

# THE HEADLINER



Network Cable Systems, Omaha Works

January 1994



Photo by Linda Ryan

*INPUT FROM ALL...Insulating line operator Bobbi Cubrich (from left), Ronald Foxx, Larry Bleich and Warren Moore all contributed to the effort to develop low-smoke PVC insulation to replace Halar® insulation. Cubrich likes the low-smoke PVC, saying it's easier to work with and poses fewer problems on the production line.*

## Two new processes make a difference

# EW&C off to good start in '94

There's nothing like ending the old year right and starting the new year right, too.

Two cases in point: Switching to water-based ink for color-coding insulation on wire, and switching to low-smoke PVC insulation and jacket on plenum cable.

Both changes were completed last year in the electronic wire and cable (EW&C) shop, giving us a head start in our 1994 commitments to better serve customers, meet environmental goals and cut costs.

### Cut toxic emissions

Switching to water-based ink was a comprehensive two-year effort, said

Larry Bleich, assigned to the project along with fellow engineers Craig Alberhasky and Warren Moore. It was begun in keeping with our commitment to the corporation to reduce toxic emissions by 95 percent by 1995.

The change immediately began reducing the Works' emissions of methyl ethyl ketone (MEK) into the atmosphere from 350,000 pounds per year. By 1995 emissions should be down to 10,000 pounds per year.

MEK, a toxic substance, is the carrier or base in the ink previously used for band marking of PVC, and top-coating and band-marking of Halar® insulation. When Halar

insulation is phased out, just a small amount of MEK emissions will remain.

The water-based ink has a 20-25 percent isopropyl alcohol (rubbing alcohol) content, which is far less toxic than MEK. In fact, waste from color changes is collected in a tank and is flushed down the city sanitation sewer. MEK ink must be collected in barrels for disposal as hazardous waste.

Isopropyl alcohol in water-based ink does not evaporate into the air rapidly like MEK. With MEK ink, attendants constantly had to add MEK to the mixture throughout the

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# HEADLINE FEATURE

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day.

"In addition to its environmental advantages, we figure we're saving about \$30,000 per year in disposal costs plus another \$50,000 per year in ink material costs," Bleich said.

The project was a true exercise in teamwork. The trio of engineers worked closely with the vendor, Gem Gravure Co. With the aid of engineer Steve Cassidy, they developed experiments for the prove-in stage. Ink attendants gave input on how the ink was working out on the insulating lines. A total of 35 lines have been converted.

Water-based inks were not in widespread use on the market when the project started, mostly because what was available "foamed" when used. Though two years may seem like a long time to convert to water-based ink, "we had to build the technology to accommodate the formula" as well as develop the right formula, Alberhasky said. "Ours doesn't foam, it dries quickly and gives good color."

## Price advantage

While we basically set the standard in the industry for water-based ink,

## THE HEADLINER

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Your comments and suggestions are welcome and should be directed to:

**Linda Ryan, Editor**  
Ext. 3795.

*The next issue will be published on Feb. 16, 1994. All news items should be in to the PR office by no later than 9 a.m. Monday, Jan. 31, 1994.*

*A BETTER ALTERNATIVE...Ink attendant Marvin Seaton pours water-based ink into a receptacle on one of the 18 insulating lines for which he is responsible. With him is engineer Craig Alberhasky.*



Photo by Linda Ryan

our low-smoke PVC also marks a "first" in the EW&C market. It is the first all PVC construction in the industry to meet standards for voice and low-speed data applications, and pass the plenum "burn" test.

Best of all, it makes our plenum cable "one of the lowest-priced in the market," said Bleich. "We are the highest-priced (supplier) in much of our cable, but not in this case."

Because plenum cable is used inside buildings without conduit (in ceilings, airducts, subfloors), plenum must have low smoke and low flame spread qualities.

Low-smoke PVC replaces Halar insulation in our plenum production, with the conversion to be completed by the end of the first quarter of 1994. It is used in our 2003 four-pair and 2010 four-pair plenum cable.

The latter is an approved SYSTIMAX® premises distribution system product.

Bleich and Warren Moore worked on the project with the support of

Tom Kusek of the purchased material inspection lab (PMI), Loretta Lewis of the chemistry lab, and insulating and jacketing operators. Ronald Foxx, a participant in the Works' engineering co-op program, assisted with experimentation during the prove-in stage.

