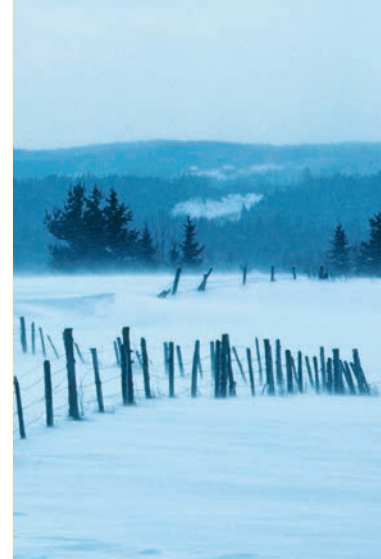


Communicator

A Semi-Annual Newsletter for Cooperative Customers



Attendees enjoyed the pork barbecue meal at the 2024 Hardy Annual Meeting of Members at East Hardy High School.

Three Directors Re-Elected At Hardy Annual Meeting

Three directors were re-elected at Hardy Telecommunications' annual meeting on October 4 at East Hardy High School. 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.

Hardy Board of Directors President Greg Zirk thanked everyone for attending the meeting, and Attorney Jack Walters presented the report of the Nominations Committee. All three directors were congratulated on their elections to new terms.

Hardy General Manager Scott Sherman said the previous year had been financially

successful but also challenging for the company. He cited the forest fires in the county in March, which caused significant damage to Hardy infrastructure.

Several recent moves from the Federal Communications Commission also complicate the company's operations. With new regulations focusing on net neutrality and digital discrimination, the FCC is hindering Hardy's efforts to continue expanding because of the time and effort required to meet FCC rules, even when Hardy never practices any of the unwanted behavior addressed by the regulations. For example,

Hardy always has practiced net neutrality, which is desired by the FCC, but the rules practically treat all providers as if they're offenders, he said.

Lastly, Mr. Sherman said Hardy was evaluating various funding available for extending our network.

About 375 people attended the meeting. Hardy thanks the EHHS Band and new Band Director Colton Watts, Band Boosters, ProStart, Bob Thompson, Philip Miller, Dorman Parker, and EHHS cooks, staff and faculty, who prepared and served the meal.

What's Inside

- Hardy Mourns Loss Of Todd Stickley
- Hardy Sponsoring FRS Scholarship, Youth Tour
- Hardy Offering Children's Cybersecurity Book

Calendar

- Nov. 28-29 Thanksgiving Holiday - Offices Closed
- Dec. 24-25 Christmas Holiday - Offices Closed
- Jan. 1, 2025 New Year's Holiday - Offices Closed
- Feb. 14, 2025 Deadline for FRS Scholarship Applications
- Feb. 14, 2025 Deadline for FRS Youth Tour Applications

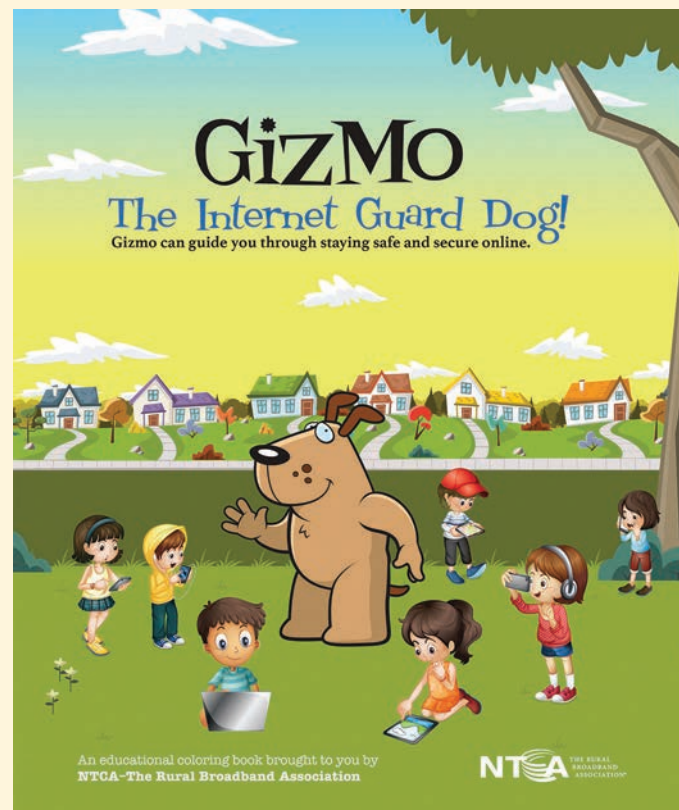
Hardy Offers Children's Cybersecurity Coloring Book

