

September 2021

Horizons

A Special Annual Meeting Edition

Family Principles Guide Fourth-Generation Grocer

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Family Principles Guide Fourth-Generation Grocer

When RF Buche was four years old, he snuck out of his house in Gregory during a blizzard and walked through the snow just to spend time with his dad. His destination? The family grocery store.

“He told me I couldn’t go with him that day because there was a blizzard,” RF recalls. “I guess I didn’t listen.”

RF’s early passion for the business laid the foundation for his future. The fourth-generation retailer proudly carries on his family’s legacy ... and is already eyeing his eventual successor.



RF Buche checks the meat department.

Be Our GEST

GF Buche Company has been a mainstay in South Dakota since 1905, when RF’s great-grandfather Gus opened his first store in Lake Andes. Today, the company operates grocery and convenience stores in 19 locations across the state. Auto parts, hardware, and lumber stores round out this mini empire on the prairie.

Any company that has been in business for over a century is doing something right. RF credits his success to wisdom he gleaned from his dad and grandpa.

“They taught me that the two most important things to do in business are taking care of your customers and taking care

of your people,” he shares. “We have an expectation of customer service in our stores we call GEST, which stands for Greeting, Eye contact, Smile, Thank you. Our team, we treat like family.”

These four guiding principles help Buche Foods stand apart in the crowded grocery business.

“Obviously, everybody has the same can of Van Camp’s Pork and Beans to sell,” RF explains. “My dad taught me a long time ago that you’ll go broke trying to be the cheapest all the time. We focus on fair pricing but differentiate ourselves with our service. We also invest back in our communities.”

Several employees have retired after 40 or more years. RF believes their longevity is the result of the genuine care he has for his staff.

“Being able to communicate with them, to know what’s going on in their lives – that’s what keeps people working for us,” he says. “We try to make a difference in their lives.”

Proactive Approach Keeps Shelves Stocked

When COVID-19 was declared a pandemic in March 2020, grocery stores were one of the first places to feel the effects.

Between mask mandates, directional arrows, and shortages on everything



We have an expectation of customer service in our stores we call GEST, which stands for Greeting, Eye contact, Smile, Thank you. Our team, we treat like family.

RF Buche

from meat to toilet paper, shopping became a stressful experience for many. Buche Foods’ proactive approach helped cushion the blow for customers in rural communities throughout South Dakota.

“We had the same challenges everyone had,” RF says. “Product shortages, trying to determine what is and isn’t safe, extra cleaning, a magnitude of things.”

In order to tackle the problem head-on, Buche Foods began holding daily manager meetings in which each store discussed what was going on in their community, which products were hard to keep in stock, and what their customers were saying.

“Collaboratively, we came up with a recipe for success,” RF explains. “We didn’t have the outs and shortages other stores did and our customer satisfaction was high. We said, look, we aren’t just here for ourselves and the bottom line; we’re here for our customers and our community. We worked very hard, and it reinvigorated everybody.”

One reason Buche Foods was able to avoid the product shortages that plagued so many other grocers was their ability to shift items around between stores. RF and his

team allocated product between higher- and lower-volume stores, shifting everything from cake mix to toilet paper where it was needed most. As a result, customers from Pine Ridge to Mission and Gregory were likely to find what they needed at Buche Foods, whether they shopped online or in person.

“We took every truckload we could get and moved it around all our stores,” he says. “We didn’t care what it cost us and if we were driving from Wagner to Gregory for one case of mac ‘n cheese. It was a tough time and we wanted to keep everybody satisfied.”

No Signs of Slowing Down

GF Buche Company is still going strong 116 years later and business shows no signs of slowing down.

“We’re in a real growth pattern right now and will continue with it,” RF says. “We’re always looking for locations that fit our footprint and style.”

When the day comes for RF to step down, he’s confident there will be a fifth generation to take the reins. He and his wife Tammi have four children: Molly, Shannon, Gus, and Gracie. And with their first grandchild on the way, it isn’t unreasonable to think there might be a sixth generation waiting in the wings. But RF says that’s a ways off.

“I’ve been in this store since before I could walk and plan to keep charging ahead!”



Buche’s Pine Ridge staff: Kraig Peterson, manager; Tamera Vocu and Rayelte Provost, customer service and check out.

