Polar Holds 65th Annual Meeting

The Annual Members Meeting of Polar Communications was held on Thursday, June 8, 2017. A total of 204 members registered during the meeting. Members and guests were served a meal prior to the meeting.

Matthew Leiphon of Senator Heitkamp’s office, Randy Richards of Representative Cramer’s office, and Brian Kroshus, commission from the ND Public Service commission addressed the membership. Dan Stenvold, Mayor of Park River, welcomed the attendees to Park River and Pastor Theresa Brezenski gave the invocation.

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

Attorney DuBois explained the election process. Two directors were re-elected to Polar’s board of directors.

Chris Nelson will represent District 2; Lori Dahl will represent District 3. The two directors will serve a three-year term. Due to term limits, Beverly Jensen’s District 1 position will be vacated and no petitions were received. Pursuant to the by-laws the board of directors will appoint an individual to fill this position.

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Two Directors Re-elected to Polar Board

At the annual meeting on Thursday, June 8, 2017, two directors were re-elected to serve on the Polar board. Representing District 2 is Chris Nelson of Edinburg and representing District 3 is Lori Dahl of Lakota. Both directors will serve a three-year term.

Chris Nelson, Edinburg
District 1

Lori Dahl, Lakota
District 2

RDFC Awards Grant in Polar Service Area

Ox Cart Trails Historical Society Member Marlys Ball of Drayton accepts a $2000 grant check from Polar Communications Board Member Beverly Jensen.

Polar Communications is a member of the Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC). As a result, communities in our service area are eligible to apply for a grant of up to $2,000 for community-based projects. RDFC is making these funds available in order that more people become aware of their larger loan program that funds community-based projects and non-profit entities with low interest loans.

RDFC has recently awarded a $2,000 grant to the Ox Cart Trails Historical Society in Drayton. The purpose of the Ox Cart Trails Historical Society is to bring together people interested in the history of northeastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota and to promote public education by the discovery, collection, restoration and/or preservation of historical sites, records, articles, and artifacts and the study of history. The grant funds will be used to update the community center, including the lighting and several fans, replacing damaged ceiling panels, and painting the walls and ceiling.

For an application, assistance, or questions concerning RDFC, please contact Lori Capouch at 701-667-6444 or lcapouch@ndarec.com.
Privacy Note From the CEO

In early April we released a notice to customers regarding federal legislation passed that would allow Internet Service Providers (ISPs) the ability to collect and sell customers’ browsing history for advertising purposes. ISPs now have the ability to collect, store, share, and sell certain types of data – including browsing history, app usage data and location information, all without the user’s consent.

We have always taken the privacy of our customers very seriously at Polar Communications and intend to continue to do so. Regardless of this legislation, we will not harvest or sell customers’ private web browsing history or data. Our goal has always been to provide the highest quality services at a fair price. As a member-owned cooperative, we respect the privacy of our customers and will continue to make it a priority at our company to protect it.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you. Have a great summer!

SecureIT Support for Windows Vista to End

Microsoft officially eliminated support for Windows Vista on April 11, 2017. Microsoft has completely discontinued security updates, non-security hotfixes, free and paid assisted support options, and online technical content updates for the Vista operating system. While less than 1% of the world’s PC users still rely on Vista today, Microsoft has made it clear that they want users to move to a newer Windows OS. Over time, Vista will develop security flaws and cracks that cyber criminals are sure to exploit.

We know our customers rely on us to help keep them safe and secure, and we take that role very seriously. While SecureIT will continue to update virus definitions (that help identify the bad stuff on computers) for Vista, over time the OS itself will become vulnerable. Because of these concerns, SecureIT will only continue to support Vista through December 31, 2017.

While SecureIT may continue to work on Vista for some time after that, it will no longer be tested or guaranteed.

It is very important that customers migrate to a modern operating system such as Windows 10. Customers moving to a newer operating system will benefit from dramatically enhanced security, broad device choice for a mobile workforce, higher user productivity, and a lower total cost of ownership through improved management capabilities.

To stay protected after support ends, you have some options. The first option is to upgrade your current PC’s operating system. Very few older computers will be able to run Windows 10, which is the latest version of Windows. We recommend that you download and run the Windows Upgrade Assistant to check if your PC meets the system requirements for Windows 10 and then follow the steps in the tutorial to upgrade if your PC is able. You can also purchase a new PC. If your current PC can’t run Windows 10, it might be time to consider shopping for a new one.

Your current SecureIT product is transferable to your new PC and we will even help you re-install and set them up! Just give us a call at 1-877-373-3320 or CHAT 24/7.

We appreciate your business and look forward to delivering on our promise to provide world-class support.
Scholarships Awarded to Local Students

**John G. Walters Scholarship**

This year Polar awarded five $1,000 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.

