

Communicator

A Semi-Annual Newsletter for Cooperative Customers



Members and guests enjoy the meal at the 2022 Hardy Telecommunications' Annual Meeting, the company's first in-person Annual Meeting since 2019.

Two Directors Re-Elected At Hardy Annual Meeting

Two directors were re-elected at Hardy Telecommunications' annual meeting on October 7 at East Hardy High School. They will serve new three-year terms.

The two directors were re-elected by acclamation. They are Gerald Smith of Baker, for Lost River serving area 1; and Greg Zirk of Moorefield, for Moorefield serving area 2. Both were unopposed in their bids for re-election.

The event marked the first in-person Annual Meeting for Hardy Telecommunications since 2019. The previous two meetings were held virtually due to COVID-19 concerns.

"We were very happy to get back to meeting in person," said Hardy Assistant General Manager Derek Barr. "It's been a difficult two years, and being able to see our members in person, combined with an East Hardy High football game later, made for a great night out."



Gerald Smith



Greg Zirk

Hardy General Manager Scott Sherman said it had been another financially successful year for the cooperative, but supply chain concerns had affected various projects. Materials and equipment that used to ship in one or two months are now taking six months to a year to arrive, he said. This is delaying the offering of service in some areas because the company still is waiting for necessary equipment to arrive. The same issues also are driving up prices for materials and equipment. In some cases, orders already had been placed at a specific price, only for the vendors to raise that price before

delivery, weeks or months after the order had been made.

Scott also recognized employee Matthew Crites, who is retiring from Hardy Telecommunications after 42 years of service (see the accompanying article inside this newsletter). Other employees gave Matthew a standing ovation.

Hardy thanks the EHHS Band and Band Boosters, FFA, ProStart, Bob Thompson, and EHHS staff and faculty, who 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

- Matthew Crites Retires After 42 Years At Hardy Tel
- Hardy Sponsoring FRS Scholarship, Youth Tour

Calendar

- Dec. 23, 26 Holiday - Offices Closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
- Jan. 2, 2023 Holiday - Offices Closed For New Year's Day
- Feb. 8, 2023 Deadline for FRS Scholarship Applications
- Feb. 17, 2023 Deadline for Foundation for Rural Service Youth Tour Applications

Matthew Crites Retires After 42 Years At Hardy Telecommunications

From rotary phones and party lines to mobile devices and broadband Internet delivered via fiber-optic technology, Matthew Crites has seen a lot of changes in the telecommunications industry while at Hardy Telecommunications. After more than four decades at the company, Matthew is retiring in 2022, capping a career that began in 1980.

Hardy General Manager Scott Sherman gave special recognition to Matthew at Hardy's 2022 Annual Meeting October 7 at East Hardy High School. His fellow employees gave Matthew a standing ovation.

"It's extraordinary, really, to think about how different our business is now versus when Matthew began at Hardy," said Hardy Assistant General Manager Derek Barr. "He's been here through it all and has been a key player in getting our cooperative to where it is today."

When Matthew started with Hardy, the cooperative was known as Hardy Telephone Company. Hardy's service territory didn't include Moorefield. The Internet and cellular service didn't exist, and TV technology was limited to just a few channels on bulky TVs. In his tenure, the company changed its name to Hardy Telecommunications, opened up several new areas for service, began offering Internet first through DSL and then fiber-optic technology, and added IPTV to its services.

Matthew said the transition from offering a single service to many services and seeing customer preferences adjust



Above: Hardy Telecommunications employees gave Matthew Crites (far left) a standing ovation at the 2022 Hardy Annual Meeting when his retirement was announced. Matthew is retiring this year after 42 years of service with Hardy. Below: Matthew Crites.

to new technologies have been the biggest changes he's seen in his career.

"When I started, the most important thing was getting a telephone into people's homes. That's what everyone wanted," he said. "Now telephone doesn't matter to most people. It's Internet and TV. Those are most important to most people."

Perhaps more than any other industry, telecommunications requires a person to continually adapt and adopt new technology. Matthew's experience reflects that, having started as an outside plant worker and doing various things over the years, from quoting business system installations to helping plan expansion projects. That full perspective allowed him to really see the results of his efforts.

"I liked building things, watching the company grow. When you bury cable, when you build a tap to someone's home, you see those results," he said. "Along the way, you keep moving



forward and keep learning new things as they come out."

Even though his Hardy career is ending, Matthew will have plenty to keep him busy.

"I like being out on the farm. I like the idea of being able to pick up and travel on a whim if I want," he said. And most of all, he'll have more time to

spend with his grandchildren, he said.

Then again, being retired means you don't really have to do anything. When asked directly what he'll do with the extra time after 42 years of working, Matthew has a simple answer.

"Whatever I want to do."

Hardy Offering D.C. Youth Tour For Local Students

Hardy Telecommunications will send two local students on a five-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 2023 Foundation for Rural Service Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., May 31-June 4. 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.

Students typically visit the U.S. Capitol Building and meet representatives of Capitol Hill and the Federal Communications Commission.

Hardy can only sponsor one student from Moorefield High and one from East Hardy High. Applications may be picked up from the 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 15-17 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 2024 graduating class.

The deadline to return applications is February 17, 2023. 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.

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 2023 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 8, 2023.

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 U.S. citizens and graduating high school seniors; 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.