Disney Jr. will begin airing on this channel at that time.

Changes in Lifeline and Link Up Programs



Lifeline and Link Up telephone assistance programs have been available for several years to qualifying customers of Polar Communications and its subsidiaries. Due to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) release in February of the Lifeline Reform Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM) the Lifeline program has changed and the Link Up program has been eliminated for most telecommunications companies, including Polar.

What is Lifeline? 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, family, and 911 services. Lifeline is supported by the Federal Universal Service Fund. You must be eligible to receive Lifeline. You are allowed only one Lifeline discount per household. You cannot transfer your Lifeline discount to someone else, even if he or she is eligible.

Who is eligible? Customers who qualify under one of the four major economic assistance programs: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Food Stamps, Energy Assistance, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Federal Public Housing Assistance, National School Lunch (NSL) or income guidelines of 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The named subscriber to the local telephone service must participate in one of these assistance programs in order for that household to receive Lifeline support. When you qualify for any of the above programs, you must self-certify in our office by completing a Lifeline Assistance Application.

If you no longer qualify for any one of the economic programs, then you no longer qualify for Lifeline and must contact our office to discontinue this discount. For more information on Lifeline please call our office at 701.284.7221 or 1.800.284.7222.

For questions on eligibility, please contact your county social services office.

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS IN MAYVILLE!

Thursday, June 22nd
Polar Mayville Office
11:00 - 1:00

face painting · balloons
bouncy house · clowns · cotton
candy · sno cones · peanuts
popcorn · burgers · hotdogs
free gifts for kids & adults!

BIG TEN
★ UNDER THE ★
BIG TENT

Rural Broadband

Essential to prosperity. Vital to America

Save Rural Broadband was created by the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association, Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies, and the Western Telecommunications Alliance to educate Americans about Federal Communications Commission (FCC) proposals that could profoundly affect rural America. Their goal is to show Congress and the Obama administration how the proposals the FCC is seeking to impose on rural communications providers are detrimental to efforts to upgrade broadband Internet networks in many rural communities – and how it would result in the loss of jobs and decreased economic development in regions of America that need them most. They are working to convince the FCC to modify its current proposal to bring it more in line with a reform plan submitted last year by a unified group of rural communications carriers. This plan is the product of many years of discussion, representing an important step forward by the telecommunications industry to reach tough compromises that will restore regulatory certainty.

Throughout SaveRuralBroadband.org you will find information about broadband Internet access in rural America and the benefits it brings to rural communities, enabling you to learn more about this important issue. More importantly, you will be able to alert friends and neighbors, business partners, and others about the consequences the FCC's rules would have on communities that rely on rural broadband Internet, and you will be able to let policymakers know of the more reasonable alternatives available for reform.

The more concerned Americans add their voice to this important issue, the stronger the reaction from members of Congress will be.

We hope you will join us.

Annual Meeting *continued from page 1*

The 2012 John G. Walters Scholarship was presented to the following: Levi Brown of Bathgate and Mariah Dalbey of Fordville. Kaitlin Lindsey of Gilby, Nicole Sobolik of Park River, and Justin Zahradka of Lawton were not present to receive their scholarships.

President Steinke and General Manager/CEO Dunning jointly presented the 2012 Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED) Scholarship to Sadie Sondeland of Edinburg.

Polar Communications presented the Business of The Year Award to Dean Steinwand of Citizens State Bank-Midwest, located in Cavalier, North Dakota.

Secretary-Treasurer Amber Meyer reported to the members.

Several prize drawings were held throughout the meeting.



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FRS Youth Tour



Each year Polar Communications sponsors a high school student for the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA) Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) Youth Tour in Washington, DC. This year marked the 18th annual FRS Youth Tour held June 2-6. It brought 95 students and 21 chaperones, representing 69 NTCA member companies from across the US. Polar is proud to represent NTCA and to send a local student on this trip. This year Polar's representative was Kari Olson of Hoople. She is the daughter of Steve and Maren Olson. Here is what Kari had to say about her trip:

"First of all, I would like to say that I am extremely grateful to have had this opportunity. I have always wanted to go to Washington, D.C., and Polar made that possible! I had so much fun on the trip; I visited the U.S. Capitol building, saw the first airplane ever flown, and made friends that I will never forget. FRS has done an excellent job of annually putting this week together and working with the small telecommunications companies to give students the opportunity of a lifetime. I felt truly privileged that I was selected to represent Polar, and I enjoyed every minute of my travels. It was incredible to visit the places you see so much of in textbooks, movies, and TV shows. I even stood where Martin Luther King, Jr., gave his "I Have A Dream" speech. Now that was surreal! Once again, I feel very blessed to have been given the chance to have this experience. Thank you, Polar!"

FRED Scholarship

Sadie Sondeland, a senior at Valley-Edinburg High School was selected to receive a \$2,000 academic scholarship by the Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED). Sponsored by Polar Communications, the given award is based on merit and demonstrated commitment to rural life. FRED will send the awarded scholarship to the University of North Dakota on behalf of Sadie Sondeland.



Board president Ron Steinke with scholarship recipient Sadie Sondeland.

David L. Dunning, from Polar Communications wrote a letter of recommendation on behalf of Sadie so that her application could be accepted and reviewed. He wrote, "Sadie is an excellent student, ranking 1st in her senior class. She takes great pride in her high achievements and her strong work ethic and desire to succeed makes Sadie a good candidate for this award."

"Sadie Sondeland was selected among an outstanding group of young people to represent 'the best of the best,'" stated FRED Foundation Director, Melissa Korzuch. "The primary interest of the foundation is to assist students with high potential for success and a strong desire to return to a rural community upon graduation. We were overwhelmed by the remarkable credentials of the applicants. Each of this year's FRED Scholars is very intelligent and exceedingly active in their community. We hope every FRED Scholar will someday return to their hometowns to contribute to the community that clearly gave them an admirable, productive start in life."

John G. Walters Scholarship Winners

Each year Polar awards five \$500 scholarships in honor of former general manager John G. Walters. The awards are given to outstanding high school seniors whose parents or guardians are current subscribers of Polar Communications or its subsidiaries. Applicants are judged on essay content, grammar, academic achievement and community involvement. This year's winners were presented with their awards at the annual meeting on June 7th. They were Levi Brown, Bathgate, and Mariah Dalbey, Fordville. Unable to attend the meeting were Kaitlin Lindsey, Gilby, Nicole Sobolik, Park River, and Justin Zahradka, Lawton. Congratulations to these outstanding students!



Board president Ron Steinke presents Levi Brown with his award.



Board president Ron Steinke presents Mariah Dalbey with her award.



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CONNECTIONS

Published By
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ronald Steinke.....Cavalier
Beverly Jensen.....Drayton
Amber Meyer.....St. Thomas
Joe Torgerson.....Fairdale
Eric "Ike" Meberg.....Park River
Jon McMillan.....Fordville
Lori Dahl.....Lakota
Cynthia Hejl.....Arthur
Brian Udby.....Lankin
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



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