

October is National Co-op Month

Celebrated by more than 40,000 cooperatives nationwide during the month of October, National Co-op Month is an annual opportunity to raise awareness of a trusted, proven way to do business and build communities. Under the theme "Co-ops Build Economic Power," this year's Co-op Month is also a chance to lift up the cooperative business model as the best way to build an economy that empowers everyone.

Recognizing the important role that cooperatives like SkyLine play as a rural telecom leader, contributor to the regional economy and the investments they make to strengthen rural communities, this year's theme closely aligns with the work SkyLine does. Having achieved Fiber-to-the-Premise (FTTP) deployment across the co-op's service area in 2016, SkyLine continues to expand fiber connectivity to unserved and underserved areas through SkyBest, its wholly-owned subsidiary. This advanced infrastructure was critical not only during a pandemic where virtual access was essential for business, education and healthcare, but it's also making a generational impact, ensuring greater prosperity for rural areas well into the future.

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Understanding Grants for Rural Broadband

As some of you may have seen, there are large amounts of funding from the state and federal government becoming available for broadband expansion. We are working each day to apply for those monies in order to bring fiber internet to those in our community who need it most. However, throughout our years of doing this, we have learned that it is not a simple, straightforward process, and there is much more to it than simply filling out an application and receiving the money. It is a large undertaking that involves many different people and a great deal of time. Nonetheless, please be assured that our grant team is working tirelessly to go after available money that will help bring fiber internet to those in our community who need it most.

Our History of Grant Funding

In August of 2010, we were awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to help accelerate the timeline of our planned Fiber-To-The-Premise (FTTP) build-out that began in 2004. What normally would have

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Help Us "Rise & Shine" to Fight Hunger!

Recognizing the need to support local initiatives to minimize food insecurity is greater than ever, SkyLine will continue its annual breakfast food drive for area food pantries. Now in its tenth year, and now through October 31, our "Rise & Shine" food drive will accept donations of non-perishable breakfast items at each of our five Customer Center locations.

While supplies last, all SkyLine/SkyBest Customer Service Centers will have shopping totes available for pick-up. We welcome all sizes of packaged breakfast food, including individually-sealed cereals, oatmeal and fruit items that can be included in area backpack initiatives for children. See related list of suggested non-perishable items. As our thank-you, please keep the tote for future use, and SkyLine will make delivery of these items to area food pantries, including the Solid Rock Food Closet, Ashe County Food Pantry, the Hunger and Health Coalition, Reaching Avery Ministry and the Shady Valley Baptist Church Food Pantry in early November.

SkyLine is grateful to join the community in support, including numerous individuals, churches and local organizations like those listed that are trying to help fill the hunger gaps that continue to exist across the region. We hope you will join us in this critical effort. As a local cooperative, we are reminded that the seventh cooperative principle is "concern for community." For more information about the food drive, please call your local SkyLine/SkyBest Customer Service Center at 118. Thank you!



When You Need to Spread the Word, SkyLine's CallTree Service Can Deliver Your Message

CallTree is an automated messaging service that can deliver phone calls, emails and even text messages. Ideal for schools, churches, small businesses, restaurants and other organizations, it allows you to transform your phone and broadband into a dynamic messaging service. What makes CallTree so valuable is that it allows the user to deliver a timely, consistent message to groups large and small alike, plus it can be set to make multiple call attempts to reach individuals on your calling list. Contact everyone on your entire list with a single message from your mobile app or your computer and phone.

There's also a CallTree app available and can be downloaded on the App Store® and on Google Play™ and is called ManageMyNotify.

Just a few of the possible applications for this convenient automated messaging service include:

- Meeting reminders
- Weather cancellations
- Service changes and outages
- Appointment reminders
- Non-pay reminders
- Marketing & promotions



Pricing includes a one-time \$25 activation fee and starts at \$9.95 per month for up to 250 contacts. For 251 to 1,000 contacts, the cost per month is \$19.95. Long-distance calls will incur additional charges. To find out more or to sign up for this valuable and affordable voice messaging service, please call your local SkyLine Customer Service Center at 118.

NEED TO CONTACT US?

CUSTOMER SERVICE

LOCAL
118

TOLL-FREE
1-800-759-2226

REPAIR SERVICE, 24/7

LOCAL
611

TOLL-FREE
1-877-475-9546

Additional Local Repair Service Numbers:

ALLEGHANY
336-372-4444
(10-DIGIT DIALING)

ASHE
336-982-3111
(10-DIGIT DIALING)

AVERY
898-9250

WATAUGA
297-4811

JOHNSON
739-4500

LENOIR
929-2872

INTERNET TECH SUPPORT, 24/7

TOLL-FREE
1-866-759-7591

STAFF:

Kim Shepherd
Chief Executive Officer

Brian Tester
Chief Operations Officer

Angie Poe
Customer Service Manager

Jamey Jenkins
Retail Sales Manager

Edward Hinson
Chief Marketing & Sales Officer

Hallie Grubb
Public Relations Administrator



Cooperatives are owned and governed by their members – the same people who use the co-op’s goods or services. Profits are distributed to the members – not stakeholders – or reinvested in the co-op or the community, often meeting needs that might otherwise go unmet. Studies show that consumers want to do business with companies that share their values, making today’s environment ideal for cooperatives and their commitment to the communities in which their members live and work.

