



Pictured at the ReCONNECT to Technological Opportunity Forum at N.C. State University: (left to right): Dr. Jeff Cox, WCC President, WCC Vice President for Strategy Zach Barricklow, SkyLine PR Administrator Karen Powell, Mountain Biz Works Business Coach Gia Galifianakis and cohort member Greg Galifianakis, Managing Partner of Gria Consulting. Cohort members not pictured: Alleghany Chamber of Commerce President-Elect Ricky Brown and Chris Robinson, WCC Vice President for Workforce Development and Community Education and the Ashe Campus.

Emerging Issues Forum Spotlights Region's Broadband Assets

At the February 10 ReCONNECT to Technological Opportunity Forum, presented by the Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI) at N.C. State University, five community initiatives from throughout North Carolina were highlighted, including one from the northwest region. Three counties in northwest NC – Ashe, Alleghany and Wilkes – are at the center of this initiative led by Wilkes Community College (WCC) to expand the region's telework economy.

Representing education, business and community leaders and the Internet service provider serving two of the three counties in the college's service footprint, the WCC delegation joined their peer cohorts at the forum to share their stories as part of the daylong event featuring several notable speakers and presentations which aired live on UNC-TV, and break-out sessions that delved further into the topics of digital inclusion and expanding economic opportunity through broadband applications.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



April is National Safe Digging Month

The North Carolina One Call Center provides a toll-free telephone number, 8-1-1, to help reduce damages to underground facilities, thereby reducing the loss of service to the public and the loss of time and money to excavators, utilities and taxpayers. And, our Shady Valley and Mountain City customers also can contact the Tennessee One-Call Center by dialing 8-1-1 from their homes or businesses.

Please provide the following information when you call:

- Location of work – street address, county and town
- Nearest cross street
- Area to be marked
- Date and time of excavation or digging
- Type of work
- Your name and number or the contractor's information

So, be safe, not sorry: Know what's below... Call before you dig... Dial 811.

Measures Implemented in Response to COVID-19

As of this newsletter's press time, SkyLine has implemented various measures in response to the continuing spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and in accordance with advisories from government and healthcare officials to ensure our employees' and our customers' safety. Those measures include work and travel policy changes, increased education on illness prevention methods and more stringent practices for disinfecting vehicles and tools between customer visits. We want to ensure that our technicians can continue to serve our community safely, quickly and with the same level of professionalism our customers have come to expect.

Our Customer Service staff will work with customers requesting special payment arrangements to assist those adversely affected, and SkyLine has additional options for business customers to maintain business continuity and modify their services as needed during this crisis. Additionally, SkyLine is assisting our area public school systems as they work to meet their students' needs remotely during this time and have enacted a plan to provide internet connectivity to students at their homes who don't currently have access to it due to need.

For nearly 70 years our cooperative has made a point to work with our customers in difficult situations to try to keep them connected. We will continue to do that throughout the coronavirus outbreak. We know that during difficult times like this, a connection to work, school and current events in the world is more important than ever. Our broadband network is designed and ready for events like this, and is more than capable of handling a dramatic increase in the number of people working and learning from home.

SkyLine Serves as Host Site for American Red Cross Bloodmobile Thanks to Our Blood Donors!

Coordinating with the American Red Cross's Winston-Salem office, SkyLine hosted its first drive for 2020 at its corporate campus on February 19, with a record 41 units collected primarily from SkyLine employees and few volunteers from the community. The convenience of having this event at SkyLine makes a significant difference for employees to be able to donate, and we'll keep you posted regarding any future blood drives scheduled here.



SkyLine Retail Services Consultant Chelsea Greer was among first-time donors at this year's blood drive on February 19.



Like many of his peers, SkyLine Cable Splicer Brandon Miller appreciates the convenience of being able to donate blood at SkyLine's corporate campus.

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

WORTH NOTING:

Monday, April 13
SkyLine Offices Close
for Easter Holiday

STAFF:

Kim Shepherd
Chief Executive Officer

Brian Tester
Chief Operations Officer

Angie Poe
Customer Service Manager

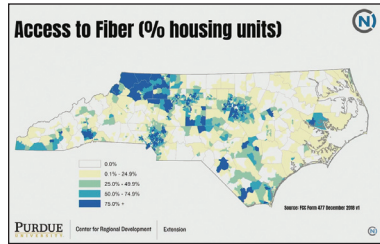
Jamey Jenkins
Retail Sales Manager

Karen P. Powell
Public Relations Administrator
& Editor



www.facebook.com/SkyLineSkyBest

The Institute's ReCONNECT NC series is a three-year initiative to address solutions to North Carolina's most pressing issues, and the Technological Opportunity Forum is initiative's fourth installment.



