August 2022

LCSC Communicator

Regional News, Views, and Information

LAKES COUNTRY Service Cooperative
Together we achieve

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- WEST CENRAL INITIATIVE LOOKING AT REGIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVES
- HOPE HAVEN
- MEDICA FIT CHOICES
- THE MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICE 2022 HUMAN SERVICES AWARD
- DEFINING GREATER FERGUS FALLS IN ONE WORD
- NONPROFIT FUNDAMENTALS TRAINING
- LAKE AGASSIZ REGIONAL LIBRARY
- EXPRESS ONLINE MARKETPLACE

LAKES COUNTRY Service Cooperative

CLICK HERE FOR A LISTING OF OUR CURRENT JOB POSTINGS

An equal opportunity employer

GOVERNMENT-
Electronic Edition
Open the full issue
www.lcsc.org

WHAT ARE THE ATTITUDES ABOUT Climate Change IN OUR REGION?

TAKE THE SURVEY!



Mark Kaelke, WCI's Assistant Community Planner

West Central Initiative (WCI) is conducting a survey and gathering data to create a climate action plan for the region, which includes Becker, Clay, Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Traverse, and Wilkin Counties and White Earth Nation.

WCI's Assistant Community Planner, Mark Kaelke, is leading this project with the help of paleBLUEdot. Located in Maplewood, Minnesota, paleBLUEdot is an organization that provides comprehensive climate change planning, carbon reduction, renewable energy, sustainability assessments, and consulting to businesses and communities. WCI hopes to roll out the regional plan, which will include vulnerability and sustainability assessments, and opportunities to combat climate change, on Earth Day in 2023.

Kaelke moved to Underwood in the fall of 2019. Before moving back to Minnesota, Kaelke worked for 12 years with Trout Unlimited in Alaska to raise conservation standards for critical fish habitats.

Working to protect Alaska's rivers, mountain ranges, and rugged coasts have provided Kaelke with the conservation knowledge and experience needed to engage with WCI's region and to help set the climate action plan into motion.

"We are seeing impacts in our region, such as warmer waters and fertilizer runoff creating algae blooms negatively impacting our lakes," said Kaelke. "This, in turn, can impact fish and recreation on our local lakes. We sometimes take our waters for granted when so many beautiful lakes surround us. This survey will help us determine people's feelings about climate change and the issues that are of most concern to people of the region."

Are you interested in completing this important survey? It only takes a few minutes, and your input is confidential. Follow this link to complete the survey. https://palebluedot.llc/wci-climate-action-survey.

To learn more about WCI Strategic Framework, visit their website at wcif.org.

Source: Mark Kaelke, WCI's Assistant Community Planner, wcif.org, palebluedot.llc
Author: Mary Phillipe, LCSC Communications Generalist

HOPE HAVEN

PROVIDING SHELTER AND WARMTH



In November of 2021, there was an increase in homelessness in our communities.
Individuals faced the reality of staying in dangerous situations, sleeping in their car or outdoors during harsh winter nights.
United Way of Douglas & Pope Counties and West Central MN Communities Action quickly responded and launched Hope Haven, a new program in partnership with the Alexandria Police Department, local churches, and many community partners.
This program ran from January to April 2022 and gave individuals peace of mind by providing a warm, inviting shelter for the night. During the day, guests worked with case managers to secure housing, employment, and stability needed to improve their situation.

Program Results:

- 100% of individuals who stayed with us this winter are now housed
- 600+ volunteers
- 3,000+ volunteer hours

The following church hosts provided overnight shelter and meals for two weeks for Hope Haven guests:

- New Life Christian Church
- Reach Church
- Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
- Calvary Lutheran Church
- St. Mary's
- First Lutheran

United Way
United Way of Douglas & Pope Counties

WEST CENTRAL MINNESOTA
Communities Action

"After my overnight experience, I started going to church service a few times and was able to build closer relationships with people I had met who helped and suggested some good local jobs and work. I am thankful for opportunities Hope Haven program has given me."

