

# CONNECTIONS

MAY 2016

Published monthly for customers of SkyLine Membership Corporation and SkyBest Communications

www.SkyLine.org  
www.SkyBest.com



Heart Auction volunteers work the 'hot boards' to move modestly priced items more quickly. Pictured left to right: Austin Hart, Heart Association Chapter President Lynn Graham, WSKS's Graham Caddell, Tina Sheets, SkyLine's Angie Miller and Jerry McMillan.

## Ashe Heart Auction Nets More than \$14,000

The largest fund-raising effort of the year for the local chapter of the American Heart Association took place on April 6 at Family Central in Jefferson, and the local chapter reports that the event has netted \$14,250 as of press time.

SkyBest TV's local content channel, SkyZhone HD, provided live coverage for the third consecutive year of the 55th Annual Ashe Heart Auction, giving local TV service subscribers a first-hand look at this popular charitable event and also featured audio through WSKS's radio coverage.

SkyLine also provided the phone service and bank of phones to connect volunteers with those who called to place bids, and 580 WSKS provided live radio coverage of the auction.

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## Please Support Area Relay for Life Events

SkyLine has been a supporter of the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life for several years. In some counties, we field teams; in other counties, our employees may be part of other community, family or church teams. Collectively, we are all making a difference in the fight against cancer.

Below are area Relay for Life events across our service area. We appreciate your support!

<b>Alleghany County</b>	<b>June 17</b>
Alleghany High School, Sparta, NC	
<b>Watauga County</b>	<b>June 17</b>
Watauga High School, Boone, NC	
<b>Johnson County</b>	<b>June 25</b>
Ralph Stout Park, Mountain City, TN	
<b>Ashe County</b>	<b>July 15</b>
Ashe County High School, West Jefferson, NC	
<b>Avery County</b>	<b>July 29</b>
Avery County High School, Newland, NC	



**10-Digit-Dialing Now Mandatory for Local Calls in the 336/743 Area Code**



SkyLine CEO Jimmy Blevins (center) is presented with the Management Innovation Award by NTCA Chief Executive Officer Shirley Bloomfield (at left) and NTCA President Doug Boone (at right).

## Blevins Recognized with Management Innovation Award at NTCA Annual Meeting

NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association recognized rural telecommunications providers during the Rural Telecom Industry Meeting & EXPO in Lake Buena Vista, Fla., in late February, for their achievements and service to the telecommunications industry, and SkyLine Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Jimmy Blevins was among the honorees.

Seven individuals received individual achievement awards, and Blevins was recognized with the "Management Innovation Award." Blevins received the award for his ongoing efforts to make innovative changes to diversify the company's revenue opportunities and place the focus on the needs of the customer.

After assuming the role of SkyLine CEO in July 2008, Blevins immediately began making innovative changes, some of which were subtle operational changes while others were more globally minded and customer-focused, such as the deployment of a Smart Home, creation of The Video Exchange and several unique service offerings. Blevins is an engineer by education. Prior to his current role, he led the company's Engineering and Plant Operations for several years and was the architect of SkyLine's present network. Below is a summary of Blevins' innovative achievements that were recognized by NTCA.

### Smart Home

Blevins devised a plan to introduce home automation services by converting an existing cabin into a "Smart

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## Internet Weekender Plan Get 12 Mbps Internet When You Need It At The Price You Want!

Enjoy 12 Mbps Internet at your weekend home automatically activated from Friday at noon until Monday at noon every weekend for only \$15 per month\*. Why pay when you're away?

**Want More?** Add Weekend Phone Service - Only \$10.  
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No Contract Required!

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

\*Some restrictions apply. Residential only. One month minimum required. Modem leases, if needed, are not included.

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## 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

ASHE

336-982-3111

AVERY

898-9250

WATAUGA

297-4811

JOHNSON

739-4500

### INTERNET TECH SUPPORT, 24/7

TOLL-FREE

1-866-759-7591

### WORTH NOTING:

**Monday, May 30**  
SkyLine Closes for Memorial Day Holiday

### STAFF:

Jimmy Blevins  
Chief Executive Officer

Kim Shepherd  
Executive Director of Customer Operations

Angie Poe  
Customer Service Manager

Jamey Jenkins  
Retail Sales Manager

Karen P. Powell  
Public Relations Administrator & Editor



Home" on commercial property that had been purchased by SkyLine to construct a new Retail Center. The Smart Home in West Jefferson is a full-service telecommunications retail center that gives customers a real-time look at innovative Smart Home features, enabled through SkyBest's broadband, automation and surveillance services.

### Weekender Internet

Blevins developed a 'Weekender Internet' service offering for part-time residents who wanted Internet during their weekend visits to their mountain homes but felt there was not enough value in paying for an entire month's service.