Meeting Allows MEMBERS TO VOTE

Members who attend the 69th Annual Meeting of the Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc. will vote in director elections and on amendments to the organization's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

The meeting will be held on Saturday, Sept. 25, in the Wall High School gymnasium. Registration will run from 8:30 to 10 a.m., when the meeting is called to order. The meeting includes a president's report and a management report, as well as door prizes. *See page 8 for additional meeting details.*

The meeting will once again have a simplified schedule and more space for social distancing. Other safety protocols will be in place again this year, in response to COVID-19.

Director Elections

Registered members in attendance will elect four directors to fill four-year terms on the cooperative board. All four incumbents are seeking re-election; two face challengers. *See pages 6 and 7 for additional details.*

Amendments to Articles & Bylaws

Members will vote on amendments to the cooperative's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws this year, as well. The amendments are the result of a year-long review of the governing document by employees and board members. The amendments are designed to improve Golden West's governance practices, and lead to better representation and increased member engagement and participation. They cover:

- **General language cleanup.**
- **Director qualifications and eligibility.**
- **Flexibility for membership communications, meetings, and voting.**

Members will vote on these three areas through four ballot items. One item covers amendments to the articles of incorporation and three cover amendments to the bylaws.

General language cleanup accounts for most of the bylaw amendments. This involves using the same verbiage throughout the document. For example, the amendments consistently refer

to the co-op as a "Cooperative" instead of "Association" and to members as "individual or entity" instead of "person."

Cleanup amendments also address clerical and oversight issues and detail changes that better align the bylaws with current cooperative processes and practices. Examples include listing the Pine Ridge office with the others for filing director petitions, removing references to wholesale stores, and clarifying that it is the members of the cooperative who are entitled to capital credits.

Director qualifications and eligibility clarifies criteria for becoming and remaining a director and the process for director nominations. The objective is not to exclude people, but to ensure the best representation for members.

The amendments require directors to be established residents of the districts they represent. They limit close relationships to incumbent directors and employees with the goal of representing members consistently and equally. The amendments also set expectations for meeting attendance to ensure directors are committed to their role for their entire term.

Flexibility for membership communications, meetings, and voting amendments will allow additional methods. This makes things like holding virtual meetings, sending electronic

meeting notices, postponing meetings when necessary, and voting in alternate ways at member meetings possible.

These amendments modernize annual meeting options. They also allow the possibility for greater involvement by permitting the removal of geography as a barrier. At this time there are no specific changes planned. Alternate options will be explored if and when the bylaws allow it.

Review Amendments Before Meeting

Golden West mailed every member a copy of the articles and bylaws showing the proposed changes in full. It hit mailboxes earlier this month in the same envelope as the annual report, which serves as the official annual meeting notice.

For more information about the proposed changes to the articles and bylaws, visit goldenwest.com/annualmeeting.

2020 Annual Meeting MINUTES

The Annual Meeting of the members of Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc., was called to order at 11:00 a.m., September 26, 2020, at the Wall High School, Wall, South Dakota by President Jeff Nielsen. Said meeting was held pursuant to notice thereof as required by law. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Jeff Nielsen.

President Nielsen then called upon Darla Pollman Rogers, attorney for the cooperative, who gave the credential report. A motion was made and seconded to approve a quorum. Motion carried.

President Nielsen proposed amending the agenda, in the interest of time, to move the president's report and general manager's report to follow balloting. A motion was made and seconded to amend the agenda in this way. Motion carried.

Next, President Nielsen called upon Kenneth Tonsager, Jr., secretary, to read the notice of meeting and the proof of mailing, after which a certified copy of each was duly filed as part of the minutes of this meeting.

President Nielsen introduced the special guests in attendance at the meeting.

President Nielsen asked that the minutes of the 2019 annual meeting be approved, if there were no additions or corrections, as written. On a motion duly made, seconded, and unanimously carried, the president declared the minutes approved.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the financial report.

President Nielsen welcomed the cooperative members and introduced the present Board of Directors of Golden West.