- HOPE HAVEN GUEST

COUNTLESS Community Partners, Donors, and Volunteers provided meals, supplies, and donations to make this program possible!
Community support and donations have allowed us to serve our community when problems surge or new issues arise.
Hope Haven will return this November and run from November 28th, 2022, through April 3rd, 2023. If you want more information about this program, contact Jen Jabas at 320-834-7800 or jjabas@uwdp.org.

Source/Author: Heather Molesworth, WCMCA, Director of Family and Community Services and Operations

*THIS PROGRAM IS ONLY AVAILABLE TO CURRENT INSURANCE POOL MEMBERS.

FIT CHOICES



HAVE YOU CONSIDERED JOINING THE GYM BUT DON'T WANT TO PAY FOR THE ENTIRE MEMBERSHIP?

SIGN UP TODAY!

PARTICIPATING HEALTH CLUBS

Fit Choices is here to help you out!

With Fit Choices by Medica, you can save up to $20 a month on gym membership fees just by attending a participating fitness club 8 times a month.

1. Locate and join a participating health club.
2. Present your Medica ID card at your gym.
3. Meet your monthly visit requirement and receive up to **$20** toward your membership fees.



QUESTIONS ABOUT FIT CHOICES OR INSURANCE POOL BENEFITS?

Contact

Reese Ellison
Insurance and Wellness Specialist
Lakes Country Service Cooperative
218-737-6515 (office)



MACSSA
Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators

The Minnesota Association of County Social Service

2022
Human Services Award

DEB SJOSTROM

HER MOTIVATION IS PURE!

The Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) has awarded Deb Sjostrom, Otter Tail County Human Services Director, the 2022 Human Services Award. MACSSA is a professional association of human service administrators serving the citizens of Minnesota's 87 counties. Sjostrom has been a member of MACSSA since 2010 and, during that time, has assumed many leadership roles, including Secretary (2019), President-elect (2020), President (2021), and Past president (2022).

A long-time resident of Otter Tail County, Deb's parents moved from Duluth, Minnesota, to Pelican Rapids when Deb was in first grade. Sjostrom grew up in Pelican Rapids, married her high school sweetheart, and they own and operate a farm in rural Pelican Rapids.

When asked why she began her career in Human Services, Sjostrom replied, "I knew that I wanted to work in a career where I helped people. Growing up, I was always that person my friends could talk to when they needed advice." Sjostrom enrolled in nearby MSUM following her high school graduation. She showed interest in several majors during her time at MSUM. However, always found herself pulled toward a degree in social work. After receiving her Social Work degree at MSUM, Sjostrom began her career at Lake Region Rehab Industries in Moorhead.

She then accepted a position at Lakeland Mental Health Center in a community support program, where she stayed for three years before taking a position at Otter Tail County. Here Sjostrom provided foster care licensure for child and adult foster care. In 2006, Sjostrom was promoted to the Supervisor of the Long-Term Care/Disabilities Services Unit. During this time, Deb was recognized as an up-and-coming leader. She was offered the interim Human Services Director role in 2014 and, in 2015, officially accepted the position of Otter Tail County Human Services Director.

Julie Ellis, Stearns County Human Services Adult and Disability Services Division Director, nominated Sjostrom for the 2022 MACSSA award and had this to say about her commitment to persons in need, "In the process of navigating bureaucracies and complex policy issues, Deb does not lose sight of the constituents and consumers in need of services. Deb is fiercely driven to advocate for others – those in need, marginalized, or underrepresented. Her motivation is pure. She is 100% others-focused."

Continues on next page

Source: Deb Sjostrom, Otter Tail County Human Services Director, Shannon Terry, Otter Tail County Public Information Officer
Author: Mary Phillipe, LCSC Communications Generalist



When asked where people can help, Sjostrom said, "We need caring people to sign up for foster and child care." Sjostrom also shared a need to support critical needs, such as gift cards to purchase food when the local food shelf is unavailable.

"Another way to support one another in our communities is by creating relationships with your neighbor," added Sjostrom.

She recently attended a conference on healthy lifestyles where the speaker discussed the research completed after interviewing subjects who had lived beyond their one-hundredth birthday. Strong relationships were the number one common denominator for people who lived to be over one hundred years. "Get to know your neighbor," said Sjostrom, "Just start by saying hello!"

