

A Publication of New Hope Telephone Cooperative

The
Communicator

Vol. 1, No. 3

July 2002



**Safe and
secure on
the World
Wide Web**

Also Inside:

Annual Meeting Coverage • NHTC Fact Sheet • Cable Survey • More!

MANAGER'S COMMENTS

On behalf of New Hope Telephone Cooperative's Board, employees and management, I'd like to thank everyone who attended our Annual Meeting. As you know, the Annual Meeting is an important aspect of being part of a cooperative. You are not just customers — you are owners, and you have a voice in the direction of this company.

I was proud to report on several exciting developments at the Annual Meeting. As you have read in the pages of this magazine, we are in the process of building a new business office to serve our members. The process is moving slower than we'd like, but you can't control the pace when dealing with the federal government (remember, as a cooperative we borrow money from the Rural Utilities Service at low interest rates).

Continue to look to the pages of this magazine for updates on the building. Once completed, we will have an open house for our members to tour the new facility.

I also announced at the Annual Meeting that we will soon upgrade our cable TV system. As we go through the process, we want your input on the channels you'd like to see added to our system. Please be sure to complete the survey on Page 8 and return it right away. To show our appreciation for your help, we'll enter all submissions received by August 1 in a drawing for a 25-inch color television.

The Internet has changed the way we live, and New Hope Telephone Cooperative is proud to offer both dial-up access and high-speed DSL. We continue to expand our DSL capabilities. I announced at the Annual Meeting that by next fall DSL should be available throughout our entire system.

This is remarkable, considering

the rural nature of the area we serve. No for-profit company would ever come into an area like this and offer high-speed Internet to every home. There just wouldn't be enough profit in it for them.

But because we are a cooperative, we can concentrate on providing quality service without worrying about sending big profits to Wall Street.

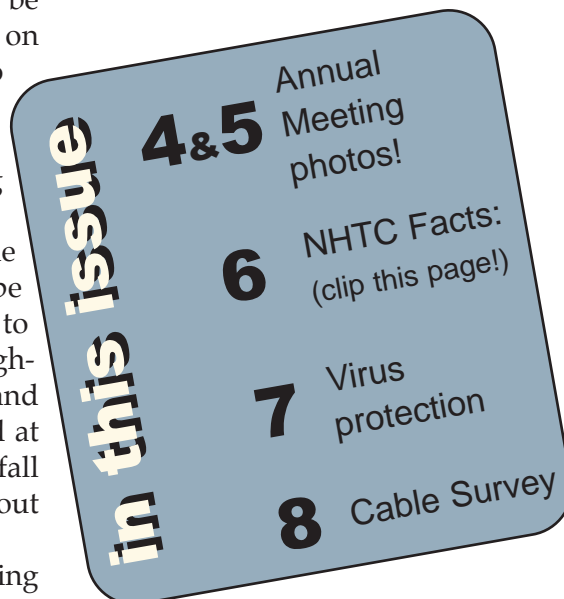
We continue to work on developing a county-wide calling plan, but we are being held back because BellSouth wants to cancel all contracts with all independent companies in all states. This is disappointing, but we will continue to work on the issue to see what can be done.

Just before the Annual Meeting, we gave back \$296,000 in capital credits. This was a lower amount than the previous year because money had been invested in equipment and services to improve our service to you.

Thank you for your continued support of New Hope Telephone. Call me anytime I can help you. ■



Tom Butler
General Manager



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

Robert Layne, Vice President
Owens Cross Roads Exchange

David Ayers, Secretary
Grant Exchange

Jeff Cooper, Treasurer
New Hope Exchange

James Cantrell
Grant Exchange

Jim Duncan
New Hope Exchange

Greg Glover
Owens Cross Roads Exchange

Barry Mefford
New Hope Exchange

Jimmy Segler
Grant Exchange

The Communicator

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THE INTERNET

A safe place for kids?

The Internet is a truly unlimited source for news, entertainment and education. Many parents certainly want to make this valuable resource available to their children.