President Nielsen called on Darla Pollman Rogers, attorney, to report on the nominating petitions for the Board of Directors. Vacancies on the Board of Directors were as follows:

- District III - Lee Briggs (four-year term) one vacancy with one candidate
- District V - Stu Marty (four-year term) one vacancy with one candidate

District IX - Jeff Nielsen (four-year term) one vacancy with one candidate

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to seat the uncontested incumbents:

District III: Lee Briggs

District V: Stu Marty

District IX: Jeff Nielsen

Darla Pollman Rogers, attorney, introduced the director candidates for District II: Gerry Sloat, Judy Goldhammer, Ryan Kjerstad, and Tanner Handcock. Each candidate was allotted three minutes to address the membership.

Next, Darla Pollman Rogers advised the membership of the balloting process and requested that the ballots for the election of director be handed out. After the membership had the opportunity to vote, the ballots were collected by a three-member balloting committee appointed by the Board of Directors to count the ballots and report to the membership. The members of the balloting committee were: Gaylord Hansen of Wall Lake, Michele Jensen of Hot Springs, and Judy Yocum of Wall.

Darla Pollman Rogers then discussed the proposed amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc.

Following membership discussion, Darla Pollman Rogers again advised the membership of the balloting process and requested that the ballots for the proposed amendments to the articles and bylaws be handed out. After the membership had the opportunity to vote, the ballots were collected. The same three-member balloting committee was used to oversee the ballot counting and report to the membership.

President Nielsen delivered his presidential report, discussing the challenges our members faced and their resiliency throughout the year. He also shared that Golden West has two-thirds of the service area converted to fiber optics and how this has helped keep

folks connected. President Nielsen also recognized Rod Renner for his 48 years of service to the Golden West Board of Directors and he received a standing ovation.

Next, President Nielsen called on Denny Law, general manager/CEO, to present his annual report. Mr. Law spoke about how Golden West and its employees share the values found among South Dakotans. And although the past year has been difficult for many, Golden West remained steadfast in its commitment to get and keep people connected and help members financially. Even in the face of a global pandemic, Golden West has continued its efforts to improve infrastructure and advocate on behalf of its members. Law also thanked Rod Renner for his 48 years of service to the cooperative as a member of the Board of Directors. Noting that Rod is the epitome of what being a good person is all about.

Drawings were held to give away more than 20 door prizes. Meal tickets were distributed to audience members in attendance.

President Nielsen called for any old business. There was none.

President Nielsen called for any new business. Jeff Nielsen answered one question; no action was taken.

Following new business, Darla Pollman Rogers announced the election results: Tanner Handcock was elected director for District II (four-year term).

Darla Pollman Rogers also announced the balloting results regarding the proposed amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. Both the results from the amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and the amendments to the Bylaws did not pass.

The grand prize \$500 check went to Marvin and Debra Moors.

President Nielsen adjourned the meeting.


Kenneth Tonsager, Jr. - Secretary

Vote in Four Director Seat Elections

Golden West Cooperative members will elect four members to four-year terms on the Board of Directors. To vote, members must be present at the September 25 annual meeting and may vote for a candidate in each district that has a director opening.



JADE HLAVKA – District I, Unopposed Incumbent

Jade Hlavka is a business owner and helps operate the family ranch near Howes. He has served on the Golden West Board of Directors since 2013. Jade graduated from Faith High School and received his degree in diesel technology from Western Dakota Tech in Rapid City.

Jade and his wife, Annie, own and operate H&H Repair. They have three boys who keep them on their toes. Jade is also a volunteer fire fighter for the Enning Fire Department. He enjoys fishing, hunting, and spending time with his family.



DAVE ASSMAN – District IV, Challenger

Dave Assman is a business owner and lifelong resident of the Mission area. He graduated from Todd County High School and completed two years of agricultural business courses at South Dakota State University.

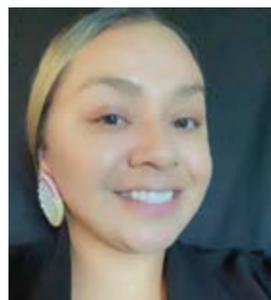
Dave and his wife, Diana, own and operate Assman Implement, a farm equipment dealership started by his parents in 1969. Diana retired from Golden West after 30 years of service. Dave has served on the Farm Credit Services Regional Board for 10 years, Cherry Todd Electric for two terms, and is currently serving as a Todd County commissioner. They have four adult children, the youngest of whom manages their ranching and organic farming operation.



