

More channels, better quality on the way for cable customers

Customers of NHTC's cable service can expect more for their money in the coming months as the utility upgrades its cable system.

"The Board is committed to this upgrade," says Tom Butler, NHTC general manager. "It will bring more channels and greater reliability to our system, while preparing us for future growth."

The new system will have a capacity of 110 channels. It will utilize parts of the existing fiber optic network which makes high-quality voice and data transmission possible.

Not only will customers notice a better picture quality, but system reliability will be increased as well. Because of the system's design, fewer people will be affected by localized outages. Cable signal strength will also be increased substantially.

The system is also being designed to accommodate a two-way signal, to take advantage of future technology.

The cable upgrade is in the engineering and design phase now. Butler says he hopes to begin construction this summer, with completion by summer of 2003.

Action by mayor and council cause cable price hike for Grant customers

Residents of the Grant area will begin paying higher rates for cable service, thanks to an enormous business license increase imposed by the Town of Grant.

"We were recently informed by the mayor and council of Grant that they had voted to raise the fee they charge us to bring cable TV service to the area," says Dewey Doss, NHTC assistant manager.

The amount is equal to 5% of gross revenue from within the town limits, and 2.5% of gross revenue from within the Grant police jurisdiction. "That totals more than \$6,200 for the year," says Doss, "compared to the business license fees of \$75 per year charged by New Hope and \$118 per year charged by Owens Cross Roads. We have no choice but to pass this huge increase along to the customer."

Beginning immediately, cable customers in the Grant area will see an increase in the cable bills. Doss says the Cooperative has decided not to pass along the retroactive fees from Grant, or the \$5,000 it cost to modify NHTC's billing system to comply with the new ordinance.

The Communicator

Vol. 1, No. 2 March/April 2002

Annual Meeting

Celebrate Service at the



Surf and save!

Internet Promotion

For a limited time, enjoy the savings when you sign up for dial-up Internet service from New Hope Telephone Cooperative.

- Sign up today and we'll waive the standard \$12 startup fee!

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Also Inside:
Cathedral Caverns • Tree Planting Tips • NHTC Cable Upgrade • More!

Thank you for the positive response we have received from our first issue of *The Communicator*. We are excited to offer this publication to our service area.

We plan to continued using this publication as a means to pass along important information about New Hope Telephone Cooperative. We also plan to use these pages to share a little good news about the people, places and events that make this area such a great place to live, work and raise a family.

Please mark your calendars for a very important date. On Tuesday evening, May 21st, we will host our Annual Meeting. There are many reasons why you should attend this event.

Remember, New Hope Telephone is a cooperative, and that means something special. By purchasing our services, you are much more than a customer — you are an owner.

Because we are a cooperative, we do not have to worry about satisfying outside investors who care only about the bottom line. Our profits don't go to Wall Street, they go to Main Street. In other words, the money we collect that would normally be considered profit is reinvested toward improving the system — your system — and returned to you in the form of capital credits.

So the Annual Meeting is all about you. It is a chance for the members to gather and hear updates on the financial condition of their company, on new services being offered, on improvements being made, and in general how the company is progressing.

Another important feature of the Annual Meeting is the election of Board members. The Board of Directors, as you know, is made up of nine Cooperative members who

make decisions affecting the future of New Hope Telephone. Your vote at the Annual Meeting helps determine who sits on the Board of Directors.

In May, Place 1 and Place 8 on the Board are up for election. Place 1, Owens Cross Roads, is currently held by Greg Glover. Place 8, Grant, is currently held by Billy Tucker.

Of course, the Annual Meeting is always a great time to see friends and visit with folks you may not have seen in a while. We'll have great entertainment by the DAR Show Choir. And don't forget the drawing for door prizes — including a big screen TV!

We at New Hope Telephone Cooperative are proud to bring you the latest in telecommunications technology. It is exciting to see what we have been able to accomplish for this region — working together through our Cooperative.

Please make plans to attend the Annual Meeting to help us celebrate these accomplishments. ■



Tom Butler
General Manager

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New Hope Telephone Cooperative

is a member-owned corporation dedicated to providing communications technology to the residents and businesses of New Hope, Grant and Owens Cross Roads.

