

# polar connections

Summer 2026



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choose the settings that work for you



# Polar Holds 74th Annual Meeting

## Polar Members Gather to Celebrate Another Year of Connection and Community

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**Board of Directors:**

Amber Meyer, St. Thomas  
Chris Nelson, Edinburg  
Lori Dahl, Brocket  
Dan Johnson, Hoople  
Brian Udby, Lankin  
James Longtin, Neche  
Wes Welch, Park River  
Gordon Johnson, Cavalier  
Scott Kroeger, Arthur

**Chief Executive Officer:**

Tim Olson

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

**On the cover:**



*Polar employees Chelsey Waslaski, Kimberly Lundquist, Aloria Nelson, and Wendy Machart are ready to register members as they arrive for the annual meeting.*

More than 180 members and guests gathered at the Park River American Legion Coliseum on June 18 for Polar Communications’ 74th Annual Members Meeting, an evening celebrating the cooperative’s past, present, and future.

The event began with a welcome from CEO Karl Blake, followed by an invocation by Karson Blake, the Pledge of Allegiance, and remarks by Brooke Doss, representing Senator Kevin Cramer’s office. President Amber Meyer also recognized special guests and introduced members of Polar’s Board of Directors.

As a member-owned cooperative, Polar’s Annual Meeting offers members an important opportunity to learn about the organization’s progress, participate in governance, and connect with fellow community members. A quorum of 102 registered members was present, allowing official business to proceed.

A highlight of the evening was the joint presentation by President Amber Meyer and CEO Karl Blake, who shared updates on Polar Communications’ accomplishments, ongoing initiatives, and its vision for the future. Their remarks underscored the cooperative’s continued commitment to delivering exceptional service, investing in advanced technology, and supporting the communities it serves.

The presentation also marked a significant moment for Polar as members looked ahead to the cooperative’s next chapter. Meyer and Blake reflected on the organization’s strong foundation and the importance of staying focused on member needs while continuing to deliver new opportunities and services to rural North Dakota.

Members also conducted cooperative business during the meeting, including the re-election of Gordon Johnson (District 1), Chris Nelson (District 2), and Lori Dahl (District 3) to three-year terms on the Board of Directors. Their continued service helps ensure that Polar remains guided by local leadership and member priorities.

Attorney DuBois provided an overview of the bylaw changes, while Secretary-Treasurer Lori Dahl delivered the financial report to members.

The cooperative’s commitment to supporting local students was evident as President Meyer and CEO Blake presented the 2026 John G. Walters Scholarship.



**GIG-CERTIFIED PROVIDER**

The scholarships were awarded to students from communities across Polar's service area, recognizing academic achievement, leadership, and community involvement.

Students receiving the 2026 John G. Walters Scholarship were Isabelle Cole, Elizabeth Fedje, Allison Gudmundson, Joslyn Kalbrener, Malory Kemp, Elizabeth Pinke, Caleb Rutherford, Luke Shirek, Ethan Skoog, and McKenna Cole. Additional scholarship recipients who were not in attendance included Miley Agotness, Sophia Beck, Abbie Fischer, Brody Rainsberry, and Jace Rosinski.

Polar also awarded 2026 Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) Scholarships to Joslyn Kalbrener and Malory Kemp, helping support educational opportunities for rural students pursuing their goals.

The meeting also marked an important leadership transition. President Meyer introduced Tim Olson, who will assume the role of CEO of Polar Communications effective July 1, 2026. Members welcomed Olson as he prepares to lead the cooperative into its next chapter of innovation, service, and community investment.

The evening concluded with the traditional prize drawing, and Allen Swartz of Park River took home the \$500 grand prize.

For 74 years, Polar Communications has been guided by the people it serves. Events such as the Annual Members Meeting highlight what makes the cooperative model special: members coming together to shape the future, celebrate achievements, and invest in the success of rural communities. When our communities thrive, we all benefit.

CEO Karl Blake and Board President Amber Meyer report to the members.



# Building on a Strong Foundation

## Tim Olson Begins New Chapter as Polar Communications CEO



In March, Polar Communications announced that Tim Olson would become the company's next CEO and General Manager. Today, that transition is complete, and Tim has officially stepped into the role, continuing a career dedicated to serving our members, employees, and communities.

