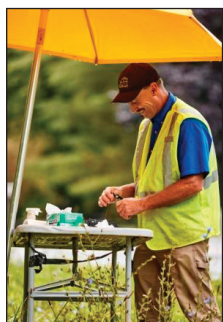




Outside Plant Engineers Matthew Ball and Eugene Seatz, pictured at far left and far right, with Chief Technology Officer Robbie Farmer and Plant Manager Brant Davis, spent considerable time with the planning and execution of the Sutherland project.

Connecting New Communities through grant-funded projects & public/private partnerships

Not far from Mountain City, just beyond our Shady Valley service area and past a section of Cherokee National Forest is the small community of Sutherland, situated at the northeastern tip of Tennessee that borders Virginia on Highway 133.



"We first learned about Sutherland's need for faster broadband last year from a resident of that community who had called in," said Plant Manager Brant Davis. "We tried to make a business case for it, but the community was so small compared to the construction costs to make it work." That is, until SkyLine learned of some available grant funding in late July through the Tennessee Emergency Broadband Fund, made possible by the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) Act passed by Congress to address such needs as enhancing broadband access to families affected during the Covid-19 pandemic.



Davis said the grant opportunity opened the door to funding that could help get the project underway. "To meet the grant stipulations to pass 48 service locations,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



New customer Rob Campbell of Sutherland (seated with Ruger) and Field Service Technician Austin Mast check the latest broadband speed test through the new fiber connection available through SkyBest. Campbell represents a growing segment of IT professionals who telework from home, and he couldn't be happier.

Could that call or email be a scam?

You get a call or an email. It might say you've won a prize. It might seem to come from a government official. Maybe it seems to be from someone you know – your grandchild, a relative or a friend. Or maybe it's from someone you feel like you know, but you haven't met in person – say, a person you met online who you've been writing to.



Whatever the story, the request is the same: wire money to pay taxes or fees, or to help someone you care about. But is the person who you think it is? Is there an emergency or a prize? Judging by the complaints to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the answer is no. The person calling you is pretending to be someone else.

In addition to these ploys cited by the FTC, please be aware that SkyLine has received recent reports from customers of emails received regarding their SkyBest email account – DO NOT click on any links in the email. Phishing and calling scams like these have one goal – to get access to your personal information and to get access to money.

The FTC further advises consumers to:

1. Stop. Check it out – before you wire money to anyone. Call the person, the government agency, or someone else you trust. Get the real story. Then decide what to do. No government agency will ever ask you to wire money.
2. Pass this information on to a friend. You may not have gotten one of these calls or emails, but the chances are you know someone who has.

If it sounds suspicious, it most likely is – call your local SkyLine Customer Center at 1-800-759-2226 any time you are suspicious of a call or email coming from SkyLine/SkyBest.

Source: FTC

What you need to know about Streaming TV

Streaming TV is a way of watching TV through the internet. So to be able to do this you will need a device that can be connected to our reliable and fast SkyBest internet like a smart TV, Roku, or Amazon Fire device.

Streaming TV is very flexible, as it requires no contracts. It is very affordable, and we have a package that starts at just \$25 a month. Streaming TV is more customized. You will likely be paying for fewer channels, getting rid of more channels you don't need. You can enjoy all your streaming content through a single device.

If you're on the fence, just remember that with SkyBest TV NOW you can get live local networks along with video and gaming options through your SkyBest internet and your Roku or Amazon Fire TV. SkyBest TV NOW lets you keep all of your favorite channels at a lower price.

Visit our website at skybest.com or give us a call with questions about our three different streaming TV packages.



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:

Thursday, November 25

Thanksgiving Holiday
All SkyLine/SkyBest
Customer Centers Will
Be Closed

STAFF:

Kim Shepherd
Chief Executive Officer

Brian Tester
Chief Operations Officer

Angie Poe
Customer Service Manager

Jamey Jenkins
Retail Sales Manager

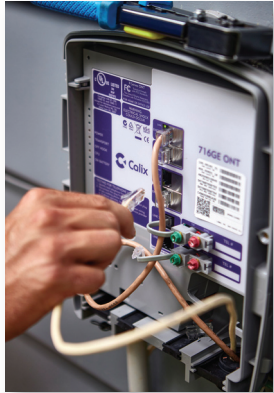
Karen P. Powell
Public Relations Administrator
& Editor



www.facebook.com/SkyLineSkyBest

over 9.27 miles, we had less than a four-month window of time to complete the project." With costs totaling just over \$280,000, the grant, which required a 20-percent match from SkyLine, was approved on August 21, 2020. Work began immediately.

