

FRS Scholarship Program Announces Online Application Process

If you have a son or daughter graduating from high school this spring, he or she may be eligible for the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) Scholarship sponsored locally by SkyLine Membership Corporation.

In 2021, 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.

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

- Staurulakis Family Scholarships
- TMS Scholarships
- Everett Kneese Scholarship
- Roger Alan Cox Memorial Scholarships
- Good Neighbor Scholarship
- Herbert and Isabel Bitz Memorial Scholarship

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

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 accepted to an accredited two-or four-year college, university or vocational-technical school.

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Frank James-SkyLine Scholarship

Ten scholarships with a total value of \$25,000 are scheduled to be awarded this spring to children of SkyLine and SkyBest customers to assist them with the cost of a college education.

The scholarships are earmarked for graduating high school seniors (including home-schooled students) in the co-op's five-county service area (Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Watauga and Johnson). The scholarships will be awarded on the basis of scholastic achievement, financial need, demonstrated leadership and community involvement.

Scholarship application forms and program guidelines will be available at area high school guidance departments and all SkyLine Customer Service Centers beginning Monday, February 8. The deadline for this scholarship is Monday, March 15.

SkyLine Announces Student Connect Grant Program in Continuing Support of Technology in Area Public Schools

With SkyLine's enduring commitment to public education across the cooperative's five-county service area, we are excited to announce the re-emergence of our technology grant program with a renewed focus on student connectivity.

Like the original grant program that helped to enhance technology in the classroom – namely by bringing new Smart Board systems to school classrooms across our service area from 2006 through 2014 – the SkyLine/SkyBest Student Connect Grant Program seeks to bridge the technology gap by linking fiber-based Internet access directly to the homes of those students who lack this critical tool to facilitate academic success due to need or challenging circumstances.

As a key community partner to education and architect of the most advanced fiber network in the region, SkyLine/SkyBest values the collaborative relationships formed with our school systems that result in a level playing field for all students and opportunity for greater student enrichment and success. Our plan is to commit

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Alleghany County Schools

(L-R): Brent Keith, Steve Hall, Directory of Technology/Accountability; Public Information/Grant Writing; Karen Powell and Edward Hinson.



Ashe County Schools

(L-R): Edward Hinson, Brent Keith, Karen Powell, Dr. Eisa Cox, Superintendent of Schools, and Director of Technology Amy Walker.



Avery County Schools

(L-R): Edward Hinson, Dr. Dan Brigman, Superintendent; Karen Powell, Chief Information Officer David Reep.

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

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(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:

SkyLine & SkyBest Close
for Presidents Day
Monday, February 15

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



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- Applicants must have at least a C grade-point-average (GPA). FRS scholarships will be awarded to deserving students whose academic credentials fall within an average to above-average range.
- Applicants must express an interest to return to a rural community following graduation.
- Applications must be sponsored by SkyLine, an NTCA-member company.

Visit www.FRS.org/student for full instructions on how to create an account and for all necessary materials required. The deadline for this year's FRS Scholarship is Friday, March 5.

If you have additional questions about the FRS Scholarship, please contact Karen Powell at SkyLine's corporate offices at 1-800-759-2226.

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

STUDENT CONNECT GRANT PROGRAM CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

annual funding to this program, and the timing of its debut cannot come at a more critical time of need in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic.

The inaugural grant will provide at-home fiber broadband connectivity for up to 75 students throughout the co-op's five-county service area. Each school system will determine student eligibility, based on need-based criteria, and whose families live in communities served by SkyLine's fiber-to-the-home network. SkyLine also provided the opportunity for school systems to provide funding for a 1:1 match for this inaugural program if additional need exists.

"We know that broadband accessibility is a common requirement for all educational settings, and the pandemic has further intensified that reality," said SkyLine CEO Kim Shepherd. "SkyLine realizes that it also has a role to play in partnering with education to enhance technology in our schools that give all students a more equal opportunity for success. We hope this new funding effort will accelerate efforts to fill that critical need."

In recent weeks, SkyLine Chief Marketing and Sales Officer Edward Hinson, PR Administrator Karen Powell and Strategic Sales Supervisor Brent Keith met with officials from all five school systems to announce the new annual initiative, and the process to extend broadband connectivity to these students has begun.



Watauga County Schools

(L-R): Director of Technology Alison Schleede and Dr. Scott Elliott, Superintendent; Karen Powell, Edward Hinson and Brent Keith.



Johnson County Schools

(L-R): Brent Keith, Dr. Stephen Long, Supervisor of 7-12, Curriculum and Instruction/Transportation; Karen Powell, Dr. Michelle Simcox, Director of Schools; Angie Wills, Supervisor of K-6, Curriculum and Instruction/Federal Programs; Edward Hinson and Director of Technology Robert Sutherland.

Amendments to Bylaws Approved Regarding Membership Eligibility and Early Retirement of Capital Credits

At its December 1, 2020 meeting, the SkyLine Board of Directors approved amendments to the cooperative's bylaws regarding cooperative membership and the allocation and retirement of capital credits, which were made effective January 1, 2021.

Under Article 1 Membership, Sections 1.1 – Eligibility and 1.2 Definitions and Classifications, membership in the cooperative may now be granted to individuals purchasing telecommunications and/or information services who reside in the cooperative's service area. This will allow broadband-only customers served by the cooperative to become members of SkyLine and be eligible for capital credits.

Amendments to Article VIII Nonprofit Operation, Sections 8.2 – Patronage Capital in Connection with Furnishing Telecommunications Services and 8.3 Patronage Capital in Connection with Furnishing Other Services will now permit an eligible member the ability to file a request of early retirement of his or her capital credit account at net present value. No retirement may be made until all outstanding accounts due are cleared either by payment or deduction from the early retirement amount. Payments for early retirements will be processed quarterly for a one-time payout for active and inactive members who meet the age requirement of 75. If member requests exceed the board-approved amount for that year, the excess requests will be addressed the following year, based on the budgeted amount approved for payouts by the Board of Directors. Active members who request early retirement will continue to accrue capital credits for future years.

SkyLine will be contacting broadband customers who reside in the cooperative's service area by letter over the next several weeks to provide additional information on how to apply for full cooperative membership. Cooperative members who are interested in applying for early retirement of capital credits may contact their local SkyLine office for further information. SkyLine's cooperative bylaws may be viewed on the company website, under the About Us, and About SkyLine Membership Corporation tabs.

Recipe of the Month

Easy Black Beans & Rice

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 can (15 ounces) black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (14 1/2 ounces) Mexican-style stewed tomatoes
- 1/4 teaspoon ground red pepper
- 2 cups hot cooked rice
- 1/4 cup chopped onion (optional)

Instructions:

In a medium saucepan, cook 1/2 cup onion and garlic in hot oil until onion is tender. Carefully stir in the drained beans, undrained tomatoes, and red pepper. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, for 15 minutes.

Serve over hot rice. Sprinkle with onion, if desired.

Recipe submitted by Marsha Walters of Ashe County



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