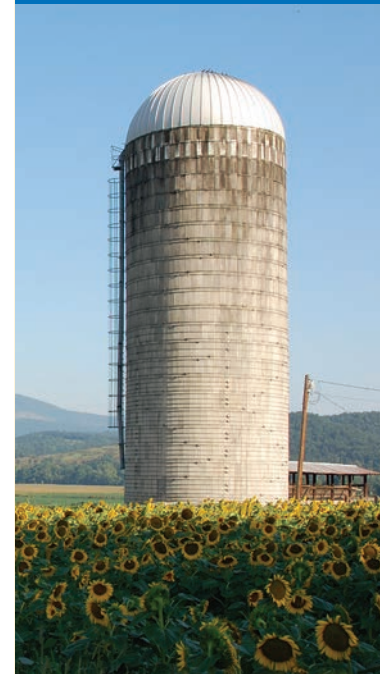


Communicator

A Semi-Annual Newsletter for Cooperative Customers



General Manager Scott Sherman addresses the crowd at Hardy's 2015 Annual Meeting.

2016 Annual Meeting Scheduled For October 7 At East Hardy High

Hardy Teams Up With East Hardy For Video

Hardy Telecommunications and East Hardy High School are teaming up in the hope that the school eventually can produce original video content for broadcast on Hardy OneNet's TV network.

Derek Barr, Hardy's director of customer service and sales, marketing and human resources, recently presented a Canon Vixia HF camcorder to East Hardy teacher Keith Miller, Principal Jennifer Strawderman and Assistant Principal Chad Williams. Hardy recommended the camera because its specifications fit well with developing content that can air on Hardy OneNet, the company's fiber-to-the-home network offering high-definition television. The camera also came with an accessory kit.

Hardy and East Hardy High both contributed to the final cost. Mrs. Strawderman secured a \$500 grant toward video broadcast equipment, and Hardy donated the rest of the \$374.99 cost. Hardy then ordered the camcorder and accessories and delivered them to the school.

Mr. Miller, who teaches theater and other classes, accepted the camera on the school's behalf. He will be instrumental in working with EHHS students to develop, film, and edit the video content.



(Left to right) Derek Barr, Hardy's director of customer service and sales, marketing and human resources, presents a high-definition camcorder to East Hardy High Assistant Principal Chad Williams, Theater Teacher Keith Miller, and Principal Jennifer Strawderman.

Derek said he hopes that the school will work toward creating original content that can be broadcast on Hardy OneNet. Hardy is a business partner with East Hardy High School.

"The camcorder has the capability of streaming live content," he said. "Students could do news broadcasts or any sort of live shot that could be seen throughout the school. The cooking class could do food preparation episodes. They could film projects for different areas of study, community service, and other school events. We can air the content to our OneNet TV customers."

Mrs. Strawderman thanked Hardy Telecommunications for the camcorder, citing Hardy's longstanding commitment to EHHS.

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Calendar

- Aug. 16 Board Resumes Due To Nominating Committee
- Sept. 5 Labor Day Holiday - Offices Closed
- Sept. 29 Responses Due For Annual Meeting
- Oct. 4 Proxies Due For Annual Meeting
- Oct. 7 Annual Meeting Of Members At East Hardy High School

Hardy Telecommunications, Inc., would like to invite all of our members to attend the Annual Meeting of Members on Friday, October 7, 2016, at the East Hardy High School gymnasium. The agenda includes the election of two members to fill seats on the Board of Directors.



Gerald Smith



Greg Zirk

Two seats on the Board of Directors have terms that expire this year. Present directors may be nominated and elected to succeed themselves. The positions expiring this year are Lost River serving area 1, currently held by Gerald W. Smith of Baker; and Moorefield serving area 2, currently held by Greg M. Zirk of Moorefield.

Any member interested in serving on the Board of Directors may submit a resume that defines the member's interest and

qualifications for the position. The deadline for resumes is August 16, 2016. The resumes should be delivered to the Nominations Committee, Hardy Telecommunications, Inc., 2255 Kimseys Run Road, Lost River, WV 26810.

Doors will open for registration at 5 p.m. October 7 with dinner to follow immediately upon registration. The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. Meals are free for each member and one

guest (up to two free meals per member), with additional meals costing \$10 each. Drawings for door prizes will be held throughout the evening.

Hardy Telecommunications members will receive a mailing that includes a reservation card and proxy for the annual meeting. If you plan to attend, please return the completed reservation card in the provided postage-

Story continued inside

Students Thank Hardy For ‘Truly Amazing’ Youth Tour Experience in Nation’s Capital

Two local rising high school seniors returned from Washington, D.C., in June thanking Hardy Telecommunications for a tour they called “truly amazing” and “the experience of a lifetime.”

East Hardy High Senior Makayla Perry and Moorefield High Senior Hunter Ayers spent June 4-8 in the nation’s capital as part of the Foundation for Rural Service Youth Tour. They were sponsored by Hardy Telecommunications.

Makayla said that, even though Hardy County is close to D.C., she experienced the city in a way she never had before.

