

# Communicator

A Quarterly Newsletter for Cooperative Customers

## New Board President Praises Predecessor, Discusses Future

Greg Zirk, Hardy Telecommunications' new president of the board of directors, said his first order of business will be to carry on the great leadership shown by his predecessor.

"Phyllis Cook served the co-op for the last 19 years as board president and did an outstanding job in that role," Greg said. "My initial focus has been to ensure a smooth transition in the change of leadership as well as to follow in her footsteps of providing the kind of leadership she demonstrated."



New Hardy Board President Greg Zirk (left) presents predecessor Phyllis Cook with a plaque recognizing her 19 years as president. Phyllis chose to step down this year as president but remains on the board. *More on Hardy service awards inside.*

Phyllis remains on the board but stepped down this year after 19 years as president. Greg took over the position in late November and praised Phyllis' leadership during Hardy's annual dinner honoring employees and directors who reached service milestones that year.

Greg discussed Hardy's future as he settles in to the job. After meeting with employees, he said he likes what he's seen so far.

"Hardy Tel is blessed to have a very talented, dedicated and passionate group of employees and board members. ... I feel very honored to be a part of such a great organization," he said.

Greg said he wants the company to build on its strengths and position itself for the industry's future.

"This not only applies to bringing on new services with our customers but also to the daily personal and professional interaction with our customers to meet their communication needs," he said.

The organization's primary focus will be the construction and implementation of Hardy County's first fiber-to-the-home network and the start of Hardy OneNet, featuring high-definition digital television and much faster Internet speeds.

"Like many telcos, Hardy Tel is experiencing the effects of transitioning from a traditional telephone company to a

communications company ... I believe Hardy's OneNet project should be our primary focus to implement over the next couple of years to position us with high quality services to our customers," Greg said. "With that being said, I believe we must continue to take care of our customers on a daily basis with the warm, professional and responsive service that made us what we are today."

Greg joined the board in 2006 and represents Moorefield serving area 2. He and his wife, Charlene, are the parents of five children. He currently works for the state Department of Health and Human Resources as a child support specialist.

## Youth Board Cautioned About Texting And Driving

The Hardy Telecommunications Youth Advisory Board learned at a meeting December 22 that even a few seconds of texting while driving can result in a serious accident.

The students, meeting at the company's Lost River office, watched a documentary titled "Distracted: The True Story of Ashley Umscheid." Ashley Umscheid was a 19-year-old Kansas State University freshman who was killed in May 2009 when her vehicle crashed along a Kansas road. The investigation revealed that she had been sending text messages on her cell phone while driving. The Foundation for Rural Service released the film in an effort to warn teens about the dangers of distracted driving.

Derek, Hardy Public Relations/Business Development Representative Heather Robbins, and the students talked about how easily and how quickly one can veer off course or lose control by texting or talking on the phone while driving. The board learned through the video that a car traveling 65 mph will travel the length of a football field in three seconds. If typing and sending an average text message takes only six seconds, the driver still travels the distance of two football fields in that time.

"That's more than enough time and distance to find yourself heading into a ditch off the side of the road or crossing the center line into oncoming traffic," Derek said.



Hardy Telecommunications Youth Advisory Board members are shown the battery back-up systems used to keep Hardy services operating in the event of a power outage. (From left): Hardy Technology Director Bill Schmidt, Hardy Marketing/Human Resource Director Derek Barr, EHHS Junior Parker Baranowski, EHHS Freshman Brandon Benjamin, EHHS Sophomore Miranda Cook, MHS Freshman Rebecca Merrill, MHS Junior Brooke Shockey, and MHS Sophomore Jared Beard

The board also talked about the back-up systems that Hardy uses to keep telephone service going in the event of a power outage. In addition to a generator, Hardy's central office has a room containing batteries that kick in when the electrical power fails.

Hardy Technology Director Bill Schmidt told the students that the equipment in the battery room becomes so hot that two air conditioners run 24 hours a day all year. Otherwise, the batteries, which contain jellied acid, would overheat and leak.

## What's Inside

- Get \$2 Off Of Your Next Hardy Tel Or HardyNet Bill
- Hardy Honors Employees, Directors For Service
- Hardy To Offer FRS College Scholarship To Students
- Youth Board Cautioned About Texting And Driving
- Hardy Sponsoring Students For Free Trip To D.C.

## Calendar

- Feb. 10 Deadline: FRS Youth Tour Applications
- Feb. 10 Deadline: FRS College Applications
- Feb. 15 Deadline: Bring TV Provider's Bill For \$2 Hardy Credit



East Hardy High Senior Chelsea Wilson (left) and Moorefield High Senior Tori Burdette pose with W.Va. Democratic Senators John D. Rockefeller IV and Joe Manchin during the 2011 FRS Youth Tour.

## Hardy To Select Students For Free D.C. Trip

Hardy Telecommunications will send two local students on a four-day trip to our nation's capital, giving them the chance to see our country's historic sites and meet students from all over the United States.