Sjostrom has witnessed the best of people in our communities and crisis situations where the work of human services personnel can be highly demanding. "I am constantly thinking about the challenges our team faces and what I can do to support and meet the needs of our employees, who do this challenging work."

Garitz Grove, a permanent supportive housing project, is one of the plans Sjostrom is excited to see come to fruition in Otter Tail County. Permanent supportive housing for individuals who may have mental health conditions, substance abuse addictions, or struggling with homelessness has been identified as a need in our community through a needs analysis survey. In 2018, Sjostrom and retired Otter Tail County Human Services Supervisor Margaret Williams identified an opportunity to support this need. Sjostrom and Williams worked together to bring community partners to the table and work collaboratively with these partners, specifically the Fergus Falls HRA, to write and submit a proposal for bonding to fund a 24-unit facility in Otter Tail County. The funding was awarded, and a groundbreaking ceremony to build a permanent supportive housing facility is scheduled to take place in the fall of 2022 and open in the fall of 2023.

Community partners include Fergus Falls HRA, Otter Tail County HRA, Otter Tail County Human Services, MAHUBE OTWA, Lutheran Social Services, Lake Region Healthcare, local law enforcement, Otter Tail County Commissioners, Freedom Resources Center, and the City of Fergus Falls. This 24-unit complex will provide the supportive services necessary for successful recovery and independence and mirrors the already successful models operating in Moorhead and around the state of Minnesota.

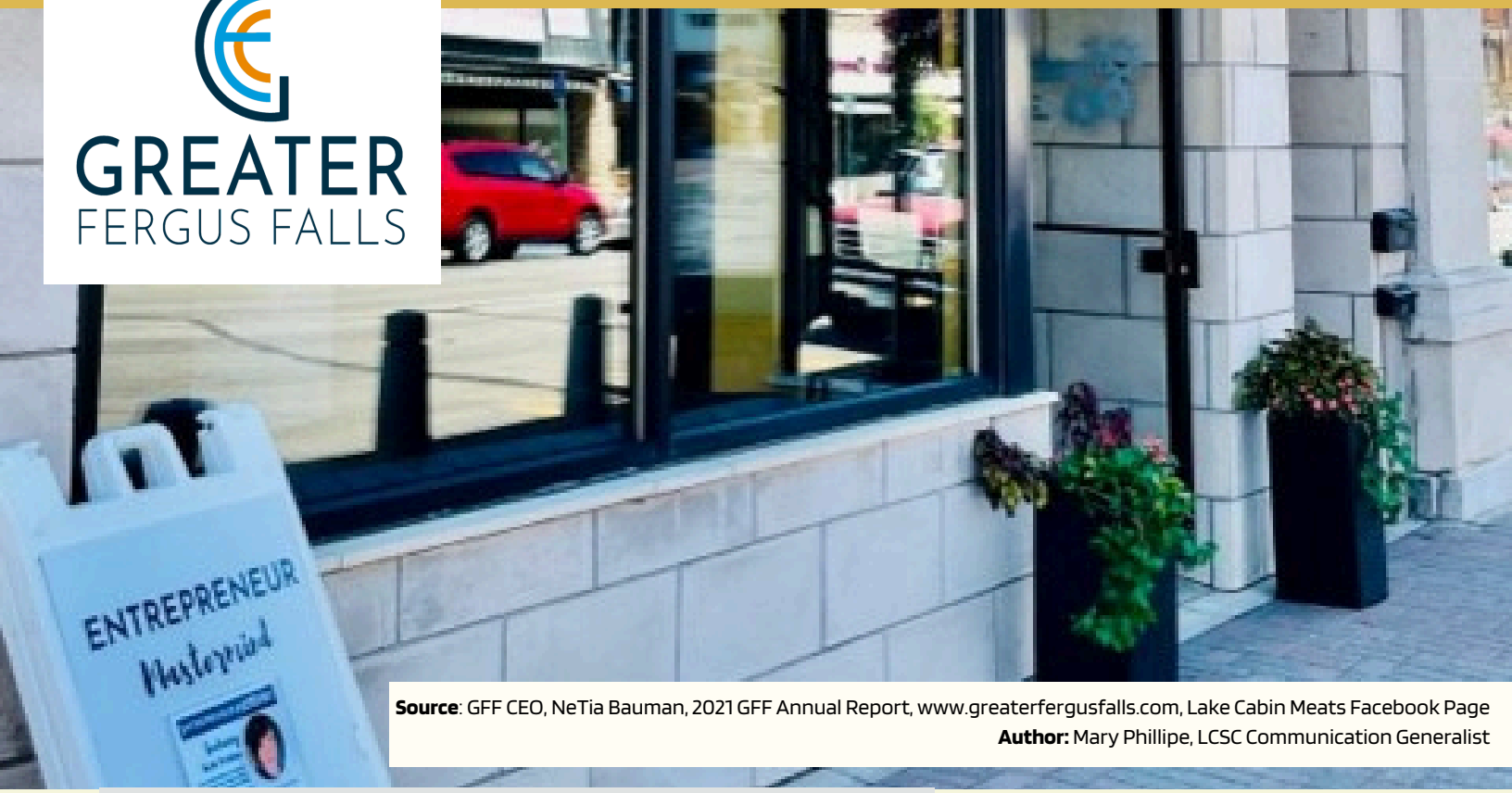
From Sjostrom's first days as a new social worker fresh out of college to overseeing the entirety of the Otter Tail County Human Services Department, one principle has stuck with Sjostrom. "You start your career to earn a paycheck and pay the bills, but you need to do the work that you enjoy. Follow your passion and do what you love!"