Halar has been expensive and difficult to process, Warren noted. "From the beginning, we knew PVC would be less expensive, that it had some flame retardancy and that it was easier to process."

The challenge was to develop a formula that "was able to run with quality results," he said. The shop had to overcome initial problems, including spark failures and holes in the insulation and jacketing.

Bleich estimated that we can offer low-smoke PVC plenum at about a 25 percent savings to our customers compared to Halar plenum.

"That translates into better opportunities to increase our sales" in 1994, he said. ■



# Works meets goals for 1993; marks growth in international sales

*John Heindel held two meetings in the auditorium with employees during December, 1993. The following is a summary of his remarks at both meetings, as well as questions and answers that followed.*



## Opening remarks

### Financials

1993 was a fabulous year. Despite disappointing results in November, we have met our stated goals to the corporation.

### 1993 Financial Results\*

	Percent of Plan
Revenue	102%
MOI	123%
EVA	158%

*\*More details on 1993 results in next issue.*

Our sales teams tell us we should see increased revenues in 1994, and they predict good growth in United States, Europe and Asia markets.

But remember, challenges will continue in 1994. The competitive environment is sure to grow, so we cannot let up on cost improvement efforts. I'm especially concerned that overtime could make us lose ground on performance going into the new year.

### Customer update

**Southwestern Bell.** We've been awarded another two-year contract by Southwestern Bell for our 40-type cabinets. It's my understanding that Southwestern Bell has high regard for our product and value, and is very impressed by the fact that in the last two years there has been only one concern pertaining to quality.

**Bell Atlantic.** DIXI 3 (the newest member of our digital interconnect and cross-connect interface products) has been well-received by Bell Atlantic. After evaluating the first panel to come off our production line in late November, Bell Atlantic placed a sizable order. Used in central offices, this product was designed in response to needs expressed by customers. We're ahead of our competitors in this area and I'm optimistic that other RBOCs will be interested in it, too. (See related story and photo on Page 6.)

### Miscellaneous

**Training.** I've been getting feedback from shop employees about training. The message I hear repeatedly is that they don't think they're getting the right kind of training to do their jobs.

During January I will review our training plan for 1994. I strongly believe that our ability to be competitive depends on how well our job skills match the needs of our business. If we have an issue here, we must make constructive changes now.

**Opinion survey.** We have received the results of the employee opinion survey which AT&T conducts annually. It's a mixed scorecard: We improved in seven of 17 categories, but our scores also deteriorated in seven of the 17 categories.

In general, results show that employees think there have been improvements in leadership, respect for the individual, dedication to service to the customer and shipping performance. Areas that employees found to be lacking include empowerment issues, quality processes and--one I find particularly disappointing--our ability to work as a team.

There is room to improve in all categories. Within the next few weeks a more detailed analysis of the results will be shared with you. I think it's important that we look at the issues raised by the survey and work together for improvements.

*Mixed results on latest employee survey indicate there's still room for improvement.*

### Q's and A's

**Q.** *Could you elaborate on the possibility of hiring, given an expected increase in business now that NAFTA has been signed?*

**A.** *If the economy continues to improve and if our business grows as anticipated, we may need to increase the number of people we now have on roll. We cannot continue at the same pace of overtime we've had in*

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recent months. So, yes, if there's sustained growth we will hire.

Come February or March, we should have a better handle on the economy and our business growth, and I do not expect that a decision will be made before then.

**Q. Will there be a replacement for Gary Epp in EW&C?**

A. We're still looking and we have several very good candidates. We hope to reach a decision soon. Meanwhile, the EW&C team is doing a great job running the business.

**Q. What does the "Workplace of the Future" look like to you?**

A. It's one where we're all willing to listen to ideas and to express our viewpoints without fear of any repercussions.

There's no detailed structure or game plan for how the Workplace of the Future should be set up. We must work together as a team to make the Workplace of the Future right for us and our business.

**Q. Why aren't supervisors trained to understand the jobs we are doing? If you ask them a question, they don't know the answer.**

A. If you're saying that supervisors don't know how to do your jobs, my view is that I don't know how to do the jobs of the people who work for me, either.