Board of Directors

Johnny Cobb, President
New Hope Exchange

Jeff Cooper, Vice President
New Hope Exchange

David Ayers, Secretary
Grant Exchange

Barry Mefford, Treasurer
New Hope Exchange

James Cantrell
Grant Exchange

Jim Duncan
New Hope Exchange

Greg Glover
Owens Cross Roads Exchange

Robert Layne
Owens Cross Roads Exchange

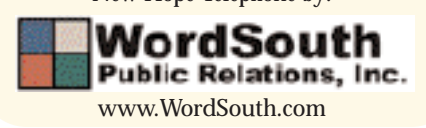
Billy Tucker
Grant Exchange

The Communicator

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One of the best ways to improve the appearance of your property is by planting trees. When carefully selected and properly placed, trees add beauty and shade to a lawn.

When planting a tree it's important to consider how large it will grow and where you should plant it in relation to utility lines. A tree planted in the wrong area can be toppled in a storm and disrupt phone, cable and electricity service for you and your neighbors.

By paying attention to planting zones, you can get the most from your landscaping experience while avoiding problems in the future.

Zone One

This is perhaps the most important zone, where most of the problems occur. Zone One includes an area 30 feet in any direction of a line.

In Zone One, you should plant trees that will be no taller than 18 feet at maturity. Choose from a variety of fruit trees, as well as the popular flowering dogwoods.

Of course, you may also plant crepe myrtles, azaleas and other small ornamentals in Zone One.

When planting trees, be sure to stay in 'the zone'

Zone Two

This zone includes the area from 30 feet to 80 feet from a utility line. Trees planted here should grow no taller than 50 feet.

Hard maples are great choices for this zone, as are hickories and Bradford pears. A variety of oaks also work well here, such as the popular red oaks and white oaks.

Keep in mind that just because a tree is the right height doesn't mean it's a good choice for this zone. For instance, sweet gums become quite heavy when they bear their foliage, increasing the chance of a limb breaking off and falling on a line. The tops

of poplar, soft maple, willow and pine trees can snap off in high winds and cause considerable damage.

Zone Three

From 80 feet and beyond is Zone Three, wherein just about anything can be planted. Just keep in mind the location of sheds and other outbuildings which could be damaged from a falling limb.

It doesn't take much time to develop a landscaping plan that will bring you enjoyment for years to come — and remain low maintenance and trouble-free. Just remember to look into the future.

Involve your kids: plant an animal garden

Many plants bear the names of animals and insects. Creating a garden with some of these beautiful plants will delight your children and spark their imaginations.

- Choose a spot for the animal garden. Plant on both sides of a tree-lined path and your children can imagine they're on the African plains. Fill a shady spot in the back-

yard and they're in the Brazilian rain forest.

- Clean the area, removing weeds, rocks, and other unwanted items. Till the area, mixing in potting soil.
- Visit your local garden shop and pick out the plants. If your little ones like wild animals, a bed of snapdragons lined with monkey grass is a fun idea. If they love farm ani-

mals, cowslip, hens & chicks and foxtail lilies are good choices.

- Make signs with each plant's name and a hand-drawn picture of its animal namesake to display along the front edge of the garden.

Designing and maintaining an animal garden can provide a fun and educational springtime project for your children.

We're looking for YOUR ideas for our "Living" section. Send your recipes, home improvement ideas, landscaping tips, and other ideas to our address on Page 2. Be sure to mark your envelope "Living Ideas." If we use your submission in *The Communicator*, you'll receive a gift!

Custom calling features put your phone to work

What if you had a device in your home that acted like a personal secretary. It would screen your calls, dial numbers for you, and even ring your morning wake-up call.

Your telephone can do all this — and much more — when it is empowered by custom calling features from New Hope Telephone. For just a few dollars per month, you can put your phone to work around the house.

“Our custom calling features add real value to owning a telephone,” says Dewey Doss, assistant manager. “Our members can select from a long list of features and choose the options that best meet their needs.”

One of the most popular features is **Caller ID**. Members have discovered the convenience of being able to see who is calling before they answer the phone. This cuts down on interruptions by unwanted calls that come during meals and other inappropriate times.