Tim joined Polar Communications in 1998 and most recently served as Chief Operations Officer. Over nearly three decades, he has helped guide the cooperative through significant technological advancements while staying focused on what matters most: delivering exceptional service and supporting the people who call this region home.

As CEO, Tim brings a deep understanding of both the telecommunications industry and the cooperative values that have shaped Polar since 1952. His leadership comes at a time when reliable connectivity plays an increasingly important role in how our members live, work, learn, and stay connected.

"I am honored to serve as CEO of Polar Communications," said Olson. "Our cooperative has a strong foundation built by the employees, members, and

leaders who came before us. I look forward to working alongside our talented team as we continue investing in our communities, delivering innovative services, and creating the best possible experience for our members."

## Directors Re-elected to Board

Gordon Johnson, Chris Nelson, and Lori Dahl were re-elected to the Polar Board of Directors at the annual meeting on Thursday, June 18, 2026. All three will serve a three-year term.



**Gordon Johnson**  
Cavalier, District 1



**Chris Nelson**  
Edinburg, District 2



**Lori Dahl**  
Brocket, District 3

## Capital Credits

Polar Communications allocates company profits to its patrons. Each year, there is a general retirement (payout) of these allocations. Capital credits are applied as a credit to the August bill. Patrons receiving \$750 or more, as well as those with multiple accounts, will receive a check by mail. Capital credits may be paid in full at age 75 or to the estate of a deceased patron.

***Polar Communications has returned nearly \$40 million in capital credits to members since its founding in 1952.***

# Washington, DC Youth Tour

Since 1995, the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) has been offering a unique educational experience to thousands of high school students across rural America through the Youth Tour. This program brings more than 100 high school students and chaperones from rural communities to Washington, DC, for five days. It's a chance to learn about legislative and agency processes and the crucial role of broadband services in rural communities. The students also get to meet peers from other states, visit historical sites, and gain insights into Capitol Hill and the Federal government.

For more information on the Youth Tour, visit our website or [frs.org/programs](https://frs.org/programs).



**Lauren Solseng**  
Park River Area School



**Katelyn Aamodt**  
Larimore High School

Going to Washington, D.C. was amazing! We did so many fun things, including touring the Capitol, meeting our U.S. representative, visiting the FCC, seeing all the monuments, and seeing so many cool items at the Smithsonian museums. In addition, I learned so much about what it takes to get communication technology to rural areas. Though I think my favorite part was meeting so many new people. I have so many new friends from all over the United States now! I didn't know what to expect when I applied, but I'm so glad I did!

I never thought I could love a city as much as I now love Washington, D.C. On the first day, we toured the Capitol Building and learned about the legislative process. In the afternoon, I had the honor of meeting our North Dakota representative, Julie Fedorchak. The next day, we visited the Federal Communications Commission, toured Mount Vernon, and had a night tour of the Lincoln, Vietnam War, Korean War, World War II, and Martin Luther King Jr. memorials. While at the FCC, we heard from several commissioners and staff about the important work that they do. I appreciated the tour of the memorials and learning some of the history behind them. On our last day, we toured Arlington National Cemetery, toured the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and visited the Smithsonian Museums. Visiting Arlington National Cemetery taught me the necessity of remembering our country's history; of remembering the lives that were given to build and protect the United States of America. It was a truly breathtaking experience to visit our nation's capital. I am tremendously grateful to Polar Communications and the Foundation for Rural Services for making this incredible opportunity possible for me.