“I was able to see so many memorials and visit places I’ve never had the opportunity to travel to,” she said. “My favorite places we visited would have to be the Lincoln Memorial at sunset and Arlington National Cemetery.”

The group also took the students to the Smithsonian Museums, Mount Vernon, the WWII, Vietnam, Korean and Iwo Jima Memorials, the U.S. Capitol, and Union Station. They also had time to visit the Library of Congress and the U.S. Supreme Court.

Makayla and Hunter were just two of more than 100 students from across the United States who attended the Youth Tour. All were sponsored by small rural telecommunications companies like Hardy.

Even though the students had plenty of time to see the sights, the tour also is designed to educate students about the challenges of bringing modern, affordable



East Hardy High rising Senior Makayla Perry and Moorefield High rising Senior Hunter Ayers visit the Federal Communications Commission during the 2016 Foundation for Rural Service Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.

telecommunications service to rural areas. Areas like Hardy County, which usually have less population and challenging terrain, often are far more expensive to serve than urban areas.

To that end, the students visited the U.S. Capitol, where they viewed a videotaped welcome message from West Virginia Republican Senator Shelley Moore Capito. The senator arranged for the entire group to use an auditorium in the Capitol building. Staffers from Sen. Capito’s office also spoke to the students about their backgrounds and their journeys from being rural students to working in the nation’s capital. The West Virginia connection appealed to Makayla and Hunter, the only West Virginia students on the tour.

The group also visited the Federal Communications

Commission. Several FCC staffers gave presentations on the various services offered by the commission.

“I learned a lot about telecommunications and the advancements that are taking place every day in rural areas,” Makayla said.

One aspect of the tour that tends to be overshadowed is the opportunity for the students to meet so many peers from around the country. Because all of the students are sponsored by rural companies, the youths learn how much they have in common.

“I made friends and met kids from all over the country that live in places similar to my hometown,” said Makayla.

For Hunter, that part of the tour stood out from the rest. He called the tour “one of the best trips I’ve ever had.”

“I met people that I never would have met otherwise, and I walked away with some new lifelong friends,” he said.

Both students said they appreciated Hardy for sponsoring them.

“I had the experience of a lifetime,” said Makayla.

“I loved seeing D.C. and I encourage everyone who is old enough next year to sign up because it’s truly amazing,” Hunter said.

Established in 1994 by NTCA – the Rural Broadband Association, the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization that promotes, educates and advocates rural telecom issues in order to sustain and enhance the quality of life within communities throughout rural America.

OneNet Passes 2,000 Customers

Hardy Telecommunications recently celebrated its 2,000th OneNet customer, marking a milestone in the development of the only fiber-to-the-home network in Hardy County.

“To hit 2,000 customers is a big moment for us,” said Derek Barr, Hardy’s director of customer service and sales, marketing and human resources. “When we first applied for federal broadband stimulus funds, our initial goal was to sign up a little more than 2,000 customers. We are very close to hitting our original project mark.”

The company received a grant/loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Utilities Service’s broadband program to construct OneNet, which provides fiber-optic cable connections directly to residents’ homes in Hardy County. Fiber-optics allows Hardy to offer the fastest internet speeds in the county and also marked the cooperative’s first foray into providing television.

Even though the federal portion of the OneNet project ended in 2015, Hardy has continued to construct the fiber network throughout the county.

“The difference between now and when we were under the federal project is that now



Contractors string fiber-optic cables on utility poles during the early stages of Hardy OneNet construction.

we no longer have access to those federal funds,” Derek said. “We have to pay 100 percent of the construction and installation expenses. That limits how quickly we can build, because we are repaying almost \$10 million in loan money to the federal government, plus we have to maintain enough capital to cover expenses. When we have sufficient cash flow, we put that toward construction and installation of OneNet.”

The 2,000-customer plateau is particularly meaningful to Hardy Telecommunications because various concerns caused it to slow its original plan to build OneNet.

“We had to do so much to satisfy environmental regulations, not because of any problems discovered, but simply because of the

testing we were ordered to perform, even in areas where we didn’t anticipate it,” Derek said. “That caused us to get a late start. When the federal project deadline came, we were out of time, even though we hadn’t spent all of our allotted money. The result was that we only passed about 4,800 homes during the federal project.”

Since then, however, Hardy has extended OneNet to approximately 400 more homes and continues to build.

“It’s a slower process, but the expansion is continuing,” he said. “That’s why reaching 2,000 customers means so much, because we’ve accomplished that feat even though we haven’t gotten fiber to as many homes as we want. We still have a lot of work to do.”

2016 Annual Meeting Set For October 7

Continued from front page

paid envelope by Thursday, September 29, 2016.

If a member wishes to vote by proxy, please keep in mind that only the official proxy included in your mailing will be accepted.

This proxy will include the member’s name, address and account number. Your proxy must contain both your signature and the signature of a witness to be accepted.

Only proxies that are received by Tuesday, October 4, 2016, will be accepted. No

proxies will be accepted at the meeting.

For more information about our election process, please see our bylaws, which begin on page 28 of the 2016 directory, or read them on our website at www.hardynet.com.

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