

70 YEARS
1953
2023



THE Connection

SAME MISSION, NEW MILESTONES.

2023 YEAR IN RECAP

Happy New Year! From everyone at GBT, we hope 2023 is off to a great start and you were able to spend some time relaxing with family. The New Year is a time for a lot of us to hit the stop/start button. It is often a time when we reflect on the last year's work and contemplate what's ahead for the coming year. Personally, this might be an upcoming vacation, graduation, wedding, a new job or even welcoming a family member.

All these thoughts can become a little overwhelming because any long-term plan you develop is rarely a piece of perfection. They are filled with a lot of unknowns: Who is doing the work? When are we doing it? How do we get the supplies? Do we have the financial being to do this? How will the current state of the economy affect us? **At GBT, when we plan for the coming year, we use history and our mission as our guidance.**

Our Board of Directors has been razor focused on the long-term sustainability of the Cooperative. This focus has led us to the front of the Broadband Revolution at a time when the conversation has garnered attention across the country because of the Pandemic. The GBT Board gave the direction to begin plowing fiber to its members in 2007, and now in 2023, we are 97% complete! In 2022, we set out on our mission to connect more members with a fiber connection. As part of that mission, the rural areas of Garfield and nearly all the Bison exchange were completed, along with the City of St. John. The Cooperative covers over 3,200 square miles with 1.6 members

per mile, so this mark comes with a lot of pride by the GBT Staff. It coincides with our commitment to our mission in providing a great experience to our customers with a reliable state-of-the-art broadband service.

As 2023 begins, the Cooperative has plans to celebrate a lot of milestones. The first of which is celebrating its 70th year in operation! The Cooperative has withstood the many changes in technology, expanded its service offerings, been operated by a committed staff, and guided by the direction of the Board to be well positioned in the industry. Our team has several events and giveaways planned during the year to celebrate this milestone with our members. In conjunction with celebrating our 70th year, GBT plans to be 100% fiber-to-the-home to all its members by the end of the year! The rural exchanges of Burdett, Otis, Utica, and Beeler will be constructed, giving members access to speeds of 1 GIG!

I would be remiss to not mention the dedicated Staff at GBT. They make every milestone we eclipse possible and take a lot of pride in delivering on the latest technology and reliability you expect. In a year filled with challenges, our committed staff worked tirelessly to connect more members. All of us are very proud to work for you and with you.

Over the course of time, these yearly resets lead to your personal or company story. All of us at GBT are incredibly thankful for each of you, our customers/members and communities we serve. Cheers to a wonderful 2023, and all of us at GBT hope this chapter is a great one in your story!

- Beau Rebel
GBT General Manager

70 years.

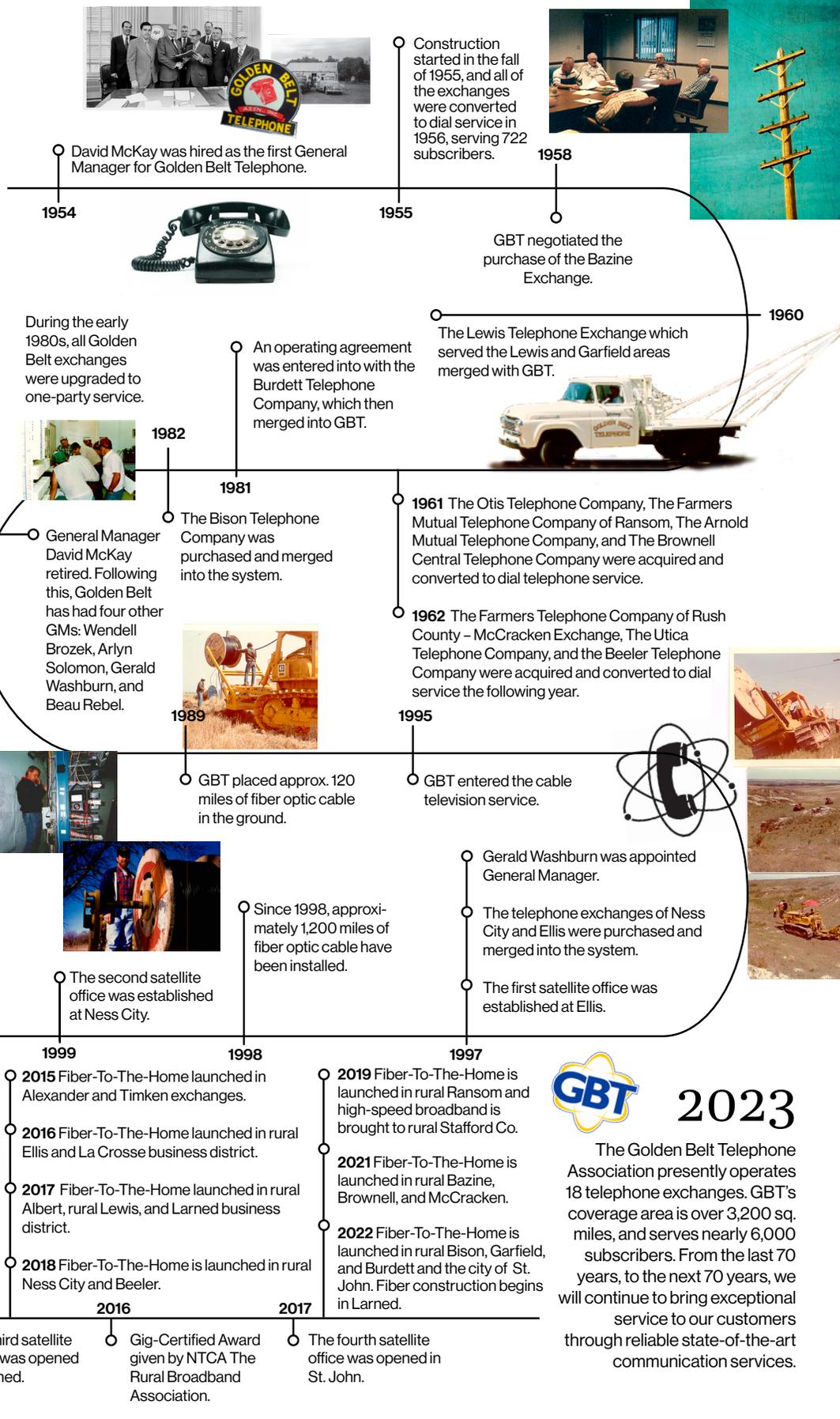
For the past seven decades, GBT has stood the test of time by staying ahead of rapidly changing technology, and continuously committing to connect our communities. Here's a glance at our past 70 years and how we got to where we are today!

