

Connecting our Communities



June 2026

2026 Annual Membership Meeting

Plains Cooperative Telephone Association holds an annual membership meeting each year in April. Members include any current service subscribers in our original cooperative area of Anton, Lindon, Cope, Joes, Eckley, Kirk, Idalia, Seibert & Vona. This year the meeting was hosted by the Anton and Cope exchanges and was held at Arickaree School. Although the evening always includes a business meeting with a report from the company's auditing firm, we always start with a free meal. This year's meal, a delicious roast beef dinner with all the fixings, was prepared by **Kevin Brown and his crew from Mustache Enterprises** and served by the **Arickaree FFA organization and their advisor Tyson Schneider**.



Once members are registered, and receive any capital credit checks for the current retirement, they also receive a gift bag with some fun giveaway items from the company. Attendees this year received a travel tumbler, a magnetic clip, a paring knife, and a pen along with a tote bag. During the dinner, attendees also have an opportunity to donate a few dollars to a charity by guessing *exactly* how many marbles are in our big marble jar. A correct guess wins you a year of free phone service, and Plains matches all the money that comes in. The donation this year goes to the Arickaree Post-Prom celebration. Another highlight of the evening is some really interesting drone footage of Plains entire service area shot by GM Ronny Puckett, from the original cooperative area to the newer areas of Wray, Burlington, Bethune and Stratton. It's fun to see all this from a different perspective!

After an enjoyable hour of eating and chatting, the business portion of the meeting gets started. **Daniel Sidebottom of the Cope Community Church** gave the invocation and **Tyson Schneider, Arickaree FFA** was appointed as the parliamentarian. **President Chad Richards** of the Idalia exchange, introduced the rest of the board members: **Vice-President Randy Gorton** – Seibert, **Treasurer Sara Walkinshaw** – Cope, **Secretary Dayton Drullinger** – Kirk, **Director Jay Owens** – Eckley, and **Director Shane Weaver** – Joes. He also introduced all the employees of the company, and past directors who were present.

Secretary Dayton Drullinger presented the secretary's report and **Christine Kirchner of Pinion Global**, the company's auditing firm, presented the audit report. financial statements of the Cooperative and its subsidiary. She indicated that the Cooperative had operating cash flow of \$906,061 in 2025 and currently has \$28.5 million invested in telephone, internet, plant and equipment, which is an increase of \$1 million. Plains Cooperative paid down long-term debt of \$599,602 in 2025. In addition, the cooperative paid approximately \$148,000 in local



www.plainstel.com



plains@plainstel.com



970-358-4211 Joes
970-592-2211 Wray

property taxes in 2025, money that goes directly back into the counties and communities we serve, and also in 2025, the company returned \$265,000 in capital credits to our cooperative members for patronage in 2004 and 2005.

General Manager Ronny Puckett reported that the final stage of the the project that began in 2021 to buildout the communities of Burlington, Stratton and Bethune is now being completed with no new debt. One USDA loan has been completely paid off. The company now owes \$4 million in long term debt, down from \$8.9 million in 2017.

The challenges ahead include Universal Service Fund Reform. Although the Supreme Court affirmed the constitutionality of the fund, contribution reform is a must. The current contribution factor is 37%. There is also little federal support for new projects at the current time, but Plains has co-applied with the City of Akron for a CDS grant.

And Plains Fiber service now has competition everywhere. Starlink is aggressively marketing their satellite service and Amazon's Leo has begun satellite launches. Mr. Puckett reminded attendees that the performance for satellite service is unreliable and far below that of fiber. Plains 100% Fiber Network exceeds 99.999% up-time every year with versatile speeds that fit your needs and 24/7 local support. Mr. Puckett also presented employee service awards, recognizing **Melissa Satterly and Jason Greenman for 5 years of service, Todd Roseberry for 20 years of service, and Dan Underwood for 25 years of service** to the company.

Director positions for the Anton and Idalia exchanges were up for election with **Dwayne Bowers of the Anton exchange** leaving the board after serving since 2010, and Chad Richards of the Idalia exchange running for re-election. **Harold Jefferson of the Anton exchange** and **Chad Richards of the Idalia exchange** had both filed proper petitions to run for the two positions. With no contest in either exchange, both men were named to the board.

Throughout the meeting, there were numerous prize drawings conducted, and many attendees went home with a prize, ranging from kitchen items, cash prizes, and bill credits to technology products like RayBan Wayfarer smart glasses, Amazon Fire tablets, and a 60-inch smart tv. The progressive cash prize drawing for \$800 was drawn from the full membership list, with the prize to be awarded only if the member whose name was drawn was in attendance. Steven Stuhlmler from the Cope area was drawn as the winning member and, as he was not in attendance, next year's progressive drawing will be for \$900 at the 2027 annual meeting to be held in the Seibert exchange.

If you have not attended one of our annual meetings, we encourage you to consider doing so at the next opportunity in April of 2027. We would love to see you there and we think you'll have fun!

Find the puppy!

Find another picture of this puppy hiding somewhere in this newsletter, then call us at 970-358-4211 or 970-592-2211 by June 18 to let us know that you located it, and we'll put your name in a drawing for a \$20 bill credit!



Our 2026 directory was delivered to subscriber mailboxes last month! Let us know if you need any more copies of the directory, and enjoy the winning & uniquely rural photo of two friends enjoying a summer day on the Plains, submitted by

Dena Mason of the Cope area.