KENNETH ZICKRICK, JR. – District IV, Incumbent

Kenneth “Sonny” Zickrick, Jr., is a lifelong resident of Long Valley. He has served on the Golden West Board of Directors since 1978. During this time, he served as secretary of Golden West Telecommunications and four of its subsidiaries for several years. Kenneth graduated from Kadoka High School and received a two-year degree in accounting from National School of Business. He taught at a country school for one year and worked at an implement dealer and body shop before taking over operation of the family farm and ranch with his wife Echo and brother Bob.

Kenneth was a founding member of the Long Valley Fire Department and remained active until he was no longer able to fight fires. He is a member of the Long Valley Cemetery Board and enjoys traveling and attending car races and auto shows.



AMANDA ANTOINE – District IV, Challenger

Amanda Antoine was born and raised on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in Mission. She has worked for the Rosebud Sioux Tribe (RST) Enrollment Department for the past 11 years. Amanda currently attends Sinte Gleska University, where she is working toward her bachelor’s degree in business management.

Amanda is a mother of four and active in the community. She volunteers for the Todd County 4-H Club and Girl Scout Troop 72237. She also serves on the Todd County Middle School Parent Committee and RST Education Task Force.



MURDOCK ARTHUR – District VI, Challenger

Murdock Arthur grew up on a ranch in Milesville. He graduated from Philip High School and received his degree in telecommunications from Mitchell Technical College. After graduating, he moved to Wyoming and began a career with RT Communications. Murdock moved to South Dakota in 2013 and worked for Golden West as a plant technician and eventually a supervisor before exploring other opportunities.

Murdock and his wife, Brittany, live at Cactus Flat, where he is pursuing his love for ranching. He enjoys hunting, fishing, and spending time with his family.



DALE GUPTILL – District VI, Incumbent

Dale Guptill was born in Martin and raised on a ranch near Kyle. He has served on the Golden West Board of Directors since 1985. Dale graduated from Kadoka High School and attended South Dakota State University in Brookings.

Dale and his wife, Valerie, purchased their home ranch and raised three children, along with grain, seed, cattle, grasshoppers, and even a few prairie dogs! In addition to three grown children, they have six grandchildren.



BART BIRKELAND – District VII, Unopposed Incumbent

Bart Birkeland grew up on a ranch south of Dupree and currently lives in Gregory. He has served on the Golden West Board of Directors since 2010. Bart received a degree in business administration from Northern State University and worked in the rural electric business for 38 years, including serving as the general manager of the Rosebud Electric Cooperative for 25 years. He is now retired.

Bart and his wife, Karen, have resided in Gregory for 28 years. They have two adult sons, Jeff and Jason, and three grandchildren. He enjoys golfing, woodworking, riding his motorcycle, and spending time with his grandkids.

Attention Businesses, Churches, School Districts, Towns, Etc.

AUTHORIZATION TO VOTE

Non-individual members of Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc., such as school districts, towns, churches, corporations, and LLCs wishing to vote at the annual meeting must complete this form and present it at the registration desk on September 25, 2021. This includes all businesses, regardless of organizational structure. Each member organization should designate a representative who is an officer, stockholder, or member of their organization.

This form must be signed by an officer or member of the governing body of the non-individual member being represented.

This is to certify that _____ is hereby
(Name of Person)

designated the delegate to the Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc., Annual Meeting on September 25, 2021,
from _____ whose phone number or account number is _____
(Name of Non-Individual member)

Named delegate is authorized to vote on all issues that may come before the meeting including election of directors.

By: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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Please Join Us for the

69th Annual Meeting

Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc.

Saturday, September 25

Wall School Gym,

401 South Blvd., Wall, SD

Park & Enter on West Side of Building

Registration: 8:30 to 10 a.m.

Meeting Called to Order: 10 a.m.

Meal tickets distributed after the meeting.

**Register for the \$500 grand prize,
plus numerous cash and other prizes.**

Must be present to win.

*The time and location once again allow for a
simplified schedule and more space for
social distancing.*

Golden West
TELECOMMUNICATIONS

PO Box 411, Wall, SD 57790



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