# Leadership Team



**Tim Olson**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Ryan Rosinski**  
Chief Operations Officer



**Shari Flanders**  
Chief Financial Officer



**Kristi Gullickson**  
Chief Business  
Development Officer



**Ashley Nordstrom**  
Human Resources  
Manager



**Angie Schroeder**  
Customer Service  
Supervisor



**Jim Praska**  
Outside Plant  
Supervisor



**Kellen Arneson**  
Controller



**Kyle Halvorson**  
Field Operations  
Supervisor



**Evan Sommer**  
Network Operations  
Supervisor



**Stacey Loftsgard**  
Facilities Operations  
Supervisor

# Employees



**Matthew Almen**  
System Administrator



**Ashley Askim**  
Customer Service  
Representative



**Randy Baker**  
Field Technician I



**Owen Bakken**  
Network Technician II



**Jessica Bata**  
Plant Records Specialist



**Chris Buttk**  
Field Technician II



**Carl Caron**  
Field Technician II



**Tamara Cudmore**  
Data Specialist



**Connor Crawford**  
IT Specialist



**David Dvorak**  
Cable Splicer



**Kage Eisenbarth**  
Cable Splicer



**Caitlin Evenson**  
Accountant



**Casey Fering**  
Field Technician I



**Matthew Flora**  
Network Technician I



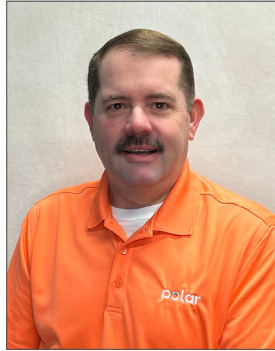
**Jenny French**  
Accounts Payable



**Donnie Gordon**  
Purchasing Coordinator



**Kole Hanson**  
Field Technician II



**Dale Holand**  
Network Technician II



**Kelly Houser**  
Cable Splicer



**Christian Johnson**  
Field Technician I



**Tyler Johnson**  
IT Intern



**Lucas Kindseth**  
System Administrator



**Brett Knudson**  
Network Technician I



**Dennis Kubat**  
Field Technician II



**Jodi LaHaise**  
Plant Records Specialist



**Justin Loftsgard**  
Field Technician II



**Kimberly Lundquist**  
Customer Service  
Representative



**Wendy Machart**  
Data Specialist



**Derrik McRoberts**  
Field Technician II



**Alex Midgarden**  
IT Specialist



**Aloria Nelson**  
Customer Service  
Representative



**Marcus Northagen**  
Field Technician I



**Spencer Potts**  
Network Technician I



**Kris Rainsberry**  
Account Executive



**Luke Reinhold**  
Summer Temporary



**Jon Russell**  
Field Technician II



**Kelli Schatz**  
Customer Service  
Representative



**Tyler Seeba**  
Accountant



**Jill Sweeney**  
Plant Records Specialist



**Mason Thibert**  
Combination Person



**Amy Thompson**  
Administrative Assistant



**Jason Troitte**  
Field Technician I



**Chelsey Waslaski**  
Customer Service  
Representative



**Robyn Watkins**  
Purchasing Coordinator

# Make Your WiFi Yours

## How to Create a Custom WiFi Name (SSID) & Choose the Right Settings

Your WiFi should be easy to recognize, connect to, and manage. Follow this quick guide to create a custom WiFi name and adjust settings that work best for your home.



### Step 1: Create a Custom WiFi Name (SSID)

Your SSID is simply the name of your WiFi network, the one you see when connecting phones, laptops, and smart devices.

#### Why create a custom name?

- Quickly identify your home network
- Avoid accidentally connecting to the wrong WiFi
- Make it easier for family and guests to connect.

*Tip: Choose something simple and easy to recognize. For added security, avoid using personal details.*

### Step 2: Set a Strong WiFi Password

#### Best practices:

- Use a mix of letters, numbers, and symbols
- Avoid common words or names
- Update your password whenever needed

### Step 3: Understand WiFi Bands (2.4 GHz vs. 5 GHz)

Most modern gateways use two WiFi bands. Each is designed to help your devices connect reliably.