The supervisor's role today must become more like that of a coach. You know how to do your job--you're the expert. It's up to the supervisor as coach to make sure that you have all the tools that you, as the expert, need to do the job right: Proper equipment, supplies, time, training and so on. You do the job; the supervisor makes sure nothing gets in your way.

*We're still managing under the old rules while learning new ways.*

A problem we're having with this concept is we all have a lot more on our plate to do than we would like. And, as supervisors, we're still managing under the old rules while trying to learn to be coaches of empowered employees.

The bottom line is that our customers expect more and more from us. Our competition will pass us up if we expect our supervisors to tell us how to do our jobs every

## Feedback, please.

Got a topic you'd like to see addressed at these employee meetings? John Heindel welcomes your views. Jot down your comments and send them to: **Feedback, Attention: Flo Helme.**

Employee meetings are held usually twice a month. If you attend one, please share information from the meeting with your co-workers.

time a situation changes or a problem surfaces. We've all got to take the initiative to become involved and use our expertise to full advantage.

**Q. You stress the importance of quality and the Workplace of the Future. Yet, we shipped 80-type cabinets to an international customer, knowing that two cabinet doors were not painted to the ends. How can we send a product like that to a brand new customer? Why not stop and put on new doors?**

A. I'm not that familiar with the situation you give. Anytime something like this happens, there are many factors to consider. How serious is the defect? What is the shipping deadline and transportation arrangements? What does the customer want us to do?

The important thing is that we talk to the customer about the problem, and plan a corrective course of action based on their expectations.

*(Editor's note: Twelve 80-type cabinets were to be shipped to the Philippines, eight of them before Christmas shutdown. The cabinets were custom designed and originally scheduled for shipment in February 1994, but the customer requested a shipment pullup to December 1993. The paint problem occurred on just one of the cabinets: paint coverage was lighter than normal near the hinge area of the doors.*

*The shipping schedule called for the cabinets to be sent first to an AT&T MASC (Material Assembly and Staging Center) in Rocklin, Calif., for component installation before completing their journey to the Philippines. A Bell Labs engineer was to oversee final installation work.*

*Rather than hold up shipment of all eight cabinets in Omaha while the paint problem was corrected, the decision was made to ship them to AT&T's Rocklin location (not to the customer!) where the Labs engineer could direct appropriate action. An extra coat of paint was applied to the affected areas before shipping to the Philippines.)■*



# Promise made in USSR is material for U.S. movie

Rita Breiburg keeps her promises, no matter what.

In another year or so, one promise in particular will be kept on the movie screen in theaters throughout America.

Breiburg, when she is not applying her mechanical engineering expertise on her job in quality assurance, is a published author of poems and a historical novel.

Last year, Breiburg signed a contract with producer John Riley, who wants to make a movie from her novel, "The True Story of Her Life," under a new title, "I Promise You." If all goes well, the movie should be at theaters and another version on television sometime in 1995 or 1996, Breiburg said.

The promise Breiburg keeps is one she made as a teenager in the 1950s, back in her native Odessa in the Ukraine. Orphaned at a young age, she was befriended by a kindly school custodian, Wanda Stanishevsky, when Breiburg lived at the school's dormitory.

During the two years that their friendship grew, Breiburg kept notes of the stories Wanda told about her life during the turbulent times that led to the formation of the Soviet Union. Fascinated and moved by the woman's story, Breiburg promised her that one day she would make sure everyone could know Wanda's story.

## Different lifestyle

Breiburg's novel, originally written in Russian, divulges a pattern unfamiliar to most of us in the United States: Alternating sequences of violent political upheaval, overwhelming economic hardship, betrayal, prison encampment, sickness, survival one day at a time by whatever means possible.

The reality of having signed a contract with a movie producer hasn't sunk in yet, said Breiburg,



Photo by Linda Ryan

*EVERY ARTIST HAS A MUSE...Rita Breiburg calls on her own personal muse to inspire her writings, she said. Apparently, she must have a cooking muse, too: She's a gourmet cook, say her co-workers, who frequently get to sample her creations.*

who could not give details about casting for the movie lead role. In fact, she considers herself more a poet than a novelist.

That she has become an accomplished writer she owes largely to Wanda. Breiburg's numerous poems, written in Russian, have been published both in the former Soviet Union and the U.S., and her novel was published in the U.S. in 1986.