1953

Labor Day 1949 President Harry S. Truman announced the Rural Electrification Act would be amended to provide loans for the development of modern telephone service in rural areas. Herman Folkerts, a director of the Albert Telephone Company took this announcement seriously, and visited with neighboring telephone companies about the possibility of consolidating and improving telephone service with the help of the REA Telephone Loan Program.

1952 Meetings were held with a number of the boards of directors of various telephone companies in the area. Five of these companies were: The Albert Telephone Company, The Pivonka Telephone Company of Timken, The Farmers Telephone Company of Rush County – Nekoma Exchange, Rush Center Telephone Company, and The Farmers Telephone Company of Rozel. These five companies agreed to purchase the Alexander Telephone Company.

January 2, 1953 The Golden Belt Telephone Association incorporated. The original board members were: William F. Schroter, President; Martin Hemken, Vice President; Walter W. Becker, Secretary-Treasurer; Charles M. Arnold; Roland Bahr; Herman Folkerts; James Jecha; Parm Renner; and Earl Ratliff.



2023

\$100,000+ in FRS Scholarships and an All-Expense Paid Trip to Washington DC - Apply today!

FRS Scholarship for High School Seniors

Deadline to Apply: February 8, 2023

Apply now for a \$2,500 General Scholarship for students from rural America to an accredited college, university, or vo-tech school which GBT co-funds with the Foundation for Rural Service! This program seeks to encourage students to return to their rural communities upon completing their education. If your parents or legal guardians receive at least one GBT residential or business service, make sure you apply, as GBT has had multiple past recipients! But there's MORE-\$5,000 James L. Bass Legal Scholarship for students entering first year of law school and Additional Named Scholarships are available-ONE APPLICATION MAKES YOU ELIGIBLE FOR ALL AVAILABLE SCHOLARSHIPS! Go to www.gbta.net/scholarships for the FRS Kaleidoscope link to apply!



Pictured: 2021-2022 FRS Scholarship Winner, Preston Dunn, St. John

FRS Youth Tour to Washington DC

May 31-June 4, 2023

If you are a 16 or 17-year-old high school student whose parents have at least one GBT service, YOU are eligible to apply for the FRS Youth Tour! This all-expense paid trip brings together 100 high school students to Washington DC for 5 days to learn about legislative and government processes and the importance of quality broadband connections. Deadline to Apply: March 1, 2023! Apply at www.gbta.net/scholarships.



Pictured: 2021-2022 FRS Youth Tour Winner, Brooke Herrman, La Crosse



GET TO KNOW YOUR GBT NEIGHBOR

Jean, Human Resources

Tell us about yourself...

I am originally from Northwest Kansas, the big city of Rexford. I am the middle child; 2 older sisters, 2 younger brothers and a younger sister. I met my husband Brent when I was working at Hoxie Implement. He is from Ness City. Annetta (a CSR at GBT and now my current colleague and friend) saw our engagement announcement in the paper and knew I was moving to Ness City. Gerald, GBT's GM at the time, called his Hoxie family and friends to find out about me and the rest is history!

Tell us about your job...

I began working for GBT as a CSR in the Ness City store. I am now working full time out of the Rush Center office providing Human Resources services for GBT. I do miss seeing all of our regulars, but it's nice being able to practice what I went to school for!

What are your non-work highlights of this past year?