One junior each from Moorefield and East Hardy high schools will be selected to attend the 2012 Foundation for Rural Service Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., June 2-6. The trip includes sightseeing as well as educational sessions to teach today's youth about the telecommunications industry. Hardy will pay all basic expenses, including travel.

The Youth Tour provides students from rural areas with a first-hand look at the telecommunications industry and educates students about the legislative and governmental processes. Students will visit the U.S. Capitol Building and hear presentations from representatives of Capitol Hill and the Federal Communications Commission.

East Hardy High Senior Chelsea Wilson and Moorefield High Senior Tori Burdette participated in the 2011 Youth Tour. The students were able to meet both U.S.

Senators from West Virginia, John D. Rockefeller IV and Joe Manchin.

"Using one word to describe my experience at D.C. would be 'amazement,'" Tori wrote after the tour. "... For me, this was as if I had won the lottery. ... Most importantly, this experience will help me grow as a person."

Chelsea she liked meeting peers from around the country.

"The friendships made will last a lifetime," she said. "I am so glad I was able to participate in this experience."

Applications for the tour may be picked up from the guidance counselors at both high schools or by contacting Derek Barr at Hardy's offices. To be eligible for the trip, students must be high school juniors of the 2013 graduating class, be either 16 or 17 years old at the time of the tour and receive service from either Hardy Telecommunications or HardyNet.

The deadline to return applications is February 10, 2012. Applications may be returned to either the high school guidance counselors or directly to Derek.

## Hardy Offering College Scholarship For Area Grads

Hardy Telecommunications is sponsoring the national Foundation for Rural Service 2012 College Scholarship Program to graduating seniors at Moorefield and East Hardy high schools.

The scholarship, open to applicants who receive local telecommunications service (either telephone or Internet) from Hardy, is worth \$2,000, and Hardy

Telecommunications will contribute an additional \$500 to the amount, bringing the total one-time scholarship award to \$2,500. Interested students can contact their guidance counselors at the two schools or download the application at the FRS website at [www.frs.org](http://www.frs.org). Students also can contact Hardy Marketing/ Human Resource Director Derek Barr at 304-897-9911 for an application.

Students are asked to return their applications no later than February 10, 2012. Applications should be returned to the guidance counselors at Moorefield and East Hardy high schools or to Derek at Hardy's offices.

The FRS will award 30 scholarships nationwide. A qualified selection committee of current educators determined by FRS

will select the winners; Hardy Telecommunications itself has no input in the process.

Applicants must be accepted by an accredited two- or four-year college, university or vocational-technical school; have at least a C grade point average; express an interest in returning to a rural community following graduation; and be sponsored by an FRS contributor.



### Get \$2 Off Of Your Next Hardy Bill!

We need your help to finalize our OneNet TV channel lineup! Bring a copy of your latest TV provider's bill to one of our offices by February 1 or 15 (based on billing cycle; ask us which date applies to you), and receive \$2 off of your next Hardy bill. It's that simple!

## Hardy Congratulates Prize Winner



Hardy Fiber-to-the-Home Project Coordinator Becky Kimble (left) presents Maysville's Clairra Thompson with Hardy's grand prize in the Chamber of Commerce's Reindeer Rampage. Clairra received a wireless router, wireless mouse, laptop case, 4 gb USB drive and other Hardy accessories.

## Hardy Honors 2011 Service Award Recipients

Hardy Telecommunications recently honored its employees and directors who reached service milestones in 2011.

Special thanks was given to Phyllis Cook for her 19 years as president of the Board of Directors. Phyllis officially stepped down as president of the Hardy Telecommunications board at the group's regular October meeting after almost two decades in the role. Greg Zirk was named as the new board president. Phyllis remains on the board as the representative of South Fork serving area 2.

At a dinner in November to recognize service award recipients, Greg praised Phyllis for her leadership as board president. Phyllis thanked the other board members and employees of Hardy Telecommunications for their support over the years.

General Manager Scott Sherman paid tribute to Hardy's other 2011 service honorees. Those recognized were Controller Don



Hardy Telecommunications recently honored its employees and directors for service milestones in 2011. From left to right: Board member Phyllis Cook, for 19 years as president of the Hardy Telecommunications board of directors; Board Member Ervin Wilkins Jr., for five years of service; Board Member Greg Zirk, for five years of service; Controller Don Whetzel, for 15 years of service; Service Order Coordinator/Customer Service Representative David Mathias, for 10 years of service; Project Manager Bobby Armistead, for 10 years of service; and Internet and PC Technician Heather Sites, for five years of service. (Not pictured: Board Member Victoria Dyer, for five years of service.)

Whetzel, for 15 years of service; Project Manager Bobby Armistead and Service Order Coordinator/Customer Service Representative David Mathias, for 10 years of service; and Internet and PC Technician Heather Sites, for five years of service.

The employees received plaques celebrating their achievements.

Three other members of the Board of Directors were presented plaques for their service milestones. Greg, who represents Moorefield serving area 2; Victoria Dyer, who represents Lost River serving area 3; and Ervin Wilkins Jr., who represents Lost River serving area 4, all were recognized for five years of service as board members.

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