"She is the one who encouraged me to keep writing," said Breiburg, who even keeps a pencil and paper handy

*"I could not have even dreamed this."*

by her bedside should her "writing muse" inspire her late at night.

And Wanda helped instill in Breiburg something more: perseverance. "I'm not one to brood over the past or feel sorry for myself," she said, preferring instead to look to new challenges and opportunities.

That's exactly what she did when she and her husband and young daughter came to live in the U.S. in 1975. She recalls setting foot on American soil with only \$1 in her pocket, unable to speak fluent English.

Soon after, she landed a drafting job with a small company in Kansas City ("drafting is a universal language," she remarked), and two years later was hired by AT&T's Kansas City Works. She transferred to the Omaha Works in 1990.

## Writing a sequel

As she became known for her published poems particularly in U.S. Russian communities, she signed on with an agent who worked to get Breiburg's novel published. Eventually he made the contact with movie producer Riley. Even now Breiburg is halfway through writing a sequel to her novel at the request of her agent.

"This country has been good to me...AT&T has been good to me," Breiburg commented.

It's more than a dream-come-true: "I could not have even dreamed this," she said, thinking back to the Ukraine when she was all alone, separated from her brother and sister. Her mother had been killed in a bomb attack and her father was an army pilot killed during World War II.

Her promise to Wanda appeared to be impossible to keep, certainly within the Soviet Union. And now, the story of her life is to be a movie. ■



## DIXI 3 has customer appeal

The customer wants it and we've got it: DIXI 3 (digital interconnect and cross-connect interface).

One of the Omaha Works' newest products, the DIXI 3 panel was developed by AT&T's Product Line Management (PLM), Bell Laboratories and the Works in response to needs indicated by our customers.

The panels are used in central offices for in-service cross-connecting, interconnecting, patching and monitoring of high-frequency digital signals.

Works engineer Rod Wentworth said our DIXI 3 was designed to provide all of the features that customers weren't able to find in any one product on the market.

One feature particularly appealing to customers is that it allows a technician to test without taking a line out of service. It also provides interconnecting versatility with the features of circuit cutovers, patching and monitoring.

In late November, two panels were shipped to Bell Atlantic for evaluation, which promptly placed an order for more.

Prospects of selling DIXI 3 panels to other phone companies are looking good, said Wentworth. "They're definitely in great demand."

## Bloodmobile visits in February

Give a Valentine's Day gift you won't find in the stores.

Donate blood to the Red Cross when its Bloodmobile visits the Works next month. Reminders will go out to regular blood donors, according to longtime Bloodmobile co-chairperson Darlene Miller, but new donors are needed, too.

The Bloodmobile will be set up in the Works' auditorium on two days: Feb. 10, noon to 5 p.m.; Feb. 11, 6 to 10 a.m.

A contest will be held in conjunction with the Bloodmobile visit. Watch the TV news monitors for



Photo by Linda Ryan

*IN DEMAND...Initial response has been favorable for the new DIXI 3 panels, one of which is shown here by Linda Severin. In the background, Jeanette Byers assembles modules that go into the panel. Both work in IBU 226.*

more details.

Miller, by the way, is turning over Bloodmobile coordinating duties to Nancy Ross. Ross will co-chair the project with Paul Perez, who succeeds past co-chairperson Graham Seiter.

## AT&T Diversity Strategy outlined

Vic Pelson, AT&T executive vice-president and chairman of the AT&T Global Operations (GO) Team, recently presented AT&T's Diversity Strategy to the Corporate Public Policy Committee of the company's board of directors.

AT&T Chairman Bob Allen asked Pelson in October to chair the GO Team and develop a diversity strategy for the corporation. A summary of its major initiatives for 1994 follows:

•**Awareness and understanding.** To foster understanding and valuing

of differences, each member of the Management Executive Committee will participate in an intensive diversity training session by June 1994. A custom-designed diversity segment will be incorporated in the fall AT&T Strategy Forum, and by 1995 each AT&T business unit and division will incorporate an objective for diversity training for all employees.

•**Community involvement.** AT&T will name a community relations leader early in 1994, responsible for formulating a community relations strategy designed to make the most of the company's position in the community.