In his presentation, Roberto Gallardo of the Purdue Center for Economic Development included this graphic which shows a high concentration of fiber availability in northwest North Carolina, including areas where SkyLine provides Gig-capable broadband services.

to greater economic opportunity for the three-county region. "In getting to tell our story, we used our time in front of this statewide audience to highlight some great examples of how folks in our service area of Wilkes, Ashe and Alleghany counties are leveraging technology and our terrific broadband connectivity in this region to work in various careers fully connected to the rest of the world," he said. "This statewide audience included many business and industry leaders, and we shared some great reasons why they should all be thinking about moving to our area themselves and/or locating their business (or a branch of it) to our area."

Zach Barricklow, Vice President of Strategy at Wilkes Community College, presented on behalf of the WCC cohort at the forum in Raleigh, sharing stories of entrepreneurs and working professionals who are savoring the slower pace, beauty and quality of life in these rural mountain communities and have made the transition from long, urban commutes to remote teleworking through the Gig-capable broadband capabilities provided by SkyLine Membership Corporation and other local providers who have made the necessary infrastructure investments. As early as 2015, SkyLine was among the nation's first rural telecom providers to offer Gig-capable internet and did so ahead of such cities as Miami, Atlanta and Charlotte.

"What allowed my wife and me to move to Alleghany and for me to work remotely was through SkyLine's robust Internet connectivity," Barricklow said. "Now that I'm working with the college, our mission and vision at its core is about empowering more citizens with education that leads to living wage jobs and promising careers, and our participation in the Institute's forum continues to provide visibility of our northwest region and a growing awareness of the broadband assets we have to attract business investment and participation in the telework economy."

"Since the IEI Forum, we have seen strong interest and enthusiasm about northwest NC's vision for connecting our rural area to global economic opportunity via telework," shared Barricklow. "We are better positioned than any other part of North Carolina, and even much of the United States." Indeed, several interviews and articles have resulted from the positive exposure, including a dedicated episode of the Community Broadband Networks podcast, an Op-Ed in the News & Observer, an appearance in the UNC-TV special on ReCONNECT NC Series (minute 9:06), live UNC-TV broadcast of the stage talk at the IEI Forum (minute

Dr. Jeff Cox, president of Wilkes Community College, recognized the value of participating in the Forum to help further tell the story of the region's robust broadband capabilities and how that could lead

When You Need to Spread the Word, SkyLine's Call Tree Service Can Deliver

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 turn your landline phone into a powerful 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!

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

In light of developments from COVID-19, CallTree is among several features available free for one month with the offer available through April 17. SkyLine/SkyBest will continue to monitor any further developments and may extend the free offer if conditions persist.

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.



Recipe of the Month

Georgia's Green Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. lime Jello
- 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese
- 1 large can crushed pineapple*
- 1/2 carton Cool Whip
- 1/4 cup nuts

Instructions:

Prepare Jello as directed on package. Beat cream cheese with jello mixture to seafoam stage and let partially jell. Mix all ingredients together and refrigerate.

* It will be sweeter to use less.

Submitted by Georgia Greer of Ashe Co.

BROADBAND ASSETS CONTINUED FROM THIS PAGE

11:50), and an Institute for Emerging Issues website profile for the northwest region in the lead up to the IEI Forum.

The WCC cohort will continue its efforts to build on this momentum by continuing to catalogue the stories they have from entrepreneurs, teleworkers and freelancers, identify ways to foster this growth and complement the recent launch of an online platform for business startups that hosts resources, provides support and tells additional stories of entrepreneurship in the area. More information about Startup Northwest NC will be featured in next month's newsletter.

For more information about the Institute for Emerging Issues and this forum, visit <https://iei.ncsu.edu/reconnectnc/>.

Stream Local Networks Live

AVAILABLE TO ANY CUSTOMER WITH SKYBEST INTERNET!



Only \$20/mo.
No Contract Required



22 channels | View on SkyBestTV NOW app or Roku

Call to sign-up today! 1-800-759-2226

12 MBPS OR FASTER INTERNET CONNECTION REQUIRED

*Some restrictions apply. SkyBest TV NOW service is available to NC SkyBest High-Speed Internet customers only. Service requires a Roku player, High-Speed Internet connection minimum of 12 Mbps and a wired or wireless router. Taxes and fees not included. Broadcast TV Fee (\$5) will be applied monthly. See complete details online at skybest.com/NOW. Channel line-up subject to change.

CONTINUED ON THIS PAGE