

FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER:

As we move forward in life, change is inevitable. In the telecommunications industry the word “change” should be in capital letters. When I began my career in the telephone industry, we provided phone lines and dial tone to the cooperative members. Now after many years, the phone lines bring varied services, such as high-speed Internet, digital video, and a multitude of options to make your telephone service more convenient. I often wonder what the next innovations will be. As you will see in this newsletter, we are announcing several innovative services.

We hope these new services will be useful to you. The first service, Secure IT, comes at a time when protecting the integrity of your computer has never been more important. We have selected Secure IT brand as the product line that we feel best fills the need.

The second service we are announcing allows you to store all or portions of the information on your computer at a secure data center, so should you ever have a complete computer malfunction, your highly valued data can be retrieved. Personally, I appreciate being

able to store my digital pictures without worry of loss.


The third service in this expanding list of services is High Definition (HD) video channels. We are amazed at the quality of the HD picture which has been running on test channels here in the office. The HD offering will begin on a limited basis, with the number of channels increasing during the coming months.

Decisions in our personal lives also bring about change. In 1974, when I began my career with Richland-Grant, I did not in my wildest dreams believe that one day I would be writing articles for this newsletter as

General Manager. Yet, here I am, doing just that. The life change I made all those years ago turned out to be one of the best of my life.

Now I will be making the next major change in my life, with April 1, 2008 set as my planned retirement date. (Not an April Fools Day joke) The Executive Committee’s “search and interview” process has begun so that by the first of the year, the new manager can be announced. It has truly been a pleasure to work for the two cooperatives and those staffs, while serving some of the greatest people in the world. I really will miss the challenges and the CHANGES.

Sincerely,



Dave J. Lull

Dave Lull – Then and Now – We Will Miss You!

Our General Manager of twelve years, Dave Lull, has announced his retirement effective April 1, 2008. A native of Woodman, Wisconsin and a graduate of Boscobel High School, Dave saw active military duty in Vietnam during his three years in the U.S. Army. He received his basic telephone training in the Army and used those skills during his 34 year career which began in May of 1974 when he started with Richland-Grant as a service technician. His career continued with a promotion to Plant Superintendent.

Continued on page 2.



Dave Lull 1974



Dave Lull 2008

Coop Affiliated Data Storage Site Will Offer Members Back Up Solutions

Wisconsin Independent Network (WIN) and its sister company, Airstream Communications, are the backbone providers of Internet services to 100,000 customers including your own Midwest Telnet service. LTC & RGTC are part owners of WIN and Airstream. WIN is an integral part of our link to the information superhighway carrying voice and data communications to the Internet and the public network over fiber. Soon, through WIN and its new secure data center, we will begin offering new services to our members.

Specifically, our cooperatives will be offering secure data back-up for your PCs or business workstations and servers. This is an ideal, local solution for those of you looking for a back-up storage solution.

Several RGTC & LTC employees toured the new 4,200 square foot WIN Data Center in Eau Claire. We saw a state-of-the-art facility,

designed with advanced information security systems, power-saving data storage arrays, and a redundant electrical supply, with a back-up generator, which can automatically switch to "back-up mode" with no power interruption, so data will not be lost.

Data centers are needed to store large amounts of critical information. New regulations are requiring businesses such as financial and health care organizations to store information in geographically separate locations, ensuring that a disaster does not destroy the data. Any type of business, farm, or individual can benefit from using the service. One visitor at the tour, who personally lost valuable information when two hard drives "crashed" this year at home, suggested that he will likely use the service himself.

Dave Lull – Then and Now Continued from cover page.

When LaValle & Richland-Grant needed to replace their retiring manager, Dave had been the Plant Superintendent and an employee of Richland-Grant Telephone Cooperative for 22 years. With his general knowledge of the cooperative, RUS policies and outside plant, Dave was recommended for the position by joint executive committee members Percy Pearson, Lester Woolever, Harvey McWilliams, Rodney Henke, Lorraine Orrick, Fred Fry, and Byron Hillberry.

Effective July 1, 1996, Dave easily transitioned into the position of manager, already having personal knowledge of the two cooperatives' history, current activities, and employees. As a shared

manager, Dave travels many miles in a year's time. He works at each office 2-3 days a week and attends many telecommunication meetings on behalf of the cooperatives. The fact that he represents both cooperatives at these meetings has proven an effective means for two small cooperatives to be heard.

Dave's personal life is a busy one as well. Slipping away to the cottage in Wisconsin's north woods has become his favorite way of finding relaxation. With 11 active grandchildren, all of whom love the outdoors and the cottage, too, we think you will find him there on a more regular basis, probably researching the latest technologies in hunting, fishing, and baiting hooks.

Best wishes Dave, for a long and healthy retirement. WE WILL MISS YOU!



Christopher Hrubes

Welcome Richland-Grant New Employee

Richland-Grant's Communication Worker for the Gays Mills and Soldiers Grove exchanges since August of 2006 is Christopher Hrubes. Chris, a graduate of Prairie du Chien High School, has education in drafting, experience as a welder, and had the rank of Staff Sergeant in the U.S. Army where he spent 5 years specializing in artillery and communications. After still more communications education at the Rice Lake Technical College, Chris has become a valuable asset to RGTC. Like many of us in southwest Wisconsin, Chris enjoys the hunting and fishing opportunities our area offers. Thank you, Chris, for all your extra efforts on behalf of our customers.