•**MWBE/business development.** By the first quarter of 1994, a Minority- and Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) Business Development Diversity Action Council will be created. The council will work to achieve 10

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(Continued from previous page) percent annual dollar growth in AT&T contracts and subcontracts awarded to minority vendors, and 10 percent growth in those awarded to women-owned vendors.

**•Profile improvement.** For AT&T to achieve its global business objectives, it is clear that the corporation must improve its employee profile, which includes improving programs and processes to attract, develop and retain diverse employees. Each business unit and division must improve its diversity profile annually through specific plans, beginning in 1994, and AT&T senior managers will be compensated in part on their ability to meet their diversity requirements.

## Work of five rates U.S. patent

A U.S. patent has been issued in the names of Kevin Keller, Howard Rhoten and Shervin Shamloo of the Omaha Works, and John Golden and Brian Underwood of AT&T Bell Laboratories in Whippany, N.J.

The five worked together to design a two-piece cable seal that is used on 40-type cabinets to keep out moisture and insects. It replaces an older design which was not reusable and

was cumbersome to install, said Shamloo.

The patent is the first that Keller and Shamloo have received, and it is the second for Rhoten.



Kevin Keller



Howard Rhoten



Shervin Shamloo

## New officers at WEOMA posts

The 1994 WEOMA Club officers and directors were installed last month.

Dennis Karloff is president; Sandy Fitzgerald, vice-president; Annette Eggert, treasurer; and Karen Novak, assistant treasurer. Bob Miller continues as executive vice-president and Clara Hendricks is secretary.

The WEOMA Board of Directors has three new members this year. They are Sandy Bowman, associate clubs; Larry Cherry, outdoor sports, associated clubs and AT&T Toy Drive; and Carmen Vacanti, entertainment and tours.

Other directing board members are Terry Kamino, indoor sports; Miyeko Kostszewa, picnic and special education; Bill Fleming, publicity and reps; Ethel Payton, women's activities and Christmas party.

## January service anniversaries

The following employees are celebrating milestone service anniversaries during January. The anniversary date is listed first, with service years after the name.

- 1/1 Melissa Strong, 25
- 1/3 Brent Timko, 10
- 1/3 Gregory Brown, 10
- 1/3 David Slaughter, 10
- 1/5 Lonnie Sick, 35
- 1/5 Alice Lugert, 35
- 1/5 Richard Winter, 10
- 1/6 Marie Kaszuba, 10
- 1/7 Wayne Ruby, 20
- 1/8 Paul Franson, 15
- 1/9 Geoffrey McKenzie, 5
- 1/9 Betty Leonard, 15
- 1/9 Charles Mann, 10
- 1/11 Barbara Tangeman, 15
- 1/12 Paul Guhl, 35
- 1/12 Michael Matthews, 10
- 1/12 Charles Ferguson, 35
- 1/12 Linda Sweet, 25
- 1/13 Rosemarie Larson, 30
- 1/13 Harvey Bolte, 25
- 1/14 Roger Rodaway, 25
- 1/14 Shirley Fiscus, 25
- 1/16 Nancy Griswold, 10

- 1/16 James Dempsey, 10
- 1/16 William Johnson, 5
- 1/16 Raymond Knievel, 35
- 1/19 Leland Wade, 35
- 1/19 Linda Severin, 20
- 1/19 Jon Paulson, 35
- 1/20 Reta Loukota, 30
- 1/21 Kathleen Scott, 10
- 1/23 Jerry Dowling, 10
- 1/23 John Stephenson, 10
- 1/23 Scott Bowman, 10
- 1/23 Steven Hayes, 10
- 1/23 Timothy Parks, 10
- 1/24 Irene Synstad, 10
- 1/26 Richard Fenske, 35
- 1/27 Kenneth Micek, 35
- 1/27 Gerhart Wehrbein, 25
- 1/27 Jeanette Crouch, 25
- 1/27 Richard Madej, 25
- 1/28 Dwain Miller, 25
- 1/28 Jack Sedlacek, 10
- 1/28 Marlin Lustgraaf, 20
- 1/28 Jon Jacobi, 10
- 1/29 Pauline Smith, 30
- 1/29 Isabel Mikesch, 25
- 1/29 Judith West, 20
- 1/29 Lena Vandeman, 25
- 1/29 Mark Zich, 15
- 1/30 Robert Drach, 35
- 1/30 John May, 10
- 1/30 Joseph Jirka, 10
- 1/31 Linda Metzler, 20
- 1/31 William Lorenz Jr. 20
- 1/31 Joy Storzjohann, 20