Outside of work we have a couple of AirBNB's that keep us pretty busy. This year we opened one in an old Grain Bin that we purchased from the city of Rozel! It is so amazing to get to meet people from all over who enjoy parts of our corner of the world that we all are accustomed to and sometimes take for granted.

Which GBT core value aligns most with your personal values?

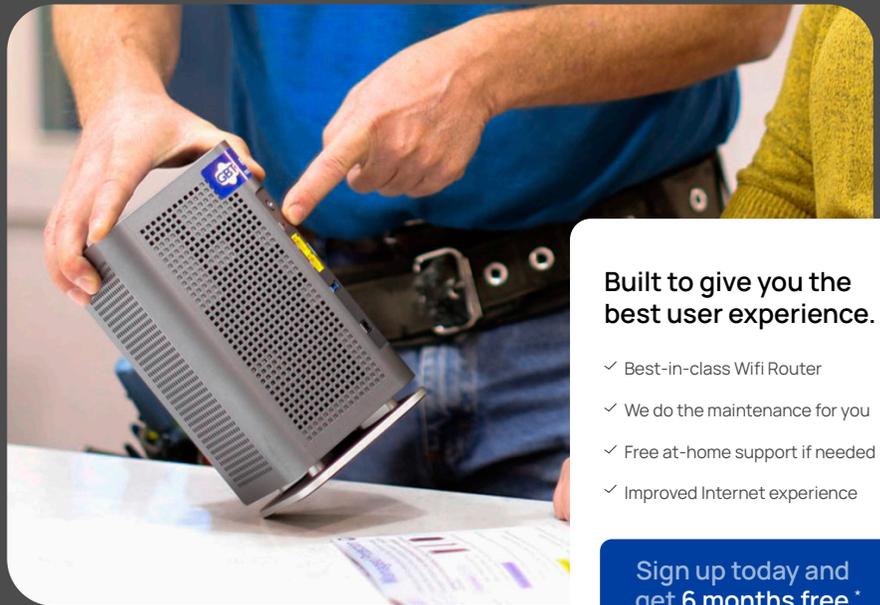
Well, all of them do, but GBT's core value of having a **positive attitude** may be among the most important to me personally. I feel like if you have a positive attitude the rest of the values seem to stem from that one!

What advice would you give to yourself when you first started working for GBT?

Don't be afraid of making mistakes. If you aren't making mistakes, it means you aren't doing anything!

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- ✓ Free at-home support if needed
- ✓ Improved Internet experience

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*Offer valid through 1/31/23. Certain restrictions may apply.

Game of the Month:

Did you hear? It's our 70th year! **To celebrate we will be giving away \$70 in free Internet to a customer each month.** Giveaways will happen here in the newsletter and on our Facebook account, so make sure to pay attention to both! This month, answer the question *"What's one fun or memorable experience you've had that includes technology?"* It could be anything from a funny story you have about the old telephone party line, to your first computer, to being able to watch your niece's wedding on Facebook because you couldn't make it in person. Email your answer to gbthunting@gbta.net and you'll be entered to win \$70 to go toward your GBT Internet bill!! Congratulations to *Scott Higgason* for winning December's game!

Recipe of the Month:

Creamy Spicy Lasagna

Great for when you're wanting lasagna...but not all the work. A mix of vegetables simmered with meat, spicy sausage, Italian seasonings, tomatoes, and lasagna noodles. Finish each bowl off with parmesan and serve with your favorite garlic bread. It's warming and so delicious, just like lasagna, but lighter and easier.

Ingredients

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| - 2 tablespoons olive oil | - 1 tablespoon dried basil | - 1 can (28 ounce) crushed tomatoes |
| - 1 yellow onion, chopped | - 1 tablespoon dried oregano | - 1/2 cup milk or cream |
| - 1/2 cup chopped, celery | - 2 teaspoons dried thyme | - 1 cup shredded provolone cheese |
| - 2 red bell peppers, chopped | - 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes | 1/2 cup grated parmesan |
| - 6 cloves garlic, chopped | - 1/2 cup tomato paste | 8-12 lasagna noodles, broken into pieces |
| - 1/2 pound ground beef | - 1/2 cup dry white wine | |
| - 1/2 pound spicy Italian sausage | - 4 cups chicken broth | |

Instructions

1. Heat the olive oil in a large dutch oven over high heat. Add the onion, celery, and red pepper, and cook until the veggies are softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook 1 minute.
2. Add the meat and sausage. Season with salt and pepper. Cook, breaking up the meat as it cooks, until browned all over, 10 minutes. Add the tomato paste, basil, oregano, thyme, and chili flakes and cook 5 minutes, then pour in

the wine. Add the crushed tomatoes and broth. Season with salt and pepper. Cook 10-20 minutes until thickened slightly.

3. Stir in the milk and cook until warmed through, 10 minutes.

4. Meanwhile, boil the noodles until al dente. Drain and add back to the pot with the cheeses. Ladle the soup into bowls and serve topped with parmesan and fresh herbs. Enjoy!



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 - 1pm; 2pm - 5pm

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



The Connection

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