

Communicator

A Semi-Annual Newsletter for Cooperative Customers



The Hardy Telecommunications Board of Directors after the 2018 Annual Meeting: Left to right (Front Row) Victoria Dyer, Phyllis Cook, Greg Zirk, Loring Barr; (Back row) Gerald Smith, General Manager Scott Sherman, Harold Michael, Attorney Jack Walters, Ervin Wilkins Jr.

Three Directors Re-Elected At Hardy Annual Meeting

Three directors were re-elected at Hardy Telecommunications' annual meeting on October 5 at East Hardy High School. They will serve new three-year terms.

The three directors were re-elected by acclamation. They are Ervin Wilkins Jr. of Baker, for Lost River serving area 4; Phyllis Cook of Moorefield, for South Fork serving area 2; and Harold Michael of Moorefield, for Moorefield serving area 1. All were unopposed in their bids for re-election.

Hardy General Manager Scott Sherman gave the latest details about Hardy's OneNet fiber-to-the-home network. As of the end of July 2018, Hardy has installed 3,266 customers with OneNet services.

Since the end of the federal program in July 2015, Hardy has spent more than \$5 million to continue to expand and make OneNet services



Ervin Wilkins Jr.



Phyllis Cook



Harold Michael

available to more Hardy County residents. The amount is a testament to Hardy's commitment to bringing fiber-optic internet speeds to as many people as possible, Scott said.

Scott said the biggest challenges to the company include the underfunding of the Universal Service Fund, which is vital to Hardy's operations to offset the high cost of serving an area with difficult terrain and fewer customers than more urban areas. Hardy hasn't been receiving the amount of funding reimbursement to which it is entitled because the USF simply doesn't have enough money. Hardy

has spent money which is eligible to be reimbursed, but the FCC hasn't fully funded Universal Service.

Scott also talked about continuing increases in television content costs. Content providers keep charging more and more for their channels, and even though Hardy has absorbed much of the cost, it has had no choice but to raise prices.

About 400 people attended the meeting. The EHHS Band and Band Boosters, ProStart, Bob Thompson, and Nancy Kline prepared and served the meal featuring pork barbecue. We appreciate their hard work!

From our family to yours, best wishes for a joyous holiday season and happy new year!



What's Inside

- Hardy Taking Applications For FRS College Scholarship
- Hardy Sponsoring Local Students For D.C. Tour

Calendar

- Dec. 24-25 Holiday - Offices Closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
- Jan. 1, 2019 Holiday - Offices Closed For New Year's Day
- Feb. 15, 2019 Deadline for Foundation for Rural Service Youth Tour and Foundation for Rural Service College Scholarship Applications

Hardy To Send Two Local Students To Nation's Capital For Youth Tour

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 student each from Moorefield and East Hardy high schools will be selected to attend the 2019 Foundation for Rural Service Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., June 1-5. The trip includes sightseeing to D.C.'s famous landmarks as well as educational sessions to teach today's youth about the telecommunications industry. Hardy Telecommunications 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.

In addition to the FCC and U.S. Capitol, past groups have visited the Lincoln Memorial, the World War II Memorial, Mount Vernon (home of George Washington), the Vietnam War Memorial, the Smithsonian Museums, the Korean War Memorial, and Arlington National Cemetery. A night tour of Washington is also planned.

Hardy can only sponsor one student from Moorefield High and one from East Hardy High. Applications for the tour may be picked up from the guidance counselors at both



(Left to right) Moorefield High Seniors Marissa Ratliff and Olivia Davis stand outside the U.S. Capitol during the 2018 Foundation for Rural Service Youth Tour in Washington D.C.

high schools or by contacting Derek Barr at Hardy's Moorefield Office, telephone 304-530-5000. To be eligible for the trip, students must be 16 or 17 years old at the time of the tour and receive either telephone, internet, or television service from Hardy Telecommunications. Preference also will be given to the 2020 graduating class.

The deadline to return applications is February 15, 2019. Applications may be returned to either the high school guidance counselors or directly to Derek Barr, Hardy Telecommunications, 121 South Main St., Moorefield, WV 26836.

Derek strongly encouraged students to apply.

"Last year we didn't receive any applications from one of the Hardy County high schools, so we sent two students from one school," he said. "We are limited to two students, but we definitely want to send one student each from Moorefield and East Hardy if possible."

Derek has worked as a chaperone for the FRS Youth Tour for several years.

"It's a great experience for the students, because they're assigned to different teams and have the chance to meet

peers from all over the country," he said.

"As a chaperone, I have students from other states assigned to my group. Some of those students I'm still in touch with after more than a decade, from Oregon to Iowa. For many students, this is the only chance they'll have to visit D.C. It's really a unique opportunity," he said.

MHS Senior Olivia Davis, who went on the tour in 2018, agreed.

"I met so many new and different people and made friendships that will last a lifetime," she said.

Hardy Sponsoring College Scholarship For Area Seniors

Hardy Telecommunications is again sponsoring a \$2,500 college scholarship for graduating seniors from East Hardy and Moorefield high schools.

Members of the Class of 2019 at EHHS and MHS can apply through Hardy for the national Foundation for Rural Service College Scholarship Program. The scholarship, open to applicants who receive local telecommunications service (either telephone, internet, or television) 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. Students also can contact Derek Barr, Hardy director of customer service and sales, marketing and human resources, at 304-530-5000 for an application.

Completed applications must be sent to FRS postmarked no later than March 1, 2019, and must bear Derek's signature as Hardy's official representative, so students are asked to return their applications to Derek no later than February 15, 2019.

Students should not send their applications directly to the Foundation for Rural Service. Applications should be returned to the guidance counselors at Moorefield and East Hardy high schools or to Derek at one of Hardy's offices in Moorefield or Lost River. Derek will ensure that all



Local FRS College Scholarship winners in the past decade are 2011 East Hardy High Graduate Jesse Cook (top left photo, with Hardy Telecommunications' Derek Barr) and 2017 EHHS Grad Caitlin Fitzwater (top right, also with Derek).

necessary Hardy signatures are obtained and mail all applications to the FRS.

The FRS will award scholarships nationwide. A qualified selection committee of current educators determined by the Foundation for Rural Service will select the winners; Hardy Telecommunications itself has no input in the selection process.

Derek stressed that the scholarship is a national scholarship, so Hardy Telecommunications can't guarantee that any local student will be selected. Hardy simply sponsors local applications and agrees to contribute \$500 of the total \$2,500 amount if the national FRS committee does pick a Hardy County student.

"The scholarship selection is divided into regions, and the Foundation for Rural Service does make sure that scholarships are awarded in every region. But West Virginia is still in a region with several other states, so it's a very competitive process," he said.

Hardy has had two FRS Scholarship recipients in the last decade: 2011 East Hardy High Graduate Jesse Cook

and 2017 EHHS Grad Caitlin Fitzwater.

"We were extremely happy to present those \$2,500 scholarships to Jesse and Caitlin," Derek said. "They were both outstanding students, and FRS officials told me the FRS judges were very impressed with their applications."

"We'd love to sponsor another winner here in Hardy County, so we're hoping a lot of students apply," Derek said.

Applicants must be a U.S. citizen and graduating high school senior; 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 a current member of 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 rural American communities.

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