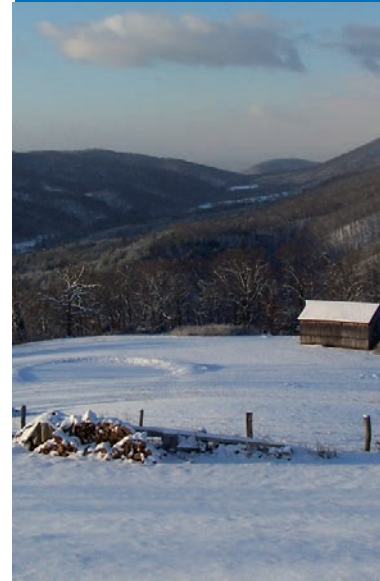


# Communicator

A Semi-Annual Newsletter for Cooperative Customers



The Hardy Telecommunications Board of Directors: Left to right (Front Row) Ervin Wilkins Jr., Vickie Dyer, Phyllis Cook, Gerald Smith; (Back row) Harold Michael, Ward Malcolm, General Manager Scott Sherman, Greg Zirk, Attorney Jack Walters

## Three Directors Re-Elected; Annual Meeting Held Via Zoom

Three directors were recognized as being re-elected by acclamation at Hardy Telecommunications' annual meeting on October 1 via Zoom webinar. They will serve new three-year terms.



**Ervin Wilkins Jr.**



**Phyllis Cook**



**Harold Michael**

The three directors are Ervin Wilkins Jr. of Baker, for Lost River serving area 2; 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, so voting by ballot was unnecessary.

For the second year in a row, concerns about COVID-19 prevented the company from holding an in-person meeting. The complications of managing such a large gathering at East Hardy High School while adhering to COVID-19 health and safety precautions proved too difficult. Hardy Telecommunications always places the safety of its members first.

We hope to return to an in-person meeting in 2022 if COVID cases have declined and health and safety precautions have eased.

With our 2021 meeting being held via Zoom webinar, Board President Greg Zirk, General Manager Scott Sherman, Attorney Jack Walters and Senior Accountant Don Whetzel all spoke to the online gathering from Hardy's office. After Mr. Walters recognized the re-election of the three board members, Mr. Sherman talked about the accomplishments of the cooperative over the past year. The company enjoyed a financially successful 2021.

Mr. Sherman said Hardy Tel's foresight to build a fiber-to-the-home network allowed the cooperative to meet the increased demand for bandwidth during the pandemic.

A negative was the ever-increasing costs to Hardy for broadcasting rights to TV channels. Broadcasters demand bigger and bigger price increases from Hardy, forcing Hardy to raise programming surcharges to customers. Hardy actually loses money on what it pays for broadcast rights vs. what it charges customers for channels. Only ancillary services like DVR allow Hardy to break even.

## Customers Urged To Contact Congress Over TV Laws

Hardy Telecommunications' goal when it launched video programming with Hardy OneNet was to provide a channel lineup featuring relevant news, sports and entertainment to our customers at a reasonable price. Unfortunately, it has become more and more apparent that the TV business does not operate on a level playing field; instead, it is stacked against rural multichannel video programming distributors (MVPDs) like Hardy in favor of broadcasting networks. Archaic and outdated laws and regulations in the video marketplace need to be reformed. A simple example is that our service area, Hardy County, is determined to be in the Washington, D.C., designated market area. As a result of the designated market area rules, Hardy OneNet can be forced to carry and pay for out-of-state channels that are considered to be "in market," even if those channels are of no interest to local viewers and don't feature any local content. At the same time, Hardy OneNet can be prevented from carrying West Virginia stations because they're considered "out of market."

We urge customers unhappy with these outdated laws to contact the West Virginia congressional delegation. A sample letter that you can copy, fill in the appropriate part, sign and mail to West Virginia's congressional delegation can be found on our website at [hardynet.com](http://hardynet.com).

The letter identifies multiple regulations that result in unfair burdens to Hardy Telecommunications and video consumers:

- Mandatory non-disclosure requirements prevent Hardy from revealing and customers from seeing market value pricing. Consumers should be allowed to see per-channel pricing charged by broadcasters to their local company.
- Broadcasters should not have the right to restrict video programming distributors from accessing local content due to designated market area restraints. How can it be fair that an area like Hardy County in West Virginia is considered "out of market" for West Virginia stations? In the same vein, video distributors should not be forced to carry and pay heavily for out-of-state stations that have no interest or value to consumers in their service territory because those channels somehow are considered "in market," even though they offer no local coverage whatsoever.
- Broadcasters should not be able to force video distributors to carry numerous other channels in order to get the few channels that consumers really want. Consumers should be able to choose what channels they want and pay accordingly, and video distributors should not be forced into stacking countless channels into tiers and charging all customers in those tiers for unwanted channels. Consumers and video programming distributors should have the right to choose and pay for channels a la carte based on customer choice.

It's a simple matter of fairness for rural West Virginians.

### What's Inside

- Hardy Sponsoring FRS College Scholarship
- Hardy To Send Students To D.C. For Youth Tour
- Lewis Foundation Grants ROW For Broadband Project
- Customers Urged To Contact Congress Over TV Laws

### Calendar

- Dec. 23-24 Holiday - Offices Closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
- Dec. 31 Holiday - Offices Closed For New Year's Day
- Feb. 25, 2022 Deadline for FRS Youth Tour and FRS College Scholarship Applications

# Lewis Foundation Grants Right-Of-Way For Hardy Broadband Project

The Jonathan D. Lewis Foundation is helping Hardy Telecommunications expand its fiber broadband network outside Wardensville, W.Va. The foundation, which funds and operates the farm-based non-profit enterprise Wardensville Garden Market, has granted the Hardy County Internet provider right-of-way to connect its fiber-optic OneNet service to citizens along W.Va. 259 into Hampshire County.