This year, SkyLine is organizing its tenth-annual “Rise and Shine” Breakfast Food Drive to help restock area food pantry shelves with non-perishable breakfast food items, which are often in short supply. We invite you, our customers, to be a part of this region-wide effort that will benefit five area food pantries across our service area. See related article elsewhere in this newsletter for more details.

GRANTS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

taken 20 years to complete, we achieved in 2016, well ahead of schedule, and became one of the first rural telecom companies in the country designated as a Gig-capable broadband provider by NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association. Most recently, we expanded into Sutherland, TN, a community located at the northeastern tip of Tennessee that borders Virginia. We received funding for this project in August of 2020 through the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) Act. A contingency of this grant required that the project be completed by December of that same year. With such a small amount of time, this project was no small feat. However, in four months, with a little help from Treeline Helicopters, SkyLine was able to deploy 2.5 miles of fiber through the Cherokee National Forest that gave high-speed internet to the members of Sutherland community. We take great pride in, not only going after any available funding, but also stewarding that money in the best and most appropriate way. We are seasoned in applying, receiving and delivering on grant funding; our history proves it.

Since the COVID-19 Pandemic brought forth an increase in government funding, SkyLine/SkyBest has won significant monies in multiple different counties. We connected 40 customers in the Riverside area of Avery County through the ARC Grant and 220 customers through the GREAT Grant in Caldwell County. In January of 2022 the Watauga County Board of Commissioners announced that SkyLine/SkyBest, in partnership with Blue Ridge Energy, was the recipient of 7.75 million dollars to complete a broadband expansion project; in September of that same year, Tennessee’s Department of Economic and Community Development awarded us over five million dollars to expand broadband to over 2,000 homes and businesses in specific areas of Carter and Johnson counties.

We understand the significant need for broadband service, and we want you to know we are aware of, and are currently working on, funding that has recently become available. Although the process is lengthy, we highly encourage you to fill out an interest form at fiber.skybest.com. This helps us in determining where the greatest need for service is. If you have any further questions, please visit us online at skybest.com or give us a call at 1-800-759-2226.

SkyLine Regional Directory

SkyLine is partnering with Mountain Times Publications in its series of community telephone directories published annually across the High Country by providing up-to-date residential and business customer listings from our SkyLine/SkyBest service area. A limited number of printed directories will be available for pick-up at all SkyLine Customer Center locations, along with the newspaper organization’s established distribution points across the region.

The first directory, published in September, was the Ashe Post and Times’ Community Directory. The Alleghany Community Directory is scheduled to be published this month, followed by the Banner Elk Community Directory in November and the Watauga Community Directory in December. A digital version of these directories will also be posted on our company website (skybest.com).

Shady Valley Cranberry Festival

Look for some familiar SkyLine faces in the parade at the Cranberry Festival in Shady Valley on October 14 at the Shady Valley Rock School. The festival begins on the evening of October 13 and continues throughout the entire day October 14. Stay tuned for more parade information next month across our service areas.

SkyLine/SkyBest Rise & Shine Breakfast Food Drive

Deliver non-perishable items to SkyLine between September 1 - October 31

SUGGESTED NON-PERISHABLE ITEMS:

- Oatmeal • Whole-grain Cereals • Hot Cereals • Cream of Wheat • Grits • Gravy Mixes
- Pancake Mixes • Muffin Mixes • Granola Bars • Syrup • Fruit Juice Packs • Jam
- Canned/Dried Fruits • Powdered Milk • Coffee • Hot Chocolate

ITEMS WILL BENEFIT:

- Solid Rock Food Closet • Ashe Food Pantry • Reaching Avery Ministry
- Shady Valley Baptist Church Food Pantry

Recipe of the Month

Cristy’s Peanut Butter Cookies

Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. yellow cake mix
- 1 c. peanut butter
- ½ c. Crisco oil
- 2 T. water
- 2 eggs

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350°. Combine all ingredients and mix well. Roll in 1-inch balls and place on un-greased cookie sheet. Press a crisscross on each cookie with fork. Bake for 10-12 minutes. Cool on cookie sheet for 1 minute

Recipe submitted by Dorothy Cline

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