Do you want to learn more about the Minnesota Association of Country Social Service Administrators? Visit http://www.macssa.org/

To learn more about the work locally at Otter Tail County Social Services? Visit https://ottertailcountymn.us/, click on Residents and follow the Health and Safety prompt.

GREATER FERGUS FALLS

DEFINING GREATER FERGUS FALLS IN ONE WORD



Source: GFF CEO, NeTia Bauman, 2021 GFF Annual Report, www.greaterfergusfalls.com, Lake Cabin Meats Facebook Page

Author: Mary Phillipe, LCSC Communication Generalist

RESILIENCE!

The office of Greater Fergus Falls (GFF) has moved, and its new location in downtown Fergus Falls is incredibly suited for its mission. Greater Fergus Falls' CEO, NeTia Bauman, proudly shared that the space will be called "The Foundry." The definition of foundry includes "workshop or factory," and the vibe of this beautiful open space is an industrial atmosphere. The downtown space is an ideal setting to spotlight local businesses with popup shops and provide space for training and a remote workspace. "This location reflects the thoughtful planning and hard work produced through GFF's board," said Bauman.

The mission of GFF is to support and grow the area's business community. Retaining the excellent businesses and industries who call the Fergus Falls region their home. Revitalizing our local economy. Recruiting new entrepreneurs and innovators to take the leap with us.

Continues on next page



GREATER FERGUS FALLS CEO, NETIA BAUMAN

In 2021, the rippling effect of the pandemic continued to impact local Fergus Falls businesses. GFF assisted many businesses in pandemic recovery and experienced an increase in new business starts, expansions, and workforce development training needs. In 2021, GFF processed over 600 inquiries from businesses, developers, investors, and realtors. This reflected a 54.5% increase from 2020. Now in her fourth year, Bauman began her career at GFF as the Executive Assistant and Business Development Coordinator. She soon moved into the CEO role when former CEO Annie Deckert left the organization, and the opportunity became available to lead GFF. "I'm privileged to have been mentored by the tried-and-true practices Bruce Thom deployed and the progressive, out-of-the-box strategies Annie Deckert brought to the table. I've used each mentor's best tactics and coupled them with my passion for helping businesses flourish," said Bauman. She also shared that they are not only focused on entrepreneurs and startups. GFF works daily to provide resources and assist local businesses and nonprofits in retaining their customers and planning for expansion.