HDTV: What To Watch For, When We'll Offer It

If you have shopped the big electronics retailers lately, you know that digital TV (DTV) and high-definition TV (HDTV) are a big deal right now. But when you plug in your new high-definition TV set, everything won't magically turn into high definition.

Unless you purchased a digital TV set within the last two or three years, what you have in your living room is most likely a normal analog TV.

February 17, 2009 is the proposed shutoff date for over-the-air analog broadcasts. Our cooperative customers who use our digital TV service will not be affected by this change. The set top boxes we installed in your home act as digital converters.

This digital signal is better quality than an analog signal; however, it is not yet high definition. High definition TV (HDTV) is the highest of all the digital TV standards. For you to see a high-definition picture and hear the accompanying sound, the channel must be broadcasting a high-definition signal and you must have the appropriate HDTV equipment to receive and view it.

When you start shopping, keep in mind that HDTV requires three parts:

- A HDTV broadcast source - the programmer
- A way to translate the signal - as our cooperatives will do in the near future
- An HDTV set - to receive the signal at your location

LaValle and Richland-Grant Telephone Cooperatives are testing our HDTV service this winter. We will continue to monitor our test stations for HDTV connectivity and quality. We know our customers have been eager to receive this service from us so we hope to have our testing complete and offer several HD channels to our customers in 2008.

Is Your Computer Under the Weather?

LaValle and Richland-Grant customers are fortunate to have skilled computer repair services right in the Richland-Grant office, where our MWT help desk technicians do general PC restoration.

Our technical support staff can do custom motherboard, processor, and hard drive replacements, along with upgrades, such as memory upgrades. Or if you need data transfers, simple data recovery, computer networking, or removal of viruses and spyware, we can help! LaValle customers, can take advantage of this convenient service, too.

LaValle customers may simply bring their computers to the LTC office and we will transport them to RGTC for you. Once your problem is diagnosed, we'll give you a quote before completing your repair.



!On Wisconsin! Catch the Games on RGTC/LTC Video Channel 30

WISCONSIN MEN'S BASKETBALL ON THE BIG TEN NETWORK		
11/4	EDGEWOOD COLLEGE	7 PM
11/7	UW-EAU CLAIRE	8 PM
11/11	IUPUI-FT. WAYNE	5 PM
11/15	SAVANNAH STATE	8 PM
11/16	FLORIDA A&M	7 PM
11/17	COLORADO	7 PM
11/24	GEORGIA	5:30 PM
12/15	UW-GREEN BAY	5 PM
12/22	VALPARAISO	7:30 PM
1/2	@ MICHIGAN	6 PM
1/5	IOWA	11 AM
1/15	@ PENN STATE	8 PM
1/19	NORTHWESTERN	8 PM
2/3	@ MINNESOTA	1 PM
2/6	@ IOWA	8 PM
2/9	PURDUE	8 PM
2/13	@ INDIANA	6 PM
2/16	MINNESOTA	1 PM
2/20	@ ILLINOIS	8 PM
3/8	@ NORTHWESTERN or @ NORTHWESTERN	4 PM
3/9	@ NORTHWESTERN	11 AM



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SCHOLARSHIP

REMINDER:

WSTF and Foundation for Rural Service scholarship forms are available from your high school guidance offices or by calling the Richland-Grant or LaValle offices

NEW: Computer Security Protection with Managed Installation and Support

Our coops are pleased to offer a new robust security tool, SecureIT Plus, for business and consumers. Your time is valuable and so is the data on your computer. But if you're like many of us, you may not be a computer security expert. Even if you choose a software security tool for your computer, configuring these programs can require security expertise. SecureIT Plus provides computer security with the added benefit of personal support that is not available from most software security solutions on the market today. You get personalized technical support for your installation- plus a service guarantee.

Do you find yourself engaging in any of the following activities on your computer or while using the Internet?

- ✓ Storing sensitive or private information on your computers such as financial software (Quicken, Money Central, QuickBooks to name only a few) and business information.
- ✓ Frequently shopping and purchasing online.
- ✓ Frequently browsing the Internet.
- ✓ Frequently using search engines to locate general information.
- ✓ Downloading Internet programs such as instant messaging, weather trackers, and other freeware utilities.
- ✓ Wanting and expecting a high level of performance from your computer.

- ✓ Managing your kids' use of the Internet and attempting to repair your computer when something becomes corrupt.
- ✓ Purchasing a new computer only to watch it get slower and slower since plugging into the Internet.

If you answered yes to any of the activities listed above, then SecureIT Plus can help ensure that your computer is optimized and secure.

SecureIT Plus provides fully automated protection and removal of viruses, spyware, adware, automated installation of tested Microsoft patches, and monthly e-mail reporting. It also provides comprehensive security protection to stop viruses and worms from invading your computer, and/or sending out e-mails on its behalf, and potentially stopping the computer from functioning. **Best of all you receive free professional installation, technical support, and guaranteed protection for this service - All for just \$4.95 per month on your monthly RGTC or LTC bill.**

These services are guaranteed and are updated automatically. If you do have problems with an Internet-delivered issue while using SecureIT Plus services, your computer will be repaired by SecureIT's technical support team at no charge. At just \$4.95 per month, you'll find your computing and Internet experience much more fun and productive. Please call our cooperative offices today and get started immediately with this great new service.