To help children stay safe online in recognition of Cybersecurity Awareness Month 2024, Hardy Telecommunications presents "Gizmo: The Internet Guard Dog!"

This fun and engaging coloring book, from NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association, helps kids learn the basics of staying safe online. Join Gizmo, the lovable cyber-savvy pooch, as he shares helpful tips and important lessons to make the Internet a safer place. With easy-to-understand guidance, this coloring book is perfect for young explorers who want to have fun while learning about cybersecurity. Items covered include:

- Guard Your Personal Info
- Strong Passwords Are Superpowers
- Ask Before You Click
- Be Kind Online
- Keep Your Location Private
- Beware of Strangers Online
- Report When Something Feels Wrong
- Not Everything Online is True

You can print or download the coloring book at <https://hardynet.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Gizmo-the-Internet-Guard-Dog.pdf>, or click the link on our Tech Tips webpage.



Hardy Mourns Loss Of Todd Stickley

Hardy Telecommunications employees are grieving the loss of Todd Stickley, who passed away September 10 after a battle with cancer. Todd was a familiar face to all of us at Hardy long before he joined the company, having spent his life working in the construction side of the telecommunications industry for decades. When he joined our engineering team in August 2020, it was as if he'd already been with us for years.

Todd graced our offices with a laid-back demeanor but a fierce dedication to his work. His steady presence never wavered no matter the situation. If something needed to be done, Todd completed it quickly and correctly - his reliability was matched by his

pride in serving our customers and community.

While we take comfort in knowing that Todd's pain is no more, our hearts still ache, especially for his family. His wife Monica has been with Hardy Telecommunications for more than 16 years. Words cannot convey our sorrow for her and the family's loss.

During Todd's illness, you, our community, were so generous in donating to raffles and other fundraisers to help the Stickley family. We can't thank you enough.

We will miss Todd greatly, but we honor the memory of a loyal coworker and devoted husband, father, and grandfather.

In Loving Memory Of



Todd M. Stickley
August 25, 1967 - September 10, 2024

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 2025 Foundation for Rural Service Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., June 2-6. 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 2026 graduating class.

The deadline to return applications is February 14, 2025. 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.

Cybersecurity Awareness Tips #BeCyberwise

Visit our Tech Tips webpage at <https://hardynet.net/about/tech-tips/> for more information about staying safe online!

CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

Follow these top tips to stay safe online!

USE STRONG PASSWORDS...

Make your passwords:
Long: At least 16 characters
Random: Use upper and lowercase letters, numbers and symbols
Unique: Use a different password for each account

...AND A PASSWORD MANAGER

Password managers can:

- Store all your passwords
- Tell you when you have weak or reused passwords
- Generate strong passwords for you
- Automatically fill logins into sites and apps

TURN ON MULTIFACTOR AUTHENTICATION

It provides **extra security** by confirming your identity when logging into accounts, like entering a code texted to a phone or generated by an authenticator app.

RECOGNIZE AND REPORT PHISHING

Common signs of a phish include:

- Urgent/alarming language
- Requests for personal or financial info
- Poor writing or misspellings
- Incorrect email addresses or links

Spot a phish? Report it to your organization or email provider, then delete it.

UPDATE YOUR SOFTWARE

Software updates ensure your devices are protected against the latest threats. Turn on the **automatic updates** in your device's or app's security settings!

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 2025 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 14, 2025.

To apply, students will need to submit a 500-800 word essay; email addresses for two people who can provide a letter of recommendation - only one can be 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 submit no 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; express an interest in returning to a rural community following graduation; and be sponsored by Hardy Telecommunications, a member of NTCA - The Rural Broadband Association.

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.