**Leadership Scholarship**

The Leadership Scholarship is sponsored by Polar Communications, in cooperation with its retired employees. This scholarship is awarded to a student who is involved in their school, serves their community, achieves leadership roles in activities, functions or organizations, and strives to reach their highest potential. Consideration is also given to any work or internship experience outside of school. Applicants must be a senior in high school or freshman or sophomore in college, and their parents or guardians must be Polar customers.

The recipient of the 2017 Polar Leadership Scholarship in the amount of $2,000 is being awarded to Mikayla Fingarson who is a senior at Valley-Edinburg High School.

**Foundation for Rural Service Scholarship**

The Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) offers an annual college scholarship program to students from rural America for their first year of college, university, or vocational-technical school. Each student is sponsored by an NTCA member company.

This year’s recipient is Casey Solseng of Park River, North Dakota. Casey is receiving $2,500, with $2,000 coming from FRS and $500 from the sponsoring company, which is Polar in this case.

The FRS College Scholarship Program seeks to encourage students to return to their rural communities upon completing their education.
Local Students Attend FRS Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.

Taylor Stegman and Kaitlyn Blake in front of the U.S. Capitol building.

The Foundation for Rural Service’s (FRS) annual Youth Tour is one of the most visible examples of the foundation’s involvement with, and commitment to, rural youth. This year’s Youth Tour was held June 3-7, 2017. Each year, in collaboration with NTCA member companies, FRS brings rural students from across the United States to Washington, D.C., for a four-day tour of some of the most historical sites in the nation. While there, students also learn about the telecommunications industry, as well as the regulatory and legislative processes. Educational sessions on these topics are greatly enhanced by site visits to the U.S. Capitol and the FCC to meet with industry leaders and members of Congress. The students are also given ample time to explore the nation’s capital and its many attractions.

Polar was proud to sponsor Kaitlyn Blake of Park River and Taylor Stegman of Drayton for this year’s tour. Here is what they had to say about their trip:

“I would like to thank Polar Communications and the members of the board for sponsoring me and giving me the opportunity to go to Washington, D.C. through the FRS Youth Tour. I met loads of wonderful people from around the country, some of which I hope to keep in touch with throughout the years. I also was given the opportunity to see many things, including Arlington National Cemetery, the Smithsonian Museums, and many memorials and monuments. My favorite thing to see was the Lincoln Memorial. We were able to see it on our night tour, so seeing it lit up and being able to look out at the Washington Monument and the Capitol building while standing at the top of the Lincoln Memorial was a very eye-opening moment. We also had the opportunity to attend a few presentations on the FRS and the FCC, and at those presentations it became very clear to me how even our little rural towns can impact such a big thing like telecommunications. I was honored that I could be one of the people to represent our little town of Park River. So, once again I would like to thank Polar Communications for sponsoring me on the wonderful trip, as well as Carol LaHaise for organizing everything and keeping me informed on what all I needed to know before going on the trip. It was an amazing opportunity and I am so glad I was able to be a part of it.”

Kaitlyn Blake

“I would like to thank Polar for sponsoring this amazing trip! I really enjoyed meeting new friends from all over the country. It was awesome to connect with people from so many places. My favorite part of the trip was touring the Smithsonian Museums and the Memorials. Seeing so much history in one place was amazing. It was also very interesting to learn about the FCC and what they do every day. I am so grateful for this opportunity and would like to thank Polar again for this great experience.”

Taylor Stegman

Be sure to check back in the fall for scholarship information. If you know a student, please encourage them to participate in these great opportunities. Applications and information regarding all of the scholarships can be found on Polar’s website at www.thinkpolar.com. For applications, details, or questions on any of the scholarships, please contact Carol LaHaise: 701-284-4361 or clahaise@polartel.com.
March Mania Winners

Laurel Skibicki was the first place winner of the Polar March Mania Challenge. Polar is pleased to announce the winners of the March Mania basketball contest. Out of 270 participants in the community, Laurel Skibicki earned the most points in the contest and was awarded a YETI Cooler package. Jeff Daley was the 2nd place winner and received a $100 MasterCard gift card, and Kenley Hanson and Jake Schauer were randomly selected for the Wildcard drawings and each won a $50 MasterCard gift card.

Annual Meeting  

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The 2017 John G. Walters Scholarships were presented to: Noah Heuchert of St. Thomas and Anne Welch of Park River. Taylor Dalbey from Fordville, Abbie Watkins from Grafton, and Nathan Steffan from Michigan were not present to receive their scholarships.

The 2017 Polar Leadership Scholarship was presented to Mikayla Fingarson of Edinburg.

The 2017 Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) Scholarship was awarded to Casey Solseng of Park River.

The 2017 Business of the Year Award was presented to Andy McKay, Production Superintendent of American Crystal Sugar-Drayton.

Secretary-Treasurer Amber Meyer reported to the members.

Several prize drawings were held throughout the meeting.
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Polar security systems fit every lifestyle, budget and need.

Security systems do more than keep you and your family safe and secure...they give you peace of mind and can even keep you connected to your home wherever you are. Our products are easy enough for every member of the family to operate, providing a level of simplicity and convenience you’ll really appreciate.

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