



Representatives of SkyLine and AAL are pictured with the official grant award from NTCA and SkyLine. Of the \$8,653.92 funded for the project, 50-percent came from NTCA (\$4,326.96) with a quarter match of \$2,163.48 each from SkyLine and Ashe Assisted Living. Pictured, left to right: SkyLine Board members Jerry Roten and Sharon Kasel, AAL Administrator Bevin South and SkyLine's Karen Powell and Edward Hinson.

## Collaborative Challenge Grant Benefits Ashe Assisted Living

What started as a conversation several months ago led SkyLine to learn of a local community need, identify a solution and pursue a grant opportunity that would enhance the level of care for seniors in an assisted living facility in Ashe County.

The senior services sector has grown in recent years with the establishment of two new assisting living facilities and the expansion of a local rehabilitation center.

Ashe County ranks in the highest percentage bracket in the state with 30 percent of its population age 60 or higher, and this segment is expected to increase to 35 percent by 2034.

SkyLine applied for the Smart Rural Community (SRC) Collaboration Challenge through NTCA to secure a new close-captioned surveillance system for Ashe Assisted Living and Memory Care Center.

The assisted living facility was lacking high-quality access to video monitoring and did not have enough resources to purchase a complete system.

The West Jefferson-based, not-for-profit residential care facility is owned and managed by Ashe Services for Aging (ASA), a non-profit agency that has been providing quality and compassionate care and services for the elderly and disabled adults of Ashe County since 1977. AAL services individuals 55 and older that need assistance with activities of daily living (bathing, dressing, toileting, ambulation and eating), medication management, meal preparation, daily activities program, transportation to doctors' appointments and recreational events, as well as partnership with home health, hospice and behavioral health.

SkyLine's CEO Jimmy Blevins first recognized how this center could benefit from the matching grant program while visiting his mother who resided there.

The challenge is an annual opportunity for rural broadband providers like SkyLine to obtain grants to deploy broadband-enabled solutions within their community and recruit the participation of other local leaders.

Blevins shared the grant opportunity with Center Administrator Bevin South and the two organizations worked together to submit an application.

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## SkyLine Announces Acquisition of Chesnee Telephone



In conjunction with the company's current strategic initiative to expand its service footprint and

to pursue growth opportunities, SkyLine Membership Corporation has announced the acquisition of Chesnee Telephone of Chesnee, South Carolina, effective October 16, 2017. Chesnee is a rural, independent telecommunications company, with approximately 2,750 access lines in Spartanburg and Cherokee counties in northwestern South Carolina. The acquisition also includes wholly-owned subsidiaries of Chesnee, which provide long-distance services, digital cable television services and Internet services to the company's customers. Chesnee Telephone is a family-owned company that has served Chesnee and surrounding communities for the past 85 years. It will retain the branded name of Chesnee Communications with a new corporate logo as a company of SkyBest Holdings, LLC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of SkyBest Communications, Inc.

The telecommunications industry has witnessed a growing number of mergers and acquisitions in recent years, due to dramatic changes in technology, a reduction in regulatory revenues and a highly competitive landscape. The challenge is especially great for small and rural local exchange carriers, according to SkyLine Chief Executive Officer Jimmy Blevins. "Small carriers need scale to remain competitive and profitable, so mergers and acquisitions are one avenue to accomplish this," he said. "With our fiber-to-the-premise overbuild now complete in our cooperative footprint, our board of directors and senior management have been engaged in strategic planning to set a course for the company's future, and that has included both service expansion to new or unserved/underserved areas near our current cooperative footprint as well as opportunities for company growth through mergers and acquisitions."

While this is the first acquisition in recent years for SkyLine, it's not the company's only one. In 1954, SkyLine acquired Watauga Telephone Company to serve the Vilas and Sugar Grove communities; in 1958, it acquired

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## Transition to New Format for 2017-18 Telephone Directories

Citing industry changes which have impacted the way consumers locate, access and store residential phone numbers, SkyLine's directory publisher, DexYP, has announced plans to cease printing residential white pages, beginning with the 2017-18 telephone directory.

To help customers adjust to the new format, a limited quantity of residential-only printed supplements will be available at all SkyLine Customer Center locations. Going forward, residential listings will continue to be available online through SkyLine's website, www.skybest.com, as well as www.realpageslive.com and www.yellowpages.com.

