

## SkyLine Annual Meeting

The 65th Annual Meeting of SkyLine Membership Corporation was held on October 5, at the cooperative's new Annex location just above the corporate campus on Highway 194 North in West Jefferson. With continued precautions in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the cooperative conducted early registration the week prior at all SkyLine Customer Centers and in the Shady Valley community, which enabled members to participate in the Annual Meeting process by registering in advance of the meeting, voting for directors and receiving meeting materials, including the 2021 Annual Meeting report.

The business session included standard reports from President R.C. Mitchell and Kim Shepherd and Board Secretary Jim Shepherd, who announced the establishment of a quorum with 731 members registered for the meeting through early registration and in-person registration on the day of the meeting. SkyLine Attorney Ray Parker presided over the official business session, and three board members were re-elected to three-year terms: James L. Shepherd of Alleghany County, Jerry Roten of Ashe County and Tommy Joe Ward of Watauga County.

President R.C. Mitchell referenced the cooperative's new early registration option and how it has engaged more members in the Annual Meeting process, while sharing continued concerns for safely conducting an in-person meeting while still in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. "Your cooperative has been key among the essential services providers that have utilized its resources to ensure residents, businesses, schools and health care

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SkyLine President R.C. Mitchell highlighted the Tennessee grant-funded fiber expansion project to the Sutherland community of Johnson County.



SkyLine attorney Ray Parker presided over the 65th Annual Meeting, held at the new SkyLine Annex in West Jefferson.



Board Secretary Jim Shepherd reported that 731 members registered and that a quorum had been established for the business meeting to commence.



SkyLine's Kim Shepherd expressed appreciation to employees for their efforts to ensure members and customers had access to ever-critical broadband and other telecom services.



Ashe County Early College junior Noah Farmer sang the National Anthem.



Robert and Geneva Treadway of Ashe County won this year's Annual Meeting grand prize: a Samsung 55-inch Smart TV and LG audio sound bar system.



The 2021 Annual Meeting was conducted at SkyLine's new Annex near the corporate campus.

## 2020 Capital Credits Allocated

Capital credits are one of the many benefits of being served by a telephone cooperative. SkyLine Membership Corporation has allocated the net margins from 2020 to the capital credit accounts of its members. Capital credits for cooperative members result from a surplus of funds remaining from doing business. If the revenues paid in to the cooperative during the financial year exceed the expenses, the remainder is known as the "margin." The margin is then allocated to SkyLine's member-owners. Allocations are based on end user revenue including members' recurring monthly charges such as local service, calling features and Internet services, as well as monthly long-distance charges.

The 2020 margin represented approximately 11 percent of SkyLine's total revenues, and this percentage has been assigned to members' capital credit accounts. Members' individual allocations are based on their share of the margin, and are determined by their usage of SkyLine's services and network.

The 2020 allocated capital credits will be retired to members at a future date, as approved by SkyLine's Board of Directors. In the meantime, members' unretired capital credits are used by the co-op to maintain a solid financial base, to build equity and to provide quality, affordable service. Individual notices of allocated capital credits are not mailed to members; however, if you have questions about your capital credit account, please call your local SkyLine Customer Service Center at 1-800-759-2226.



SkyLine's new corporate video was featured just prior to the beginning of the business session.



President R.C. Mitchell speaks to Credentials Committee members Fontrina Wray and Susan Thomas following the business session.



SkyLine's Sue Davis and Ronda Roten register members Burt and Sandra Prange for the Annual Meeting at the new Annex location.

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### 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



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providers remain connected and progressing through this unprecedented period."

Citing the increased demand for connectivity at higher speeds, Mr. Mitchell said the company continues to pursue ways to extend critically-needed fiber connectivity to communities outside of the cooperative's footprint. "The 2021 Annual Meeting Report highlights one such community not far from our Shady Valley service area in east Tennessee," he said. Following a call-in from a Sutherland resident and learning of a possible grant through the state from federal Covid-relief funding for broadband expansion, SkyLine moved quickly to complete the project within a short timeline.

"As we celebrate our 70th year in 2021, it's clear to see the historic parallels of our early days as a cooperative," Mitchell said. "Local citizens came together to build a telephone system for a few thousand member-subscribers at a time when existing providers concentrated primarily within the town limits. With a significant shot of support through federal funding to get this cooperative off the ground, we again find our organization called upon to connect those unserved or underserved communities at a time when they need it most."

CEO Kim Shepherd spoke of the company's new Annex location, which will continue to host the Annual Membership Meeting, All Company Employee (ACE) meetings and serve as the company's training facilities. "We will conduct all of our safety trainings (including pole top rescue, defensive driving, flagger safety, CPR and First Aid) as well as other trade and industry-specific trainings at this location." She also expressed appreciation to employees for continuing to work through the pandemic under less than ideal conditions, along with finding creative solutions to unique issues created by the pandemic. "Our employees continue to show up to work each and every day to ensure that our members and customers have access to ever-critical broadband and other telecommunications services. I remain so incredibly proud of them."

Noting the company's 70th year, Shepherd credited those who have led the company, making brilliant decisions throughout SkyLine's history to make it what it is today: a broadband services company that has over \$300 million invested in total plant and a 2020 consolidated net operating income of over \$11 million. "For the first time in our history, the number of broadband customers exceeded the number of access lines we serve."

She also pointed to how SkyLine gives back through the cooperative model. "We give back, on so many levels and so many ways, to help improve lives for those living in the communities we serve. In addition to donations to other corporate and charitable entities, we also give back to our members. This year, we returned over \$1.5 million to members in capital credit refunds. And in December 2020, an amendment to the bylaws was approved which permits eligible members of the cooperative the ability to file a request of early retirement of his or capital credit account at net present value. This year alone, we were able to refund \$300,000 to members in the form of these early retirements and we will continue to do so in coming years."

The business session featured a video presentation that recognized 10 area 2021 high school graduates who received local and national scholarships through SkyLine and the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS).

The 2021 scholarship recipients are: Austin Douglas,

Ally Hanson and Chloe Pruitt of Alleghany County; Savannah Wilcox, Alexis Blevins and Trenton Blevins of Ashe County; Silas Barinowski and Mary Johnson of Avery County; Laiken Combs of Watauga County, and Cindy Jones of Johnson County. Hannah Starling of Alleghany County also was named a recipient of the national Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) Scholarship worth \$2,500.

SkyLine announced five \$100 prizes and the grand prize: a Samsung 4K Ultra High-Definition LED TV and a Sony Bluetooth Sound Bar System. The \$100 prize winners are Janie Murphy of Alleghany County, Larry Wilcox of Ashe County, Alexander and Brenda Lyerly of Avery County; Rudy and Margaret Hartley of Watauga County; and Frances Duncan of Shady Valley. Robert and Geneva Treadway of Ashe County won the grand prize.

Special thanks to Noah Farmer for the presentation of the National Anthem and to the following restaurants for accepting special meal vouchers for registered members to redeem through October: Crave Restaurant in Sparta, Smoky Mountain Barbecue in West Jefferson, Banner Elk Cafe, Cove Creek General Store and Grill in Sugar Grove, Grandview Restaurant in Foscoe and Raceway Restaurant in Shady Valley.

### 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*



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