This service comes in three versions to offer members greater flexibility. **Caller ID Name Only** will display just the name under which the calling phone number is listed. **Caller ID Number Only** shows only the number that is calling. **Caller ID Deluxe** is a combination of both services.

Call Waiting is another popular feature among New Hope Telephone subscribers. A simple beep alerts you to an incoming call when you are already on the line. With Call Waiting you won't have to worry about missing important or emergency calls that come in while you are talking with someone else.

“New Hope Telephone has recently announced a new service that is becoming very popular with our members,” says Susan Eubanks, NHTC customer

service representative. **Caller ID-Call Waiting** combines the best of both services, she explains.

“With this new service, an incoming call will give you a beep when you're already on the line,” Eubanks says. “Your Caller ID box will display the incoming caller's information — name, number, or both, depending on which service you have — and you can decide whether you want to put your current call on hold to accept the new call.”

You must subscribe to a version of Caller ID in order for Caller ID-Call Waiting to function.

Do you receive unwanted calls that you would like to block completely? With **Select Caller Reject**, that ability is just a few buttons away. Whether you know the number of the incoming call or not, you simply wait until the ringing stops, pick up the phone, and at the dial tone follow the instructions from New Hope Telephone. Once blocked, that number will never again be able to ring your phone.

Speaking of blocking, did you know New Hope Telephone offers two free call blocking services? For no installation charge and no monthly fee, we will install **900/500 Restriction** and/or **International Restriction** on your line. This will prevent any calls from your phone to numbers whose area codes are 900 or 500 (these can get expensive), or to area codes outside the United States.

“We're always looking for services that will add value to the user experience,” says Doss. “With today's technology, a phone can be a powerful tool that helps people manage their household. We're proud that our members can turn to New Hope Telephone Cooperative for the latest in custom calling features.”

Customize your phone with these and other custom calling features

Automatic Call Back	\$2/month
Automatic Recall	\$2/month
Call Forwarding	\$1/month
Call Waiting	\$1/month
Caller ID Name Only	\$3/month
Caller ID Number Only	\$3/month
Caller ID Deluxe	\$6/month
Caller ID - Call Waiting	\$2/month
Voice Mail	\$4/month
Wake Up Voice Mail	\$1/month

There is a one-time service charge of \$10 to activate custom calling features. No matter how many features you order at one time, you will only be charged one \$10 fee.

Come to the New Hope Telephone Cooperative Annual Meeting

May 21st • Doors open at 6 p.m.
New Hope High School Auditorium

Plans are underway for the Annual Meeting of the New Hope Telephone Cooperative. Members are encouraged to join their neighbors and friends as they conduct the business of their telecommunications company.

The doors to New Hope High School Auditorium will open at 6 p.m. for the event on Tuesday, May 21st. The business meeting is scheduled to begin at 7:30 p.m.

Entertainment, updates, prizes

Members will enjoy the talents of the Kate Duncan Smith DAR School Show Choir from 7:00 – 7:30 p.m. Many great door prizes will be given away at the end of the meeting, including a big screen TV.

New Hope Telephone Cooperative is different from many utilities. It is not owned by a group of investors located in other states. It is a cooperative, which means it is owned by those who use its services.

This business concept has many advantages. Because the company does not have to make high profits to satisfy investors, it can instead focus on providing superior service at reasonable prices. And because customers are members, they have a voice in the future of the company.

Board Elections

One of the most important functions of the Annual Meeting is the election of members to the Board of Directors. Members cast their votes to decide who will help lead their Cooperative through the important decisions of the future.

Two Board positions are up for consideration at this year's Annual Meeting. Place One represents the Owens Cross Roads exchange. This position is currently filled by Greg Glover. Since 1985 Glover has owned and operated G&G Enterprises, a landscaping company specializing in residential projects. He also raises quarter horses on the family farm, including a stud that he breeds to the public. Glover and wife Harriet have one son.

Place Eight represents the Grant exchange. This position is currently filled by Billy Tucker. With 20 years of

service, he is the senior member of the board, and enjoys fishing and hunting in his spare time. Tucker is retired from the State of Alabama engineering department. He and wife Julia have two children and two grandchildren.