Residents in Sutherland had seen SkyLine vehicles in the area in recent weeks, and there were rumors that fiber might be coming to their community. "How are they going to get here," wondered resident Rob Campbell, an IT professional who was receiving under 2 Mbps service from the incumbent broadband provider. At that time, his wife's boss was letting him use some extra office space in his place of business in Abingdon where broadband speeds were much faster.



Fiber-to-the-Premise (FTTP) technology delivers the triple play of services (including voice, symmetrical broadband and video) via an Optical Network Terminal (ONT), shown here outside the customer's home.

"Our oldest son had come home from college due to Covid to begin virtual classes, and our youngest son's high school was following a hybrid schedule due to the pandemic, so we clearly didn't have enough bandwidth in the house for our needs."

One day while driving toward Damascus, Campbell spotted one of SkyLine's trucks and decided to follow it. Stopping at Cowboy's, a local business, Campbell approached SkyLine's Eugene Seatz about the potential fiber project.

"First thing, Eugene gave me his business card, and said, 'Absolutely. Not only are we doing it, we have to have it constructed and installed by December 15.'"

Having achieved FTTP (Fiber-to-the-Premise) deployment across its co-op-served areas in 2016, SkyLine and subsidiary SkyBest have since focused efforts on extending much-needed fiber connectivity and telecommunications services to new communities needing faster broadband speeds, including downtown Lenoir, areas of the Boone business district, parts of Linville and Mountain City.



Working for a Fortune 100 company, Campbell oversees its desktop support services in multiple office locations across the US, and he frequently orders services from a host of telecom providers. "Lead times ordering circuits, ISDN or T-1 lines take months," he said. When you have service issues and are dealing with multiple providers, delays are the norm. In general, things move slow. Campbell said he was skeptical about the likelihood of getting fiber so quickly. "I didn't think it would happen, the enormity of it," he said. For SkyLine, it was going to be a tall order to fill. "As our guys were field staking the project, they soon realized the terrain challenges we were facing with construction on this particular area and with the short schedule to

complete it." Davis said. "We learned of Treeline Helicopters through their work clearing right-of-way for Mountain Electric Co-operative, so this became a historic first for SkyLine to contract a helicopter service to help deploy 2.5 miles of fiber through the Cherokee National Forest to reach Sutherland."

After seeing the helicopter and SkyLine crews at work in the Sutherland area, Rob Campbell was convinced that the project was moving forward. "I knew then that it could happen." Campbell's fiber broadband service was installed on November 24, well ahead of the project deadline for customer installations, and he is among 27 Sutherland customers now receiving 300 Mbps symmetrical fiber broadband service, more than enough for him to work from home and for his sons and wife to access the content needed for school and work. "I consider this a herculean effort by a company that had a vision of where they needed to go and the expertise to make it happen," Campbell said. "SkyLine/SkyBest overpromised and over-delivered."

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.



Recipe of the Month

Stove Top Red Beans and Rice

Ingredients:

- 1 pound of red kidney beans
- 1/2 pound of andouille smoked chicken sausage, thinly sliced
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon creole seasoning
- Garnish: sliced green onion
- 3 celery ribs, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 cups of uncooked long grain rice

Instructions:

Place beans in a Dutch oven; add water 2 inches above beans. Bring to a boil. Boil 1 minute; cover, remove from heat, and soak 1 hour.

Sauté sausage and next 3 ingredients in Dutch oven over medium high heat for 10 minutes or until sausage is browned. Add garlic; saute one minute and drain excess drippings. Add beans, creole seasoning, and seven cups water. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to low, and simmer 1-1 1/2 hours or until beans are tender

Meanwhile, cook rice according to package directions. Serve with red bean mixture. Garnish, if desired.

Recipe submitted by Edith Harless of Ashe County



SkyBest Medical Alert

\$24.95/mo.

No Contract. No Upfront Costs.

www.skybest.com 1-800-759-2226

*Some restrictions apply. SkyBest internet subscribers will pay only \$14.95 per month.