



THE Connection

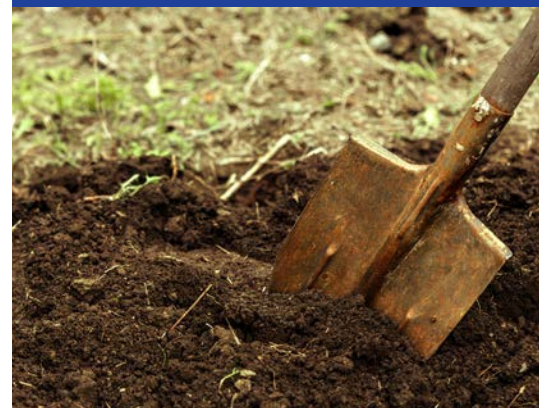
THE FUTURE IS LOOKIN' BRIGHT

GBT is full of celebrating anniversaries this year, and the GBT Junior Board is no different. GBT just wrapped up its 10th Junior Board with 7 area students from 5 local schools participating. These 7 area seniors are provided learning opportunities about who GBT is and what we do, including how communication services are delivered to the area. The Junior Board received an in-depth look about voice, video, and Internet and got to tour the NTW Cellular Headquarters in Hays. GBT gets to learn insights from our student leaders, including how they use technology in their everyday lives. The Junior Board also got involved with our communities and gave back by hosting the Tech Tip Open House in March at GBT headquarters in Rush Center. This year's Junior Board was an outstanding group and helped remind us the future looks bright with the talented youth we have in the GBT area! For their participation, all 7 members of the GBT Junior Board will receive a \$1000 scholarship.



As the weather warms up and you start working on outdoor projects, remember it's important to call 811 Dig Safe, which will notify all the utility companies in your area to mark their lines. Whether it's putting in a fence, planting a tree, or other types of construction that cause ground disruption, contacting 811 Dig Safe can prevent fines and repair costs, and prevent you from taking down an entire neighborhood's services!

It's free and easy to submit a ticket by calling 811 or issuing a request on their website at www.kansas811.com/.



ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

GBT held its 70th Annual Meeting Wednesday, April 19, 2023, at the GBT Headquarters in Rush Center. A drive-thru meeting was conducted, with 124 Members receiving an Annual Meeting booklet of 2022 Reports, along with a ballot. Board member elections were held for District 2 – Ellis, McCracken and District 4 – Alexander, Bazine, Rush Center. Election Results: District 2 – Philip Martin; District 4 – Gene Knieling.

LETTER FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

I am grateful to have this yearly opportunity to connect with our members and share cooperative happenings. It allows GBT representatives to visit and provide members with our successes, challenges, finances, and plans for the future. For 70 years, all our member-owners have trusted us to connect you to the world. Although we call this an annual meeting, it is really a celebration for you, our member-owners. This year embarks a special celebration as the cooperative not only celebrates its 70th year in business, but also anticipates crossing the finish line on connecting every member with FIBER!!! The Cooperative covers over 3,200 square miles with 1.6 members per mile, so this mark comes with a lot of pride from the GBT team. This kind of accomplishment doesn't happen without a vision that has covered many decades of sound leadership, planning, and commitment from past and present Board members and employees.

Over the last couple decades, that vision includes investing in fiber; GBT believes a fiber investment is one that keeps the future in mind. A fiber network transforms rural areas by strengthening commerce, advancing education, enabling precision agriculture, and improving healthcare. The GBT Board gave the direction to begin plowing fiber to its members in 2007, and now in 2023, we are 97% complete! GBT has invested over \$46 million dollars in fiber to the home builds since the Board directed back in '07. In 2022, the rural areas of Garfield and nearly all the Bison exchange were completed, along with the City of St. John. It is our objective to build the rural areas of Burdett, Otis, Utica, and Beeler this year, along with the cities of Larned, Macksville, and Stafford. We can be grateful that our financial position comes at a time when we



are on the cusp of a capital expenditure program of more than \$15 million in fiber deployment. The cooperative feels very strongly about ensuring our members have a reliable and quality broadband connection. These investments should make sure our members can achieve their broadband needs long into the future.

Although we are very bullish on our future, that optimism gets a little clouded with reality. Our country is facing many economic pressures that make it challenging for many businesses. Our team cannot ignore or think that we are immune from the volatility, reliance on federal funding, workforce pressures, and supply chain disruptions that are the result of the times. A lot of what we can do is driven by policy in Washington, D.C. because of the financial requirements to build in rural areas. Trying to predict the future of our industry has become much more difficult. As administrations and technology change, so do regulations and funding mechanisms that directly impact our business. The Cooperative is reliant on federal funding for about 50% of its revenues, so it is important for us to continue to educate our elected officials on the requirements of connecting and maintaining a broadband network. Our success is highlighted by getting every member connected with fiber. However, there are areas in rural America that are





broadband deserts. Although none of us want to go back to the pandemic years, it did bring to light the lack of broadband in those areas of rural America. This has provided some opportunities for GBT to expand its network. As a result, this past year our team has spent time planning and applying for several grant programs. These programs are highly competitive

and time intensive. Through a lot of hard work by the GBT team and in collaboration with Pawnee County officials, we were awarded a grant to build the rural Larned exchange.

As we talk about intense, our staff knows how busy everyone is these days. That is why our customer experience team offers a multitude of ways to do business with us. This spring we rolled out a new website that allows customers to pay bills, sign-up and shop for services, troubleshoot, and search for product information. If you haven't signed up for e-bill or auto-pay, we encourage you to do so.