“We can’t thank the Jonathan D. Lewis Foundation enough,” said Hardy General Manager/CEO Scott Sherman. “They understand the importance of broadband Internet connectivity in today’s world, and they are doing their part to help their fellow Hardy County residents.”

Hardy Telecommunications built most of its OneNet network with the aid of a \$32.7 million grant/loan federal Broadband Initiatives Program funding award almost a decade ago. The initial plan was to include the area outside of Wardensville along W.Va. 259, but the company was unable

to secure right-of-way despite trying three different routes, two through private land and another through farmland preservation territory. All of their requests were denied at the local, state, or federal level, stalling the project at the Wardensville town limit.

“We certainly appreciate Mr. Yandura (Paul Yandura, CEO of the Jonathan D. Lewis Foundation) and his board of directors for working with us,” said Hardy Assistant General Manager Derek Barr. “This is something that we’ve been trying to do for several years, years that Hardy County residents along W.Va. 259 had to go without an adequate Internet connection. The Jonathan D. Lewis Foundation, through the Garden Market and other endeavors, is a big contributor to this community, and the granting of this right-of-way is an example of that commitment to help others.”

Mr. Yandura said it simply was a matter of helping the Hardy County community.

“We have heard firsthand from our neighbors and friends

about the issues they face because of the lack of fast, consistent access to broadband. We also know that the connection will help with local economic development,” Mr. Yandura said. “We are lucky that Hardy Tel has been, and remains, committed to bringing broadband to rural America, and we are happy to help do our part.”

Because their original BIP project’s deadline expired long ago, Hardy Telecommunications is using its own funds to place fiber along W.Va. 259 to the Hampshire County line.

From there, the line will become part of a federal Community Connect project that will continue along the highway to the High View area, then branch off onto Christian Church Road to end just outside of Capon Bridge. Hardy runs an existing network in Capon Bridge built by Hampshire County with Community Development Block Grant funding, and Hardy will pay to build the last remaining distance to connect the networks.

“This will provide a more secure, redundant service for existing customers as well as opening new Internet connection options to reach the outside world,” Derek said.

The three-year Community Connect project will pass more than 600 homes in Hampshire County on its route to Capon Bridge. The Hardy-funded portion in Hardy County will allow community institutions like West Virginia University’s Reymann Memorial Farm to have a fiber Internet connection.

“We certainly wanted to get this done years ago, and fast, reliable Internet has only become more important in our lives in the past couple of years,” Derek said. “Thanks to the Jonathan D. Lewis Foundation, we’re able to reach more citizens and fulfill our mission of improving the quality of life in the communities we serve.”

The Garden Market’s mission is to provide experiences to help young people in the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia thrive.

## Hardy Sending Students To D.C. Youth Tour

If COVID-19 pandemic conditions allow, 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 2022 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.

FRS does require that all students be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and have proof of vaccination.

Students will hear from Capitol Hill and Federal Communications Commission representatives. Past tours 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.

Applications for the tour may be picked up from Derek Barr at Hardy’s Moorefield Office, telephone 304-530-5000, or downloaded from Hardy’s website at hardynet.com. 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 for selection will be given to students from the 2023 graduating class.

The deadline to return applications is February 25, 2022. Applications may be returned to Derek Barr, Hardy Telecommunications, 121 South Main St., Moorefield.

## Hardy Sponsoring College Scholarship For Area Seniors

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

Members of the Class of 2022 at EHHS and MHS can apply through Hardy for the national Foundation for Rural Service Undergrad 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.

The application process is done online. Students can go to the FRS website at frs.org/programs/youth-programs/scholarships and click a

link to the Kaleidoscope application platform. Completed applications must be submitted online to the Foundation for Rural Service by February 25, 2022.

To apply, students will need to submit a 500-800 word essay; two letters of recommendation - only one can be from a teacher or educator; and seven semesters of transcripts. The transcript does not have to be an official copy. FRS urges all applicants to have all of their documents ready to upload before beginning the application. Students no longer have to return any paperwork to Hardy Telecommunications.

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 and cannot guarantee that any local applicant 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.

Local 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 Hardy Telecommunications, a member of NTCA.

## How To Reach Us

**Lost River Office**  
2255 Kimseys Run Road  
Lost River, WV 26810

Phone:  
304-897-9911

Hours:  
Mon. - Fri. 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Moorefield Office**  
121 South Main Street  
Moorefield, WV 26836

Phone:  
304-530-5000

Hours:  
Mon. - Fri. 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Wardensville Office**  
345 East Main St., Suite A  
Wardensville, WV 26851

Phone:  
304-897-2355

Hours:  
Tues., Thurs. 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Capon Bridge Office**  
199 Capon School St.  
Capon Bridge, WV 26711

Phone:  
304-897-9911

Hours:  
Mon., Wed., Fri. 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Toll-Free**  
800-838-2497

**Visit Us On The Web**  
www.hardynet.com

**Emergency After Hours**  
Lost River:  
304-897-9913

Moorefield:  
304-530-HELP (4357)

**24-Hour Internet Technical Support**  
800-884-0778

Hardy Telecommunications is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

*Tell Santa you won't settle for less than the fastest broadband speed from Hardy OneNet! From our family to yours, best wishes for a joyous holiday season and a happy and healthy new year!*