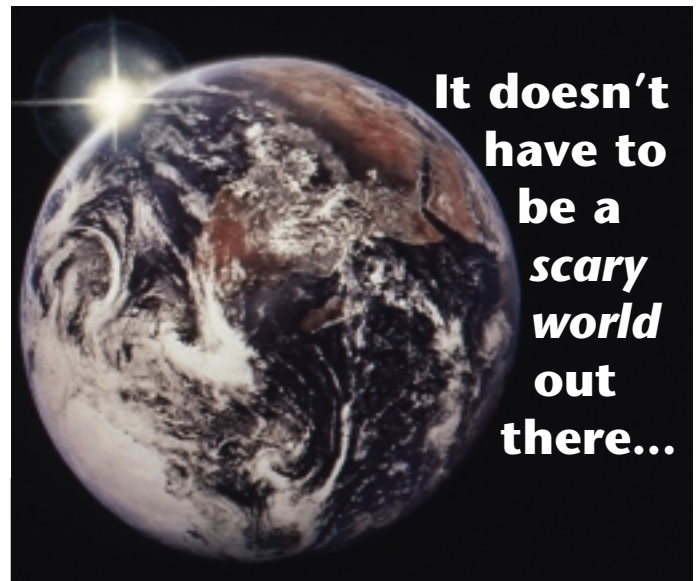
At the same time, parents may be concerned about their children accessing harmful material. No parent wants their child stumbling across pornography or hate sites while researching homework.

Many of these concerns can be put at ease with a few simple steps. Parents can begin by having a discussion with their child about the kind of content the child

would like to access on the Internet, and the material which parents think is appropriate. For many families, parental involvement, regular discussion of Internet activity, and the old-fashioned honor system covers most concerns.

To go another step, parents can install software which protects children from harmful content. Such software can be found with a simple Internet search. A great resource is www.getnetwise.org/tools.

A little research can make the Internet an important part of a child's education. ■



Before your child spends time on the Internet, make sure he understands the importance of protecting personal information while on the Web. Have your child read and agree to the following statements:

- If I want to give out or type in information about myself online, I will first show my parents - even if it's to enter a game or contest.
- I will only respond to emails or instant messages from people I know (or from addresses I know).
- If I receive a message that makes me uncomfortable or I think is weird, I not respond and will show my parents or my teacher.
- If a Web site asks me to type in my name, address, email and hobbies, I will ask my parents first if it's OK.
- If someone I met online wants to meet me in the real world, I will tell my parents first.
- If a Web site asks for my parents' email address so that they can seek their permission for me to enter a game or provide my personal information, I will always provide my parents' correct information.

This information, along with a wealth of other valuable resources, can be found on the Web at:

www.getnetwise.org

"Get online today with Internet service from New Hope Telephone Cooperative"

DIAL UP CONNECTION

Both plans below carry a Connection fee of \$12.50 (a one-time charge). One email address is provided; additional email accounts are available for a Setup fee of \$6.00 and a monthly fee of \$3.95.

- **BASIC PLAN**\$9.95/mth
10 hours of access each month, with a fee of 95¢ per each additional hour
- **BLUE PLAN**\$21.95/mth
Unlimited access each month

DSL (DIGITAL SUBSCRIBER LINE)

Experience blazing fast Internet speeds on a dedicated connection. With DSL, you're always on — and always fast. There is a one-time Connection fee of \$25.00.

- **DSL**\$49.95/mth
Unlimited access each month on a dedicated connection

Large turnout for NHTC Annual Meeting



Members cast their election ballots.



General Manager Tom Butler visits with a NHTC member.

The annual meeting is an important time in the life of a cooperative. It's the one day out of the year when members get together to conduct important cooperative business and hear updates about their company. It's one of the core responsibilities of a cooperative member.

Members of New Hope Telephone Cooperative take that responsibility seriously. A total of 824 members voted at NHTC's Annual Meeting, held May 21, 2002. The halls of New Hope High School were filled with members registering, voting, visiting and hoping for a chance at a door prize.

As the auditorium filled, members enjoyed the talents of the DAR School Ensemble. This talented group of kids provided a variety of musical entertainment, from "Man

of Constant Sorrow" to "Soul Man." The crowd responded enthusiastically to the group's country music numbers, solo acts, patriotic songs, and group dance numbers.

The group is directed by Natasha Tidmore, and has performed at school events and a number of community functions. Several have received performance scholarships.

As the business meeting began, three cooperative members were selected from each exchange to form a nine-member vote-counting committee.



