



Rural broadband study committee wraps up

The Legislative Council Study Committee on Rural Broadband completed its review of the Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant Program on Oct. 5. Over three meetings, the group examined alternative methods for encouraging construction of broadband infrastructure. Cooperative Network director and Mosaic Telecom CEO Scott Behn served on the committee.

“Wisconsin’s communications cooperatives were pioneers in bringing broadband to the rural areas they serve,” Behn said. “I felt it was important to participate in the committee to be sure the money goes to communities where it’s most needed.”

The committee made the following recommendations:

- Maintain current law regarding locations eligible for grant funding or activities for which funds may be used.
- Further define projects that promote economic development and those that affect areas with no broadband service providers.
- Give priority to projects that don’t duplicate broadband service infrastructure

—continued on back page—

Cooperative Builder honorees announced

Early bird annual meeting registration ends October 19

David Cramer, United Cooperative president and CEO; Tim Harrington, Premier Cooperative chairman; and Judy Ziewacz, National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA CLUSA) president and CEO, will receive Cooperative Network’s 2016 Cooperative Builder Award. The annual distinction honors individuals who have made outstanding contributions at the local, state, and/or national level to advance cooperative philosophy and ideals. Cramer, Harrington, and Ziewacz will be recognized at a Nov. 14 evening banquet during the Cooperative Network annual meeting, Nov. 14–16, at the Holiday Inn and Convention Center in Stevens Point, Wisconsin.

The theme of the meeting is Cooperatives Build, celebrating the partnerships, innovation, and commitment that set cooperatives apart. Sessions will address key economic trends, communications-centered initiatives for growth, cooperatives in higher education, and an election recap.

A full schedule, speaker bios, lodging, election, and registration information are online at www.cooperativesbuild2016.com.



David Cramer
United Cooperative



Tim Harrington
Premier Cooperative



Judy Ziewacz
NCBA CLUSA

October is Co-op Month

Our Cooperative Story showcases co-op difference



Cooperative Network has launched www.ourcooperativestory.coop in celebration of national Co-op Month and the many ways "Cooperatives Build." Each day, the blog features a new video or photo story from a cooperative in Minnesota or Wisconsin. Sign up online to receive posts by email or watch for them on social media.

Many thanks to the cooperatives that opened their doors to this project and to the CHS Foundation for its funding support.

Call for auction items!

Please support our cooperative political action committees.

Silent and live auction proceeds at the annual meeting help fund the campaigns of legislators who have consistently supported priority issues for cooperatives.

Minnesota residents:

Contact Vicky Chaput
vicky.chaput@cooperativenetwork.coop

Wisconsin residents:

Contact John Manske
john.manske@cooperativenetwork.coop

Please note that by law, we can only accept donations from individuals.

November elections promise tight races

Early voting has begun in Wisconsin, with the state's focus on the Nov. 8 general election. Victors will fill the U.S. Senate seat, all eight U.S. House seats, half of the State Senate (even-numbered districts) and all Assembly seats. The GOP currently holds majorities in the State Assembly (63-36) and State Senate (19-14).

Among the most intensely fought and anticipated elections are the following races:

- **U.S. Senate:** Former U.S. Sen. Russ Feingold vs. Republican U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson. Libertarian Phillip Anderson is also on the ballot.
- **8th Congressional District:** Republican primary winner Mike Gallagher (Green Bay) vs. Democrat Tom Nelson (Appleton).
- **18th State Senate District:** Republican Daniel Feyen (Fond du Lac) vs. Democrat Mark Harris (Oshkosh).
- **Assembly District 50:** Incumbent Republican Ed Brooks (Reedsburg) vs. Democrat Art Shrader (Reedsburg).
- **Assembly District 51:** Incumbent Republican Todd Novak (Dodgeville) vs. Democrat Jeff Wright (Plain).
- **Assembly District 67:** Republican Rob Summerfield (Bloomer) vs. Democrat Dennis Hunt (Chippewa Falls).
- **Assembly District 85:** Former Democratic Rep. Mandy Wright (Wausau) vs. Republican Patrick Snyder (Schofield).

Voters must produce proper photo identification at the time they vote.

Comprehensive election information is available at www.wisconsinvote.org.



Upcoming Events

December 12

Co-op Directors Forum

Discuss the most pressing questions related to equity, board governance, and legal issues your cooperative faces. Early registration ends Nov. 30. This program is offered in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives. Details are online at cooperativenetwork.coop.

USDA funds rural co-op development

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of Rural Development has awarded \$200,000 to the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives (UWCC) and Cooperative Network to provide technical assistance and counseling to more than 150 existing cooperatives and 25 groups interested in forming new cooperative businesses in the Upper Midwest. UWCC and Cooperative Network will use the funds to address five key issues in rural areas: regional food systems, broadband access, senior cooperative housing, business succession, and cooperative education.

This is the sixth year Cooperative Network and UWCC have received USDA's Rural Cooperative Development Grant, which was awarded to 29 grantees in 22 states this year.

Stakeholders weigh in on RevEx final report

Stakeholders gathered Sept. 28 at the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) in Madison to review a draft of the agency's RevEx (revenues and expenditures) final report, which made recommendations on eight issues pertaining to the future of the Agrichemical Management (ACM) Fund and Agricultural Chemical Cleanup Program (ACCP).

Among the key recommendations were allowing fee holidays and approving reductions for the ACM Fund, simplifying pesticide registration, reducing surcharges and the maximum ACCP fund balance, and revising inspection fees for commercial feed manufacturers and distributors.

The RevEx project was a comprehensive review of the ACM Bureau's programs

to ensure that fees are "assessed equitably, collected efficiently, and spent effectively." More than 60 stakeholders participated in 11 stakeholder meetings from October 2015 through this past month, including Cooperative Network and several Cooperative Network members. The statutory recommendations are expected to be included in Gov. Scott Walker's 2017-19 biennial budget bill.

Rural broadband

—continued from front page—

and to projects that won't delay the provision of broadband to communities that neighbor areas to be served by a proposed project.

- Maintain current law requiring priority be given to projects that include matching funds, involve public-private partnerships, are scalable, or affect a large geographic area or a large number of underserved individuals or areas (www.broadbandmap.wisconsin.gov).

Funding for the grant program will be derived annually by the Public Service Commission through the Universal Service Fund assessment beginning in fiscal year 2019-20.

Co-op Calendar

Oct. 19—Employment Law Update, Eau Claire, Wis.

Nov. 14-16—Cooperative Network Annual Meeting, Stevens Point, Wis.

Dec. 7—Farm Supply Committee Meeting, Location TBD

Dec. 12—Co-op Directors Forum, Baraboo, Wis.

For more information about these events, call (608) 258-4400 or go to www.cooperativenetwork.coop.

Cooperative Network **Contact** 

Prepared and distributed to provide timely information on matters pertaining to Wisconsin's member-owned cooperatives.

Cooperative Network

1 S. Pinckney St., Suite 810
Madison, WI 53703-2869
(608) 258-4400 fax: (608) 258-4407
www.cooperativenetwork.coop