GBT is also dedicated to our communities by supporting area events, activities, and projects that serve the needs of the area. We do this in many fashions by sponsorships, volunteering, and educating, it is truly what makes us unique. The cooperative was proud to award over \$20,000 to local area youth in



2022. One of those youth will be joining the GBT team after completing schooling as part of a partnership that was formed with NCK Tech to develop industry workforce.

Every day I am impressed by the people who lead and operate the cooperative. The employees of GBT are a motivated, talented, hard-working team, and I want to make sure I recognize them for the products and services they deliver to our membership. We are lucky to have such incredible people working behind the scenes to connect your homes, businesses, and communities.

“GBT takes great responsibility in knowing that it is part of the economic engine that feeds our service territory. Our team sets out every day with great pride and passion to provide our members with reliable state-of-the-art communication services.”

As we embark on this celebratory year and journey, our efforts are inspired by our membership. GBT takes great responsibility in knowing that it is part of the economic engine that feeds our service territory. Our team sets out every day with great pride and passion to provide our members with reliable state-of-the-art communication services. Thank you for your continued support and patronage.

*All the Best-
Beau Rebel | GM*

WINNER, WINNER!

Congratulations to the following winners of the 2023 Annual Meeting Special Prizes:

Retirement of \$250 Capital Credit

Paul Yost, Rush Center
Daryl North, Ellis

1 Month Free Internet Service

Lavern Schneider, Albert
Terry Seltmann, Rush Center

\$70 GBT Bill Credit

Joey Bevitt, Rush Center
Clarence Foos, Bazine
Harry & Helen Thorne, Rozel
Corey & Cari Torrez, Rush Center
Brandi Seltmann, Bazine
Hoop & Twila Higgins, McCracken
Don Hanhardt, Albert
Fred Flax, Ransom
Cynthia Billinger, Lewis
Linda Bahr, Otis



Kansas Lifeline & ACP:

Lifeline connects eligible low-income families and individuals to the services they need to live, learn, earn and participate fully in their communities. Federal and state discounts of up to \$17.02 per month on phone or Internet services are available.*

Eligible Services

- Residential phone service
- Wireless phone service

Benefits

- Health and Safety – connect to healthcare providers, call for help in an emergency
- Education – take online classes, complete training programs
- Employment – search for jobs, complete online applications, schedule interviews
- Family Connections – stay in touch with family and friends reducing loneliness and isolation



Subscribers

Lifeline serves more than 10 million Americans, 35,000 right here in Kansas. Depending on the services provided and your provider, you may be eligible to receive up to \$17.02 in monthly federal and state discounts. Subscribers living on tribal lands qualify for additional discounts.

2023 Lifeline Income Eligibility Guidelines

Household Size	48 Contiguous States, D.C., and Territories
1	\$19,683
2	\$26,622
3	\$33,561
4	\$40,500
5	\$47,439
6	\$54,378
7	\$61,317
8	\$68,256
For each additional person, add:	\$6,939

You may have to show proof of income, like a tax return or three consecutive pay stubs, when you apply for Lifeline.

For more information:

Visit <https://www.lifelinesupport.org/> or call 800.234.9473, Visit <https://kcc.ks.gov/telecommunications/lifeline> or call the Kansas Corporation Commission 800.662.0027

Find out if you qualify:

Guidelines – You may be eligible if you receive any of the following: Medicaid, Section 8 Public Housing Assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit, Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Head Start (tribal programs for only those meeting its income qualifying standard), and Food Distribution Program on Tribal Lands, and Tribally Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

* The Kansas portion of the discount may only be applied to phone service. The federal discount may be used for Internet or phone service.

Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP):

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) program that replaces the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBB Program) to help low-income households pay for Internet service and connected devices.

If your household is eligible, you can receive up to a \$30/month discount on your Internet service.

Only one monthly service discount and one device discount is allowed per household. To receive the connected device discount, consumers need to enroll in the ACP. (Note: not all Internet company offer device discounts.) The Internet company will provide the discount to the consumer.

For more information visit: <https://www.fcc.gov/acp> or call us at 785-372-4236.

Recipe of the Month:

Smothered Carrots

Ingredients

3-lb carrots, peeled and sliced into ¼-inch slices
1-lb bacon
¾ cup brown sugar
¼ cup unsalted butter, melted
¼ cup low-sodium soy sauce
1½ tsp garlic powder

Smothered Carrots –the only way to eat carrots! Sliced carrots baked in bacon, brown sugar, butter, soy sauce, and garlic. Everybody gets seconds. SO good!! Great for a potluck. Everyone asks for the recipe! Super easy to make.

Directions

(1) Preheat the oven to 400°F. (2) Pour sliced fresh carrots in an ungreased 9×13-inch pan. (3) In a large skillet, cook bacon until almost

done but not too crispy. Remove from skillet, drain on paper towel and chop. Sprinkle cooked bacon on top of carrot chips. (4) Whisk together brown sugar, melted butter, soy sauce, and garlic powder. (5) Pour over carrot chips. (6) Bake uncovered for 40 minutes.

Notes: To make carrots in the crock pot, place all of the ingredients into a crockpot. Cook on low or high until the carrots are tender. Perfect for busy weeknights!



785-372-4236
www.gbta.net

Ellis

101 W 9th | Open: Mon., Wed., Fri.
8 am - 12:30 pm; 1:30 pm - 5 pm

Ness City

114 W. Main | Open: Mon.-Fri.
8 am - 5 pm

St. John

602 N US Hwy 281 | Open: Mon.-Fri.
8 am - 1 pm; 2 pm - 5 pm

Larned

122 W. 5th | Open: Mon.-Fri.
8 am - 11:30 am; 12:30 pm - 5 pm

Rush Center

103 Lincoln St. | Open: Mon.-Fri.
8 am - 5 pm



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Kyle Bahr, Editor | Kara Jecha, Editor | Addie Flax, Graphic Design