The crowd enjoyed the entertainment

These people sat around a table on stage as cooperative attorney Doug Martinson led them through the vote-counting process. As a result of the election, Greg Glover retained his seat on the Board of Directors representing the Owens Cross Roads exchange, and Jimmy Segler was elected to represent the Grant exchange.

Tom Butler, General Manager of New Hope Telephone Cooperative, updated the crowd on events taking place at their telecommunications company. He pointed out that within the past few months NHTC had developed a new way to communicate with its members by launching its member magazine *The Communicator*. He also discussed a

number of major projects taking place at the cooperative, including:

- A new business office to serve NHTC members
- Upgrades to the cable system
- Expansion of DSL service throughout the service area

Butler also reported on the cooperative's financial condition. "We made \$1,163,000 last year," he reported. "This cooperative is strong financially, and we'll get stronger because the people are supporting their co-op."

As an example, Butler said that New Hope Long Distance was now the number one long distance provider in the cooperative's service area. ■



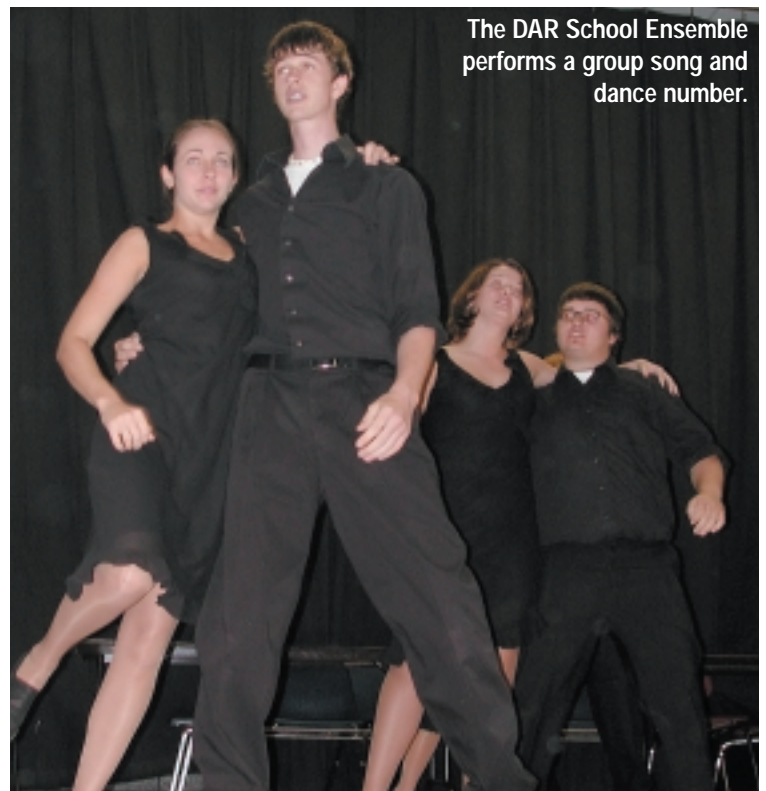
The NHTC Board of Directors: (seated, left to right) Jeff Cooper, Robert Layne, Johnny Cobb, David Ayers, (standing, left to right) Greg Glover, James Cantrell, Barry Mefford, Jimmy Segler, and Jim Duncan.



Members register to vote in the Board elections.



A DAR soloist entertains the crowd.



The DAR School Ensemble performs a group song and dance number.

NHTC MEMBER INFORMATION

Hours of Operation

NHTC's business office is open Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Customer Service

For customer service, call 723-4211. Please note that, due to the high volume of payment activity the first and last weeks of each month, you will experience shorter waits if you call us with billing questions and service issues between the 8th and the 20th.

To Sign Up for Service

A standard deposit of \$50 is required upon opening an account with New Hope Telephone Cooperative (a higher deposit may be required if the applicant is unemployed or has a history of bad debt with NHTC). After one year, the deposit may be refunded, with interest, provided the member has maintained a good payment record.

Billing Policy

Following is New Hope Telephone Cooperative's standard policy for the payment of services by members:

- Bills mailed to members1st of each month
- Payment due . . .on or before 20th of each month
- Late notices mailed21st of each month

Bills paid after the 20th of the month will have a late fee of 1.5 percent added. Accounts not paid in full by the end of the month will be subject to having services suspended.