Be an active member

New Hope Telephone Cooperative belongs to you. Working together, we have brought many great services to this area — and many great things are still ahead. Make a special effort to attend the Annual Meeting and take part in the company you've helped build. Remember, it's your Cooperative. ■

Ready for life to be a little less complicated?

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Plan A	14¢ per minute for interstate and intrastate calls, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
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Call today to get the “close-to-home” advantage.
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Cathedral Caverns bringing thousands to north Alabama

In the lush forests of North Alabama yawns the monstrous maw of an ancient limestone cave. Its formations, resembling liquid more than stone, have garnered the site several world records. Entering through the largest cave mouth in the world, visitors find incredible exhibits of nature, such as "Goliath," reported to be the largest stalagmite on the planet.

The latest jewel in the Alabama State Parks System crown, Cathedral Caverns reopened to the public 18 months ago. The response has been incredible, and attendance doesn't seem to be slacking off, according to State Parks employee Eric Dobbins.

"About 50,000 people came through last year," Dobbins says. "It's been pretty steady every day."

When Jay Gurley found Cathedral Caverns in 1952, its features were so striking to him that he decided to risk all he had and buy the site. He began clearing rubble, running electrical wires and making the cave a safe place for visitors. A lot of the hardest work was done by Gurley himself. He knew that people from all over would be just as mesmerized by his discovery as he was.

One of a great many limestone caves in North

Alabama, the 160-acre geological marvel was originally to be called Bats Cave. When Gurley's wife visited for the first time, stalagmites and stalactites of all sizes reminded her of the columns and candelabra of a cathedral. The name was changed to Cathedral Caverns for its inaugural opening in 1955.

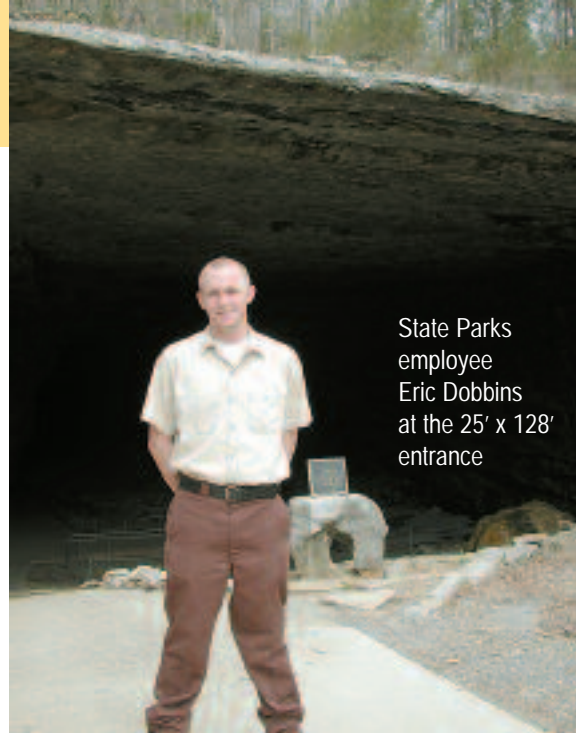
By the early 1960's, the Grant, Ala., tourist attraction was receiving about 24,000 visitors annually. The cave beckoned tourists from all over the world to see its odd 35-foot by three-inch stalagmite, its "frozen waterfall" of stone and its vast stalagmite forest.

Despite the great number of visitors, financial troubles forced the Gurley family to close the site in 1980 and the cave mouth went silent.

The silence was broken, however, when the state of Alabama bought the site in 1987. Plans were made to renovate, but progress slowed to a crawl. Marsha Folsom, wife of former governor Jim Folsom, gave the renovation project a boost in 1993. After touring the caverns with Jay Gurley himself, Mrs. Folsom led efforts to secure federal grants. A little over \$1,400,000 was invested. Work resumed and the state reopened the legendary Cathedral Caverns in August 2000.

December 2001 saw ground broken for a visitors center. Another \$200,000 is expected to go toward such work as improving the cave entrance, enhancing safety and tying in to the Grant city sewer lines.

