

THE PROGRESS MAY 2022

NORAH FOREMAN AND ANNA ERICKSON TO RECEIVE MINNESOTA TELECOM ALLIANCE FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

The Minnesota Telecom Alliance announced that they received 103 scholarship applications from across the state and two winning students are from the Park Region Exchange. Norah Foreman and Anna Erickson were selected to receive a \$2,000 scholarship for the 2022-2023 academic year from the Minnesota Telecom Alliance Foundation, according to Dave Bickett, General Manager, Park Region Mutual Telephone Company.

Ms. Foreman will be graduating from Kennedy Secondary School and plans to attend Montana State University. She is the daughter of Robert and Michelle Foreman.

Ms. Erickson will be graduating from Kennedy Secondary School and plans to attend Montana State University. She is the daughter of Jeremy and Marsha Erickson.

In awarding the scholarship to Ms. Foreman and Ms. Erickson, Dave Bickett said, "We're happy to have this chance to make an investment in these students' college education. Rural communities need educated and talented young people to be our leaders of the future. It makes us all proud at Park Region Mutual Telephone Company when we have not one, but two statewide winners selected from our area."

The Foundation is part of the Minnesota Telecom Alliance, a trade organization based in St. Paul representing over 44 telephone companies and cooperatives in the state.

OFFICES CLOSED – MONDAY, MAY 30, 2022

In observance of Memorial Day, our offices will be closed on Monday, May 30, 2022. Our 24/7 help desk will be available by calling 800.247.2706.

2021 ANNUAL MEETING

We want to express our gratitude to those members who attended Park Region Telephone's 116th Annual Meeting at the Underwood School on Wednesday, April 13, 2022. This year's meeting was only open to cooperative members. During the meeting, Candace Catoe (Ashby), Joyce Herbranson (Vining), and Marcus Meder (Dalton) were elected to the Board of Directors. Not seeking re-election, Dwight Hintermeister was thanked for his service on the board over the past 12 years.

We wish to recognize Dwight Hintermeister for his service as a member of Park Region's board for the past 12 years. Over that time, Dwight acted as a voice for the members of the cooperative, representing their interests and providing input into the direction of the company. We wish to express our appreciation to Dwight for his contributions over the years and extend best wishes in his future endeavors.

We would also like to welcome Marcus Meder (Dalton Exchange) to Park Region's Board of Directors. Marcus is a financial advisor with Edward Jones in Fergus Falls. He is active in his community, serving as a 4-H leader, member of the 4-H Leaders Council, and as a board member for West Otter Tail County Farm Bureau. He also enjoys coaching speech at the Underwood High School. Marcus and his wife, Rebekah, and their four children live on a farm between Underwood and Dalton. Marcus is looking forward to learning more about our company and serving on the Board.

Also, during this meeting, the proposed Bylaw amendment to include broadband retail internet customers as members of the cooperative did pass by a large majority of votes cast. This amendment secures the future of our cooperative and we thank all those who cast ballots on this important matter.

At the close of the meeting, many prize drawings were held with three grand prizes awarded to Deborah Bjorgum, Missy Hoen, and Randy Green.

STANDBY POWER CUSTOMER NOTIFICATION

To improve access to 911 emergency services, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted backup power obligation rules for any service provider utilizing fiber optic or other nonpowered media to provide voice services to residential homes. The requirements include an obligation to offer subscribers the option to purchase backup power sufficient to operate the terminal located at the subscriber's home for a minimum of 8 hours in standby mode.

Park Region's phone service is delivered in one of two ways, over traditional copper wires or via fiber optic cable. In instances where fiber to the home (FTTH) is utilized, Park Region provides a battery backup solution, free of charge, at the time of installation for voice customers only.* This solution will provide the customer with 12 hours of talk time and 24 hours of standby power when new and fully charged.

How does the battery backup work? Under normal operating conditions, subscribers have access to all services including voice, video, and broadband data without interruption. However, when commercial power is interrupted, the fiber terminal will change to emergency standby mode and disable video and broadband data services while continuing to provide voice service and, more specifically, access to emergency 911 service until power is restored. Disabling video and broadband services extends the time the optical network terminal (ONT), provided by Park Region, can deliver access to emergency services.

Even though Park Region provides this solution at the point of installation, the battery is considered customer equipment and is therefore maintained by the customer. However, the unit that houses the battery remains the property of Park Region. Without proper maintenance, access to 911 services could be lost if commercial power is not available. The average lifespan of the backup battery is three years. Therefore, it is recommended that subscribers plan to replace their backup battery on a three-year cycle. Park Region customers can replace the battery themselves by following the directions on our website or an appointment can be scheduled to have a qualified technician replace the battery for a fee of \$100.00. Contact our offices at 218.998.2000 or 218.826.6161 or email sales@parkregion.com to schedule an appointment.

*Consumer broadband only (CBOL) customers do not receive a standby power solution since the solution only works with voice services.



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