Reconnecting Service

If service has been disconnected due to non-payment, all past due amounts must be paid in full before service is restored. The following reconnect fees also apply:

- Telephone \$10
- Internet \$10
- Cable TV \$20

Once a non-paid service has been disconnected for more than 30 days, the service is removed from the NHTC system. To reinstate such an account, all past due amounts must be paid along with full connection fees.

Repair Service

Please call 723-4219 for all repair requests. Calls are taken in-house during normal business hours. After-hours calls are answered by a paging service.

All troubles should be reported through 723-4219. Using this number will result in faster response times and accurate record keeping.

Our Fees

Residential Service Fees

Following is a list of standard fees charged by New Hope Telephone Cooperative to install or set up service:

- Phone Service \$45.15
- Cable TV (in a house) \$30
- Cable TV (in a mobile home) \$40
- Cable Extension . . \$20 (plus \$1.25/mth)
- Internet Service \$12.50
- DSL Service \$25

- Custom Calling Features \$10
- Toll-Restriction \$16
- Toll-Restriction w/PIN \$16

Residential Monthly Fees

- Basic Phone Service \$16.25
- Resident End-User Charge \$6
- E-911 fees varies by county
- Federal Universal Service Charge . .46¢

Inside Wire Maintenance Option

If (1) New Hope Telephone wires your premises for telephone service, or (2) your telephone wiring meets industry standards, you may choose to carry our maintenance option. This option costs \$2 per month (as of 6/1/02). With this coverage, New Hope Telephone will maintain your wiring with no additional charges.

There is no service charge for adding this option upon application for service. If you want to add this option later, there will be a \$30.15 charge to come to your premises to determine if we can maintain your wiring.

If you decline our maintenance option, you are responsible for maintaining your wiring to the protector on the outside of your house. Before reporting a trouble, please trouble-shoot to make sure the problem lies outside of your house. If you report your telephone out of service and we determine that the trouble lies in your wiring or telephone sets (unless you have our set maintenance), you will be charged a \$30.15 trip charge. If you choose for us to fix the trouble, the first quarter hour (15 minutes) will be covered in the \$30.15; you will then be charged at a rate of \$9 per quarter hour (plus materials).

Troubleshooting Wiring Problems In Your Home

If you choose not to purchase NHTC's wire maintenance option, there is an easy way to determine if a phone problem lies inside your home or with the service leading into your home. First, locate the service protector (also called a NID or network interface device). This unit is attached to the outside of your home where the phone service enters the structure. It looks similar to the photo below.

Unscrew the bottom screw to open the NID. Unplug a phone set from a jack inside your home and take it to the NID. Unplug the NID's connection and snap in the line from the phone set. If the phone has a dial tone, the trouble lies within your home. If there is no dial tone, call NHTC repair service at 723-4219 and explain your problem.



Closed Protector

NOTE: Be sure to reconnect the NID's connection and securely close the unit.



Open Protector

THIS INFORMATION IS PROVIDED AS A SERVICE TO MEMBERS OF NEW HOPE TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE. PLEASE SAVE THIS PAGE FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.

Are you infected?

Virus protection is essential

A malicious computer program has kept NHTC's Internet Administrator Rusty Bright busy lately. A computer virus known as the KLEZ virus, has infected a number of area computers — and Bright has fielded complaints from across the country about email messages sent from the system.

Like many such programs, the KLEZ virus corrupts a computer user's address book. What makes this virus unique is that it pulls a name from the computer user's address book and uses it as the "From" address in a random message it sends from the computer.

For example, let's say that Jane's computer is infected with the virus.

When the virus performs its emailing routine, it finds the email address of Martha. It inserts Martha's email address into the "From" portion of an infected message that it then sends to Betty. Betty contacts Martha and says, "hey, you sent me an infected message." Martha scans her computer for viruses and none are found. Jane never knew what happened, and neither Betty nor Martha had a clue that the message came from Jane's computer.

The KLEZ virus is just one of many that spread across the Internet. Some can cause considerable damage.

"If you're on the Internet, you need virus protection," says Bright. "And because new viruses appear all

the time, you need to update your virus protection software at least once a week."

There are many virus protection programs available. A free one that does an excellent job is available at www.grisoft.com. Norton Antivirus, found at www.symantec.com, is a popular product, as is McAfee's VirusScan (www.mcafee.com).

On the server side, New Hope Telephone takes every precaution to prevent virus infection. For instance, all attachments ending in ".scr" and ".exe" are blocked at the server.