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### WORTH NOTING:

Thursday,

November 23

SkyLine Offices Close for Thanksgiving

### STAFF:

Jimmy Blevins  
Chief Executive Officer

Kim Shepherd  
Chief Management Officer

Brian Tester  
Executive Director of  
Customer Operations

Angie Poe  
Customer Service Manager

Jamey Jenkins  
Retail Sales Manager

Karen P. Powell  
Public Relations Administrator  
& Editor



Central Telephone's Sparta facilities and in 1961, Cherokee Telephone Membership Corporation merged with SkyLine, expanding the West Jefferson-based cooperative's service area to five counties, covering 840 square miles.

Through its subsidiary, SkyBest Communications, Inc., SkyLine introduced services to the Lenoir business community in 2016, and the company is extending its service this fall to include some residential areas in Lenoir, as well as the business community of Mountain City, Tennessee. The company learned of the Chesnee acquisition opportunity during this time of expansion, which complements SkyLine's overall growth strategy and gives Sky-Best future consideration to serve potential areas south of Lenoir and Caldwell County.

SkyLine's advanced network, company structure and size as the eighth largest telecommunications cooperative in the nation and the largest among eight co-ops in the state, bring to the table economies of scale, operational efficiencies and a longstanding commitment to technology and exceptional customer service. "We pledge to further enhance and strengthen Chesnee Communications. The revenue growth from expansion and M&A activity will ensure the continued viability of SkyLine, SkyBest, the subsidiaries of SkyBest Holdings, LLC and the communities they serve in the years to come," Blevins said.

#### ASHE ASSISTED LIVING CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Having a state-of-the-art surveillance system through this collaborative initiative allows AAL to staff monitor the safety of its residents more effectively and capture on video unwitnessed falls, patterns of wandering and attempted elopements.

"I am so grateful to Jimmy and everyone else at SkyLine for turning our need into a reality," said Bevin South, Administrator of Ashe Assisted Living and Memory Care. This system will help us ensure that we are providing the best services possible to our residents at all times, further enriching and celebrating their amazing lives."

SkyBest's Security's surveillance/IP Network solution offers 3.0 Mega Pixel HD image bullet and dome cameras with some of the best night vision available and its onsite Network Video Recorder (NVR) comes with a mobile app to view live footage, making fiber-optic bandwidth a necessity.

"The installation of security cameras throughout our assisted living community has been a goal since our opening six years ago," said Patricia Calloway, Ashe Services for Aging Executive Director.

"Unfortunately, the drastic decline in Medicaid funding has left several projects unrealized. With the support of SkyLine, we are so grateful that we can now move forward with adding this amenity to our community."



Ashe Assisted Living



## Commemorative Cookbook

The recipes we feature in our monthly newsletter come from SkyLine's commemorative cookbook. At just \$15 each, they make great gifts, and all proceeds will support area food banks. Call SkyLine at 118 to order yours.

#### TRANSITION FOR DIRECTORIES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

According to a 2017 study by the National Center for Health Statistics, 46.1 percent of adults in North Carolina live in wireless-only households. Because wireless consumer listings do not print, the residential white pages do not fully represent the directory area. Due to this transition, almost one out of every two residential listings searches could end in user failure, which in turn, may negatively impact the perceived value of the yellow and business white pages content and the brands associated with the publication.

Due to these industry changes and value issue for consumers, directory publisher YP (now, DexYP) began migrating away from automatic delivery of printed residential white pages in 2008, initially moving residential white pages to 'upon request' status only. Since that time, request rates for this content have remained low. SkyLine will be the last YP-associated directory to make this transition in format beginning with the 2017-18 directory.

The new directories will be delivered through the U.S. Postal Service in December, and in conjunction with deliveries, residential white-page printed supplements will be available while they last at all SkyLine Customer Center locations in Sparta, Boone, Banner Elk and West Jefferson (Smart Home and Call Center).

## Recipe of the Month Fresh Apple Cake

### Cake:

- 1 1/2 cup cooking oil
- 3 eggs
- 2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 3 cups chopped apples
- 3 cups flour
- 1 cup pecans or walnuts chopped

### Frosting:

- 1/4 pound margarine or butter
- 2 teaspoons flour
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup evaporated milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 1/2 cups powdered sugar
- 1 cup chopped pecans

### Instructions:

Cake: Combine oil and eggs. Add sugar and apples. Mix together dry ingredients and add this to apple mixture. Then, add vanilla and nuts. Pour into floured & greased tube pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 1/2 hours.

Frosting: Melt butter. Add flour and milk, and cook on medium, stirring constantly until thick. Add brown sugar and stir until sugar melts. Remove from heat and add powdered sugar and pecans. Spread on cake that has cooled.

Recipe submitted by Sharon Davis of Alleghany County



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