## In memoriam

**Gerald Carroll**--Production specialist, IBU 254; 12/14/93.

**David Hamlet**--Material management clerk, Dept. 273; 12/23/93.

## Interested in tuition assistance?

You *must* apply in advance for the Tuition Assistance Plan *before you start classes*. If you don't, *you won't be reimbursed*.

Stop by or call the Employee Resource Center with questions about the program.



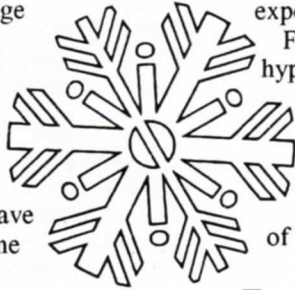
# You can nip frostbite before it nips you

*(If your name appears somewhere in this article, call Ext. 3583 or Ext. 3415 to claim a \$40 gift certificate to one of six popular local restaurants. The names of two employees are featured.)*

When you're in extreme cold, you expose yourself to frostbite. Often, a victim of frostbite is not even aware of the damage being done.

It's important to know the symptoms and first aid treatment for frostbite, so you may save yourself or someone else from serious injury.

Frostbite happens when the fluids and tissues of the skin freeze. When it's very cold, and especially when the wind blows hard, it's difficult to keep the ends of your body warm.



Frostbite is a great danger to your nose, cheeks, ears, toes and fingers.

The first sign of frostbite is reddening of the skin. It then turns blotchy white, gray or yellow. Finally, the skins becomes completely white and sometimes blisters.

The body part may feel very cold or numb. In advanced stages of frostbite, there is no feeling in the exposed skin.

Frostbite victims also suffer from hypothermia or loss of body heat.

Symptoms are shivering, loss of hand control, drowsiness and not caring about staying warm. Hypothermia victims need Charles Newell to get out of the cold immediately.

## Treating frostbite

Keep the victim as warm and dry as possible. Bring the victim inside to a warm place as soon as you can. Warm the frozen body part by putting it in warm (not hot) water,

damp cloths or blankets. Check the water to make sure it stays warm.

Do not rub or move the frozen part. Place the frostbitten part lower than the head to increase blood flow. Do not let the person sit close to a stove, heater or fire. If the frozen part gets too hot, the damage can be worse.

Do not give the person alcohol. Once the area is thawed, the victim should gently exercise the area. This will bring blood back into the injured part. (If the victim must go back into the cold again, do not thaw the frostbitten area, because it will freeze again and cause more damage.) Get medical attention as soon as possible.


## Avoid frostbite

Don't stay out in extreme cold whenever possible. If you must, wear clothing to protect your face, nose, ears, fingers and toes.

If you work in the cold, have someone work with you Larry R. Johnson so you can check each other frequently for frostbite and hypothermia symptoms.

When you are in the cold, wiggle your toes and fingers. If they begin to lose feeling, tingle or are painful, get inside and warm up. ■

**35th annual WEOMA CLUB**  
**Bowling Tournament**  
 Cougar Lanes - ABC/WIBC sanctioned  
 Feb. 19/20 - Feb. 26/27  
 9 a.m. - noon; noon - 3 p.m. all days  
**Deadline to sign up is Jan. 28, 1994!**



Call now:

Art Clausen	x3807
Dan Moran	x3880
Bob George	x3166
Kathe Scott	x3323
Chuck Schultz	x3673
Mike Fager	x3808
Dave Borstad	x4832

*Valentine*  
*Sweetheart Dance*

*Feb. 12*  
 IBEW Hall  
 13306 Stevens



Pioneer couples	\$25.00
Pioneer singles	\$12.50
Guest couples	\$29.00
Guest singles	\$14.50

Cocktails: 6-7 p.m.  
 Buffet dinner: 7-8 p.m.  
 Dancing: 8:30 p.m.-12:30 a.m.  
 Prizes! Music by Full Circle

*Tickets available at the Pioneer office*