"We are very conscientious about server protection," Bright says. "We make a real effort to keep our servers secure."

Segler elected to NHTC Board of Directors

At the recent Annual Meeting, members of New Hope Telephone elected Jimmy Segler to represent the Grant exchange on the Board of Directors.

Segler retired from the cooperative in 1998 after more than 36 years of service. He spent the first 15 years as an installer repairman before moving to the engineering department.

"I helped build the co-op, and I've seen a lot of changes," Segler says. "I look forward to working with everyone here. We have a good bunch of employees who do a good job, and that's important to the success of a company."

He expressed his appreciation to everyone who supported him during the cooperative's Board elections.

Segler has one daughter,

Melissa Clay. He enjoys spending time with two-year-old grandson Jack, and he is proud of his new granddaughter, Josie, who arrived in June.



New billing format coming soon

Your bill from New Hope Telephone will soon have a new look. "We had really outgrown our bill, with all the new services we've added in recent years," says NHTC Business Office Manager Teresa Hunkapillar. "Our new equipment will produce a more user-friendly bill for our members."

The new bill is the size of a standard sheet of

paper and will feature more information about members' accounts. Members will find it easier to understand their charges with the new format.

"We expect to begin using the new bills sometime this fall," says Hunkapillar. Look for more information about the new format in an upcoming issue of *The Communicator*.

Thanks to you, we're

New Hope
Long Distance

#1

Find out why. Call today: 723-4211

NHTC seeks member input on cable upgrade

Survey responses entered into drawing for a 25" color TV

We are proud to offer quality cable service to the New Hope, Grant and Owens Cross Roads areas. The Board of Directors is committed to expanding the service to offer a wider selection of channels to our members.

Please take a moment to let us know what channels you are interested in. Using the chart to the right, **check 30 channels** you would like us to consider adding to our system.

Once completed, please **remove this entire page** and return to the New Hope Telephone office by mail or in person. **All entries will be entered into a drawing for a 25-inch color television!**

Thank you for your input. The results of this survey will help us decide which channels to begin offering.

To be eligible for the prize drawing, please return your survey before August 15. We appreciate your help.■

Cable Channel Survey

Please check up to 30 channels that interest you, then return the entire page to NHTC.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hallmark | <input type="checkbox"/> TRAVEL | <input type="checkbox"/> TBN Trinity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COURT TV | <input type="checkbox"/> TV GUIDE | <input type="checkbox"/> Sci-Fi |
| <input type="checkbox"/> C/SPAN | <input type="checkbox"/> ANIMAL PLANET | <input type="checkbox"/> CNBC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> America's Store | <input type="checkbox"/> MTV | <input type="checkbox"/> ESPN 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> C/SPAN 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> BET |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WEATHER | <input type="checkbox"/> Sundance | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TV LAND | <input type="checkbox"/> Flix | <input type="checkbox"/> Fox Sports |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GREAT AMER. CTRY. | <input type="checkbox"/> VH-1 | <input type="checkbox"/> FX |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PIN (PAX) | <input type="checkbox"/> FOOD NETWORK | <input type="checkbox"/> Gameshow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COMEDY CENTRAL | <input type="checkbox"/> CARTOON | <input type="checkbox"/> Golf |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E! | <input type="checkbox"/> MSNBC | <input type="checkbox"/> YES (Yankees) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oxygen | <input type="checkbox"/> EWTN | <input type="checkbox"/> Shop at Home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Univision | <input type="checkbox"/> Valuevision-ShopNBC | <input type="checkbox"/> EWTN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History West | <input type="checkbox"/> TurnerClassic | <input type="checkbox"/> WE Women's Ent. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BRAVO | <input type="checkbox"/> Turner South | <input type="checkbox"/> MBC Network |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WVC | <input type="checkbox"/> The Inspiration Net | <input type="checkbox"/> Access TV |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HSN | <input type="checkbox"/> HGTV | <input type="checkbox"/> Fox News |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speed Channel | <input type="checkbox"/> GoodLife | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tech TV | <input type="checkbox"/> InfoAmerica | |

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS:

New Hope Telephone Cooperative

P.O. Box 452

New Hope, Alabama 35760

Pre-sort
Standard
US POSTAGE PAID
Metro Mail
36201