GFF'S FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS INCLUDES …

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT and ATTRACTION

- Support start-ups and existing businesses.
- Execute customized Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) strategy.
- Execute a business attraction plan.
- Maintain a comprehensive commercial/industrial property database.

MARKETING and PROMOTION

- Streamline messaging to tell the GFF story.
- Proactively market available properties.
- Proactively market development opportunities. Utilize digital marketing to promote GFF.
- Gather and promote area demographics and competitive advantages.

PARTNERSHIPS

- Leverage partnerships to enhance the GFF mission.
- Leverage area Workforce Development Solutions to strengthen the workforce.
- Strengthen relationships with local, regional, state, and national business development entities and organizations.

ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Continuous Professional Development.
- Maintain a comprehensive fundraising approach.
- Maintain policies and processes.
- Develop and sustain GFF Board and Staff.

Continues on next page



MASTERMIND

These free sessions are for entrepreneurs hosted by entrepreneurs and will include keynote speakers, panel discussions, and facilitated mentoring sessions on various topics, including startup fundamentals, financial basics, marketing for small businesses, and more.

I literally could not have done this without Greater Fergus Falls' assistance. The staff and consultants remained in constant communication with me throughout the process.

- Phyllis Tysver, Lake Cabin Meat & Deli Co-owner.

GREATER FERGUS FALLS

Administrative Assistant,
Patricia Wahl



"I love helping people follow and achieve their dreams," said Bauman when describing the work completed to help both the Fabled Farmer restaurant and the former Fergus Locker change ownership. Bauman shared that Fabled Farmer former owner, Mary Robertson, had a buyer, and GFF assisted with the succession planning process. What keeps GFF CEO NeTia Bauman up at night? "Positive community dialogue," Bauman stated. Bauman works to be proactive in creating systems to keep the momentum and positive dialogue about Fergus Falls' growth happening. Whether through word of mouth, social media, or local community forums. "We have a good quality of life; people are moving here and want to raise their families in our community," said Bauman.

When reflecting on the growth in 2021, CEO Bauman knows that GFF will also have to grow to keep up with the demands of additional foot traffic in the new location, growing phone inquiries, and meeting the goal for retention visits to existing businesses. With only two current full-time employees, current CEO and Administrative Assistant Patricia Wahl, Bauman has hopes to add to the GFF team of professionals.

Do you want to get involved and help local businesses and GFF grow and be resilient? There is a need for volunteer mentors for entrepreneurs, expert topic speakers, and sponsorships. You can get involved by calling their office today at 218-321-2079. You can learn more about their initiatives and support by visiting their website at greaterfergusfalls.com.

NONPROFIT TRAINING



Lakes Country Service Cooperative

1001 E Mount Faith
Fergus Falls, MN 56537

- **Budgeting - Thursday, September 15,**
- **Finance - Thursday, October 20, 2022**
- **Governance - Thursday, November 17, 2022**

Time: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Participants may REGISTER to attend virtually or in person.

Cost: $230 for the Fundamentals Series/ $80 Per Session
LCSC members may use the promo code and receive a 10% discount.
PROMO CODE: FUNDAMENTALS

FUNDAMENTALS OF NONPROFITS

After attending this series, nonprofit professionals will understand how mission and money work together and the critical relationships between planning, strategy, and sustainability.

Your organization will not only be prepared for what's ahead but will be proactive in making changes to meet your mission.

A COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PARTNER





Source/Author: Hillary Stevens, Marketing Coordinator, Lake Agassiz Regional Library

LAKE AGASSIZ REGIONAL LIBRARY

LEVEL UP YOUR FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH WITH FREE LIBRARY TOOLS, INCLUDING ANCESTRY.COM AND FAMILYSEARCH

EMBARKING ON A FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH JOURNEY?

Let your local library be your travel partner as you venture back in time and uncover fascinating tidbits about your family's past. Lake Agassiz Regional Library locations across seven counties in Northwest Minnesota offer free access to premiere genealogy research tools, including Ancestry.com, HeritageQuest Online, and FamilySearch.

