

# Communicator

A Quarterly Newsletter for Cooperative Customers



About 500 people attended our 2012 Annual Meeting at the East Hardy High School gymnasium, where they enjoyed a pork barbecue meal and heard about our upcoming OneNet service.

## Hardy Welcomes Youth Advisory Board For 2012-13

Hardy Telecommunications kicked off a new year of its Youth Advisory Board by giving six local high school students a tour of its corporate headquarters and educating them about mobile phones' reliance on the landline network to operate.

Hardy Marketing/Human Resource Director Derek Barr asked the students how they spend their time online and how often they use mobile phones. Derek then explained how mobile phones use the landline network to connect calls and deliver data. Hardy Telecommunications provides a fiber-optic connection to the local cell towers. When people access their mobile phones to make a call or text or browse the Internet, the data is carried from the cell tower over the Hardy landline network, a process called backhaul.

"A wireless signal doesn't have nearly the capacity to transmit data as fiber-optic technology does, both in amount of data and in speed," Derek said. "That's why mobile phone companies always want to find the nearest fiber network when they're thinking of putting up a tower."

Even a mobile phone call to another mobile phone using the same tower will often travel over a landline network in order to be connected. The call information is transmitted to a mobile switching center, which then routes the call to the proper destination. The mobile switching center can be located far away from where the two phones are operating.



Hardy's 2012-13 Youth Advisory Board members are: (Front row, left to right) Krysten Ayers (Moorefield High junior), Makayla Miller (Moorefield High sophomore), Paula Smith (East Hardy High junior); (Back row, left to right) Josh Ograbisz (Moorefield High freshman), Ian Im (East Hardy High sophomore), RaeAnn Orndorff (East Hardy High freshman).

Derek said the reliance of mobile phones upon the landline network is even more important now that more smartphones are being used to conduct business over the Internet.

"You see advertisements where wireless companies urge you to use a wi-fi Internet connection when available," he said. "What they're asking you to do is use another company's Internet service, like HardyNet, so that their wireless signals won't be jammed with too much data and slow down operations."

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### Calendar

- Nov. 22-23 Thanksgiving Holiday - Offices Closed
- Dec. 24-25 Christmas Holiday - Offices Closed
- Jan. 1, 2013 New Year's Day Holiday - Offices Closed

## Three Directors Elected To Serve New Terms After Annual Meeting

About 500 people turned out for Hardy's 2012 Annual Meeting of Members on Friday, October 5, at the East Hardy High School gymnasium, where they enjoyed a pork barbecue meal and saw three directors elected to serve new terms.



**Ervin Wilkins Jr.**



**Phyllis Cook**



**Harold Michael**

The three directors were re-elected by acclamation. Serving new three-year terms will be 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.

Members were treated to a preview of the upcoming Hardy OneNet high-definition digital television

service. A live TV feed from WHSV-TV3, traveling over Hardy's network, was played in the EHHS cafeteria as members entered and waited for their meal. Hardy employees also were on hand to show a display of OneNet equipment and to answer any questions from members about the service, which also will include much faster Internet speeds and digital telephone.

You can read more about the status of OneNet in this newsletter.

We at Hardy sincerely appreciate the hard work of the East Hardy High Band Boosters and FFA, who prepared and served the meal. We also thank former EHHS Band Director Bob Thompson, now at East Hardy Early Middle School, for his assistance.

## Critical Local Organizations See Advantages Of AnchorRing

Hardy Telecommunications is completing work on its AnchorRing project, connecting critical anchor institutions in Hardy County to a fiber-optic cable network.

Several organizations have been connected to AnchorRing and are enjoying the benefits of the faster Internet speeds possible with fiber. Those anchor institutions already using AnchorRing include the Hardy County Rural Development Authority, E.A. Hawse Health Center in Baker, the towns of Moorefield and Wardensville, and many more.

Mallie Combs, executive director of the RDA, said AnchorRing will play an important role in attracting industry and development.

"It is an economic development benefit to the operation of the HCRDA to have fast Internet service," she said. "This telecommunications infrastructure will be an asset to current businesses while allowing Hardy County to be more competitive with future new and expanding business investments."

AnchorRing was partially funded by the federal National Telecommunications and Information Administration Broadband Technologies Opportunity Program. It was designed to establish a fiber ring and bring faster Internet to "critical anchor institutions" in Hardy County, such as emergency, medical, educational, government, and other public service organizations. More than 122 miles of fiber have been constructed as part of AnchorRing.



Above and below middle: Employees of ER Excavating & Utilities begin work on Hardy OneNet by placing fiber along U.S. 220 North in Moorefield.

## Construction Begins For OneNet Fiber-To-The-Home

Construction has begun for Hardy OneNet, the upcoming fiber-to-the-home network that will offer high-definition digital television, much faster Internet speeds and digital telephone service.

"It's been a long time getting to this point, but we're hopeful that things will now progress more quickly," said Derek Barr, Hardy's marketing and human resource director.

Three contractors are working throughout Hardy County on the first construction phase. ER Excavating & Utilities, Nichols Construction, and Henkels & McCoy are all working on fiber placement projects.

It's been more than two years since Hardy was first awarded a \$31.6 million grant/loan combination from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development program as part of the broadband stimulus initiative.

Derek said the delay in starting construction is due largely to



working through the federal process.

"Every step and part of the project has to be approved by federal officials, and that process has taken much longer than we anticipated. Obviously, they're dealing with a lot of projects, so we have to adjust. It has affected our timelines and made it difficult to tell people when we'll be offering OneNet service in different areas," he said.

Now that the first projects have been given the green light, "we hope to just keep trucking and stay busy as more projects complete that approval process," Derek said.

OneNet involves a three-phase construction process. The first step, currently ongoing, is the placing of fiber-optic cables throughout the county, most of it aerial construction. Next will come the splicing together of those fiber sections. The third step will be connecting and installing the fiber to individual residences. The second and third steps involve a new bid process for contractors.

"It's impossible to predict exactly, but we hope to have the first people receiving OneNet in January 2013. It will continue to be built throughout the county over the next several months," he said.

Derek stressed that Hardy will be its own TV provider via fiber and will not be reselling a home satellite service like Dish Network or DirecTV.

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## National Telecommunications Employees Visit Hardy To Learn Rural Operations

Hardy Telecommunications hosted two visitors from the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association on October 17, introducing them to the challenges of providing modern services in such a rural, geographically rugged area.

Laura Withers and Barbara Fitzpatrick traveled from NTCA's Arlington, Va., headquarters to Hardy County. The two were recently hired at NTCA and came to Hardy to learn the inner workings of rural telecommunications. Laura is NTCA's communications manager, and Barbara is its legal administrator.

"We give them a better understanding of who they're really representing in D.C.," said Hardy Marketing and Human Resources Director Derek Barr.

The NTCA employees took a tour of Hardy's Lost River



(Left to right) Hardy Fiber-to-the-Home Project Coordinator Becky Kimble demonstrates the company's OneNet TV equipment to new National Telecommunications Cooperative Association employees Barbara Fitzpatrick and Laura Withers.

and Moorefield offices, then Becky Kimble, Hardy's fiber-to-the-home project coordinator, showed them the equipment that will deliver high-definition digital television, faster Internet speeds and digital telephone via OneNet's fiber network.

Barbara, who has spent decades in the industry, said the time was well spent.

"It was a wonderful and educational experience," she said. "I have worked as a paralegal in the telecommunications field for over 30 years, but visiting Hardy was my first opportunity to actually see how a telecommunications company operates."

Both visitors praised the beauty of Hardy County.

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