



SkyLine/SkyBest Employee Perspective – Field Services Technician, Jeff Ellis

In his nearly two years as a Field Services Technician at SkyLine, Jeff Ellis found his passion in pleasing customers. After leaving his previous job of 26 years, Ellis sought a career change. "I started thinking about what's going to be around," Ellis recounted, "and I just said 'broadband'. In this day and time, everybody has to have internet to function."

As early as onboarding, he could tell people at SkyLine care. Ellis quickly felt comfortable in his new role and his co-workers were soon like family. He addresses that while the company is known for helping the surrounding communities, the employees feel cared for as well.



The positivity carries through from employees to customers. Ellis takes pride in the work he does, knowing installing fiber-optic broadband is for the benefit of his community. A technician is available to customers seven days a week. The team completes a 10-week rotation, in which one technician is on call for the full week;

therefore, SkyLine is always prepared to meet customer needs. Ellis reports he remains ready to adapt as technology continues to develop. Working primarily with installations, he is in customer homes daily delivering access to first-rate internet.

"We're the last phase," Ellis says. "After all the other steps that go into it, we get to see the smiling faces of those pleased with their broadband service."

Ellis regularly finds himself in rural areas, and his drive to improve the quality of life for people in remote places is unwavering.

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Be Aware of Phone Calls and Emails

Customers have reported recent phone and email scams that 'appear' to be coming from SkyLine/SkyBest. ALWAYS be hesitant about sharing information over the phone, clicking on links or opening attachments in emails – not only those that appear to be from SkyLine/SkyBest, but other companies as well. Call us at 1-800-759-2226 to verify if the calls or emails are legitimate.



FRS Scholarship Program Continues in 2024

If you have a son or daughter graduating from high school in the spring of 2024, he or she may be eligible for the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) Scholarship sponsored locally by SkyLine Membership Corporation. In 2024, the FRS will award one-year scholarships in each geographic region of the NTCA membership (including the service area of SkyLine/SkyBest) to graduating high school seniors whose families are served by NTCA member organizations. For each FRS general scholarship, FRS provides \$2,000 and the sponsoring NTCA member company provides \$500. The FRS has awarded over \$1 million in scholarships since its inception, empowering rural students throughout the country to advance their communities with invaluable skill sets and experiences.

In addition to the FRS general scholarships, FRS has the following named scholarships*

- Everett Kneece Scholarship
- Herbert and Isabel Bitz Memorial Scholarship
- JSI Scholarship
- Sarah Tyree Good Neighbor Scholarship
- Cronin Communications Scholarship
- Diana Jo Dreyer Memorial Scholarship
- TMS Scholarships
- Roger Cox Memorial Scholarship

*Submitting one application is sufficient for eligibility of all available scholarships.

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Pictured L to R: Hallie Grubb, Eric Holt, Sam Wilson, Tammy Taylor, Eric Church and Brantley Davis

Spreading Christmas Cheer

During the 2023 Christmas holiday season, SkyLine employees gathered their time and resources to help support area community members in need. As longtime sponsors of the Appalachian Senior Programs' Project Star, SkyLine employees were able to sponsor 25 senior citizens that needed some additional support this year. SkyLine employees also sponsored children through BROCC (Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission), a program that collectively provides Christmas gifts to children in need.

We also would like to take time to thank you, our members, for your efforts in supporting those in need throughout our community the entire year.

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



"It really hit home for me when thinking about Covid," Ellis illustrates. "Both kids and adults need reliable broadband to work from home, but in these rural areas, they don't have internet, period."

With each install, he enhances the customer's ability to operate in today's society. Ellis understands the value of working meticulously while remaining efficient. "I try to do things the exact same way I would want it in my home," he stresses.

When Ellis joined SkyLine, he witnessed and became a part of a new kind of teamwork and collaboration, both within and outside of his department. For example, not only does his own team possess a genuine desire to help, when he experiences issues in the field, those in Support Services never fail to find a solution.

"As far as Field Services, I am happy to be part of such a great department," Ellis remarks. His enthusiasm for his job is apparent. It is obvious he has a purpose and knows each day that he is providing a meaningful and needed broadband service. "It's really awesome to work here," he adds. "The work week just flies by."

2024 Calendars are now available at local Customer Centers!



According to the FRS, more than two-thirds of rural Americans with postsecondary degrees never return to their rural communities, so this program gives particular emphasis to those students who plan to return to their community following college. Eligibility requirements include the following:

- Applicants must be children of SkyLine members or SkyBest customers who subscribe to either company's facilities-based services.
- Applicants must be graduating high school seniors and reside full-time with their parents(s) in the companies' service area.
- Applicants must be a United States citizen.
- Applicants must complete the online application.
- Applicants must express an interest to return to a rural community following graduation.
- Applications must be sponsored by SkyLine, an NTCA-member company.

Note: Children of SkyLine employees or directors are not eligible for this scholarship.

The FRS, in cooperation with NTCA — The Rural Broadband Association, seeks to sustain and enhance the quality of life in America by advancing an understanding of rural issues. Through its various programs and initiatives, FRS strongly supports the continuing education of rural youth. If any SkyLine-sponsored students are named winners, they will be announced in May, in conjunction with area high school awards day programs.

Visit www.FRS.org/student for full instructions on how to create an account and for all necessary materials required. If you have additional questions about the FRS Scholarship, please contact Hallie Grubb at 1-336-876-6117.

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Recipe of the Month Baked Mac & Cheese

Ingredients:

- 1 package macaroni and cheese (with creamy sauce)
- 1 1/4 cup milk
- 1 cup sour cream
- shredded cheese

Instructions:

Prepare mac & cheese according to package directions. Add milk and sour cream. Mix very well. Pour into a baking dish sprayed with non-stick spray. Top with shredded cheese and bake at 400 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes.

Recipe submitted by Donna Harless Jones

Happy New Year!

From the Board of Directors and Staff of
SkyLine Membership Corporation and SkyBest Communications



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\$24.95/mo.

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SKYBEST.COM 1-800-759-2226

*Some restrictions apply.