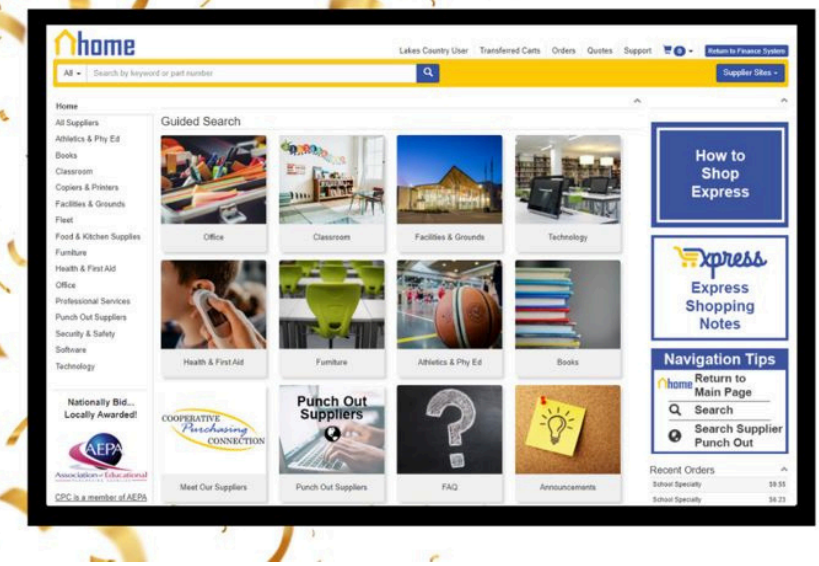
Lake Agassiz Regional Library (LARL) is now a FamilySearch Affiliate Library, which means it has access to more genealogy resources to help you make more family discoveries. FamilySearch is a world leader in family history. There are only a few hundred affiliate libraries in the country. The designation means library customers will have greater and more convenient access to the wealth of genealogical resources available through FamilySearch. The popular web service has over 6 billion searchable names and 2 billion images of historical, genealogical records—and you get the helpful assistance of library staff.

FamilySearch adds over 300 million free genealogical records and images online from all over the world and manages the famous Family History Library in Salt Lake City. It has amassed billions of birth, marriage, death, census, land, and court records from more than 130 countries to help you discover and make family connections.

To access FamilySearch, Ancestry.com, and HeritageQuest, Lake Agassiz Regional Library cardholders can visit larl.org/research/genealogy. A free account may be required to access parts of the FamilySearch site, and as a FamilySearch affiliate library, additional records are available within LARL locations.

Librarians are also readily available to assist family history researchers. Several of the library system's locations offer a unique scanning tool that allows users to view and search old newspapers dating back to the late 1800s. Visit sites in Moorhead, Crookston, Ada, and Fosston to use these tools free of charge.

Learn more at larl.org/research/genealogy.



Save time and money! Try the Express Online Marketplace!

purchasingconnection.org

Express offers Guided Buying for our popular categories and items and an integration option for finance systems.

CONNECT WITH PROGRAMS & SERVICES AT LCSC!

- FINANCE
- INSURANCE & WELLNESS
- COMMUNICATIONS & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- COMMUNITY WELLNESS
- TECHNOLOGY
- LAKES COUNTRY ACADEMY
- HEALTH & SAFETY
- EDUCATION
- SPECIAL EDUCATION
- COOPERATIVE PURCHASING

CONTACT US
Phone: (218) 739-3273
(800)739-3273 (toll free)
Fax: (218) 739-2459
Email: communicator@lcsc.org
Executive Director: Jeremy Kovash

COMMUNICATOR STAFF
Editors: Jane Eastes: jeastes@lcsc.org
Mary Phillipe: mphillipe@lcsc.org
Address:
Lakes Country Service Cooperative
1001 E. Mount Faith
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
An equal opportunity employer

The LCSC Communicator is a publication of Lakes Country Service Cooperative.

Views and ideas expressed in the LCSC Communicator by its contributors or advertisers do not necessarily reflect views or policies of Lakes Country Service Cooperative and should not be considered an endorsement thereof.

Lakes Country Service Cooperative retains the right to accept, reject or edit any submitted material and requires all submissions to be signed and dated.