Jay Gurley passed away in 1996, never having seen the reopening of his beloved Cathedral Caverns. There has been talk of building a memorial to Jay Gurley near the caverns, a fitting tribute to a man of vision and imagination — a man who opened the eyes of many to some of the wonders of nature.



State Parks employee Eric Dobbins at the 25' x 128' entrance



Some of Cathedral Caverns' many limestone formations

New building in future for NHTC

After years of sitting vacant, the old city hall and fire department buildings in New Hope were demolished last month. In their place will be new offices for New Hope Telephone Cooperative.

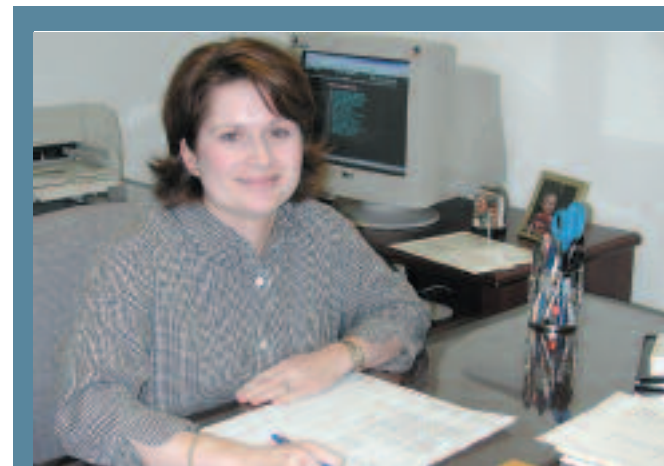
The 8,500 square foot building will house all business office operations. Members will come to the new building to make payments, sign up for new services, and conduct other Cooperative business.

The Accounting and Engineering departments will also be moved to the new

building, which will house all management offices as well.

"Construction is scheduled to begin during the summer," says Tom Butler, general manager of New Hope Telephone Cooperative. "We hope to be in the new facility by the end of the year."

The property is adjacent to the existing New Hope Telephone office building. After the move, the existing facility will house outside plant operations, Internet equipment, and the central office operations.



Tammy Weeks has joined the New Hope Telephone Cooperative family in the Accounting Department. Her duties include general ledger, payroll, financial statements and related tasks. Weeks earned her B.S. in accounting from Athens State University. Her husband, Chris, owns and operates Weeks Construction. The couple live in Grant and are the proud parents of Gracie, their 18-month-old daughter.

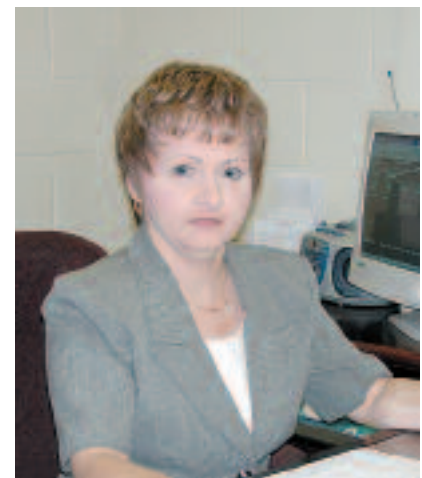
Hunkapiller promoted

Teresa Hunkapiller has been promoted to Business Office Manager for New Hope Telephone Cooperative.

"Teresa has been with New Hope Telephone since 1987, and is a valuable asset to the company," says Tom Butler, general manager. "She will serve our members well in her new capacity."

Hunkapiller holds a degree in business administration from the University of Alabama in Huntsville. She makes her home in New Hope with husband Joe, who repairs and sells watches, clocks and jewelry.

"I look forward to the challenges ahead," says Hunkapiller.



"I enjoy working with our members, and I'm excited about enhancing the level of quality service they expect from their telephone cooperative."

Training helps New Hope Telephone employees deliver quality member service

Several employees of New Hope Telephone attended specialized customer service training last month. The classes were hosted by the Alabama-Mississippi Telecommunications Association. Those attending learned valuable principles of effective customer service. "Our members deserve the best service possible," says Dewey Doss, NHTC assistant manager. "Offsite training is one of the ways we can make sure our employees are the best in the business."