### One-to-One Initiative

Working collaboratively with Alleghany County's Superintendent of Schools, Blevins addressed a need relating to its 'one-to-one initiative,' where high school students received a laptop but due to low income, could not afford Internet access at home. Realizing the school's Internet backhaul was not being utilized at night, Blevins devised a solution for the school to purchase circuits through SkyLine to connect to the students' homes and tie back into the school's IT network. In 2012, this school was one of 10 schools/districts in the state recognized by the N.C. Governor with the "Innovator in Digital Learning" award.

### The Video Exchange

After SkyLine deployed a local content channel as part of its TV service line-up, Blevins approached his peers in the rural telecom industry regarding the need for additional content and found that some companies had ample content while others needed content. To satisfy a need on both sides of the content equation, he developed the concept for an eCommerce site and a new subsidiary of SkyBest called "The Video Exchange," where companies can purchase or sell video content.

NTCA's national awards are voted on by the association's Awards Committee, which is composed of NTCA members. NTCA Chief Executive Officer Shirley Bloomfield presented the awards during the Rural Telecom Industry Meeting & EXPO Awards Banquet on February 24.

NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association is the premier association representing nearly 900 independent, community-based telecommunications companies that are leading innovation in rural and small-town America. NTCA advocates on behalf of its members in the legislative and regulatory arenas, and it provides training and development; publications and industry events; and an array of employee benefit programs. In an era of exploding technology, deregulation and marketplace competition, NTCA's members are leading the IP evolution for rural consumers, delivering technologies that make rural communities vibrant places in which to live and do business. Because of their efforts, rural America is fertile ground for innovation in economic development and commerce, education, health care, government services, security and smart energy use.

## Directory Drive Continues to Benefit Area Schools

We have concluded our annual Directory Collection Drive, coordinated with area public schools. For their part, participating schools will receive 25 cents for each directory collected from this drive. Special thanks to our members, school staff and students across our service area for supporting this worthwhile project.

According to Lynn Graham, local Heart Association chapter chairperson, the event would not have been possible without its many volunteers. "Many thanks to all the ladies who helped Edna Ham with the baked goods table, all the individuals who baked and St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, Fletcher Memorial Baptist Church, Mount Jefferson Presbyterian Church and Nathan's Creek Homemakers Club. Thanks also to SkyLine for providing the phone bank, SkyZhone for the TV coverage, WKSK—Jan, Graham and Marty, and all the volunteers who worked the boards, manned the phones and helped with set-up and take-down. We appreciate Dr. Pepper, McDonalds, Hardees and Bojangles for providing food and drinks to our volunteers. Special thanks also to Sam Weaver and NAPA for allowing us to store items prior to the auction.

This year's auction featured specially-designated white boards that WKSK called the "Hot Boards" to help move smaller ticket items throughout the day and enabled the event to finish on time. "Pat Leone, our website designer, kept a running tally of sold items throughout the day so we could have a list of items by buyer for the cashiers," Graham said. "Our website, asheheart.org, featured pictures and listings of the donated items for buyers to peruse prior to the auction."

Heart disease is the number-one killer of Americans, while stroke ranks fourth and is a leading cause of severe disability. Established in 1924 by six cardiologists, the American Heart Association is the nation's leader in CPR education training and has funded more than \$3.4 billion in research since 1949, more than any organization outside the federal government.

### Recipe of the Month

## Stella Jarrett's Fresh Strawberry Pie

### Ingredients:

- 4 tablespoons of flour
- 4 tablespoons of strawberry Jello
- 1 cup of sugar
- 1 cup of water
- 1 baked pie shell
- 2-3 cups strawberries

### Instructions:

In a pan on the stove: mix flour, jello and sugar well. Gradually add water while cooking over low heat until mixture thickens. Cool. Place strawberries in a baked shell. Pour cooled sauce over the strawberries. Place in refrigerator to chill. Serve with whipped cream.

Submitted by Linda Hurd of Watauga County



**Spring is Here –  
Remember to Notify  
One-Call at 8-1-1  
Before You Dig**

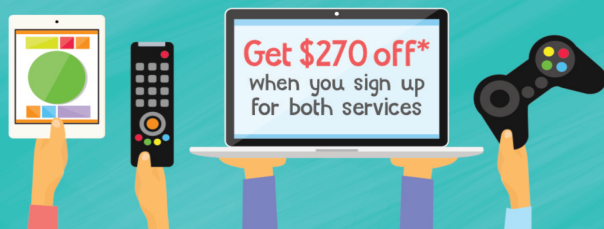
The North Carolina and Tennessee One Call Centers provide a toll-free telephone number, 8-1-1, to help reduce damages to underground facilities, thereby reducing the loss of service to the public and the loss of time and money to excavators, utilities and taxpayers.

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\*Certain restrictions apply. Expires 5.31.16. 24-month service agreement and early termination fee apply for each service ordered. New TV and/or Internet customers only. Offers valid for 8 Mbps or higher Internet and/or Plus or Premier TV. Service not available in all areas. Higher speeds and TV available in fiber-served communities only. Internet savings will be applied as a \$25 monthly bill credit for six months. TV savings will be applied as a \$10 monthly bill credit for 12 months.