#### 2.4 GHz is best for:

- Smart home devices
- Devices far from the gateway
- Older or low power devices

#### Why choose it?

- Longer range
- Better at passing through walls

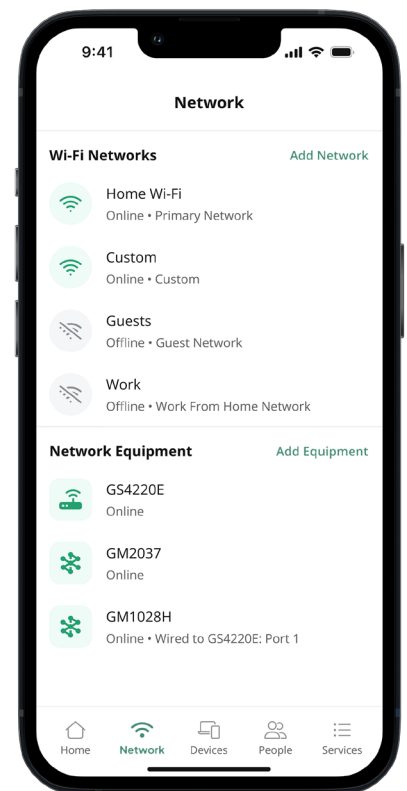
#### 5 GHz is best for:

- Streaming, gaming, and video calls
- Newer phones, tablets, and laptops
- Devices close to the gateway

#### Why choose it?

- Faster speeds
- Less interference

*Pro Tip: If a device isn't connecting, try switching it to the 2.4 GHz band—it's more compatible with many smart home devices.*



## Step 4: How to Choose the Right Setup

### Most homes get the best experience by:

- Letting the system automatically manage both bands, or
- Using a single network name so devices connect to the best band for them

### If you prefer more control, you can:

- Assign specific devices to a specific band
- Create separate names for each band (for advanced users)

## Step 5: Make Changes Anytime

### You're always in control. With your WiFi app, you can:

- Rename your network
- Change your password
- Update your band settings
- Add or remove devices

No technician required!

**polar**  
 polarcomm.com  
 701.284.7221

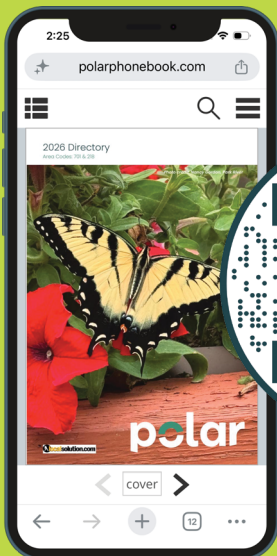


Your home's WiFi can feel like a juggling act. The kids need bandwidth for homework. You need a steady connection for work calls. And everyone wants simplicity and a sense of safety online. The polar WiFi app is designed with users like yours in mind. It's easy to use, packed with tools to keep your WiFi humming, and built to make your day a little less stressful. Whether you're managing a houseful of devices or just want a connection you can trust, we've got you covered.



Contact us today to get the Polar WiFi app, included free with your Polar WiFi service.

Access our directory online at [polarphonebook.com](http://polarphonebook.com)



## Directory Listing Updates

Aaland & Robbins, LLP.....	211 Main St W Cavalier	701-265-8429
Earthwork Services Inc.....	1742 160th St Wolverton	218-995-2653
Franciscans Of Mary Immaculate.....	15613 County Road 15 Minto	701-248-3020
Harvey Ave Saloon - Beavers Cafe.....	149 Harvey Ave Minto	701-248-6181
Minn-Dak Ag.....	4034 40th Ave N Grand Forks	701-746-7453
Nelson County Health System.....	115 South St W Michigan	701-259-2119
Oxton Auto Care LLC.....	612 Washington Ave Northwood	701-587-3440
Skin Rehab.....	15 E 7th St Grafton	701-379-0140
St Gianna's Maternity Home.....	15605 County Road 15 Minto	701-248-3077



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# Phone & Internet Assistance Programs

Lifeline is a federal program dedicated to making phone and Internet service more affordable for low-income households. This benefit provides eligible consumers a monthly discount of up to \$9.25.

For our customers in Minnesota, Minnesota's Telephone Assistance Plan (TAP) offers a monthly credit on your landline telephone service. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission of the Department of Commerce administers and supervises this program. This benefit provides eligible consumers a monthly discount of up to \$10.

## individual eligibility

You qualify for a discount if you participate in any one of these government programs:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Medicaid
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)
- Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

—OR—

- Your income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines.

Lifeline:  
[www.lifelinesupport.org](http://www.lifelinesupport.org)

MTAP:  
[mn.gov/puc/consumers/telephone](http://mn.gov/puc/consumers/telephone)

