

The
Communicator

Vol. 2, No. 3

June 2003



We saw you at the Annual Meeting!



I want to begin my column in this issue by saying a big THANK YOU to all our members who participated in the Annual Meeting. As I've said many times in this magazine and in everyday conversation, New Hope Telephone Cooperative is your company, and it's important for you to be involved.

While I'm extending thanks, I want to thank the employees of New Hope Telephone for another great year. As I reported at the Annual Meeting, we ended fiscal year 2002 with \$1.4 million in profit and a good, clean audit. It takes a team effort for a company to see such accomplishments, and I appreciate the hard work and dedication of all our employees.

The Board of Directors is also due recognition for their work in guiding this cooperative to another profitable year.

Where does this profit go? If New Hope Telephone was a private, investor-owned business, that money would go to shareholders across the country or anywhere in the world they might live. But because this is a cooperative, the members — you, the people who use NHTC's services every day — are the ones who benefit.

It's important to note that this money doesn't just sit somewhere in an investment fund. When I report that New Hope Telephone made a profit of \$1.4 million, that doesn't mean we have \$1.4 million stashed away in the bank.

This money is invested in things that make your cooperative more productive and better positioned to compete in the ever-changing

telecommunications industry. When you see things like new equipment, poles, lines and service trucks, you see the investment of our profit into making this a better cooperative, things that are necessary to run this business.

If you were at the Annual Meeting, you heard me talk about another important area where we invest our dollars — education and training. We frequently send employees (outside crews and office personnel) to seminars and workshops where they can strengthen their jobs skills and learn about changes in the industry.

Your Board members also seek education and training opportunities. As directors for a multi-million dollar utility, they have a tremendous responsibility to make decisions that are in the best interest of members.

Telecommunications is a very complex industry, and New Hope Telephone is committed to getting our employees and directors the education and training they need to do a good job for you — the owners of this company.

So whether we return some of the profit as capital credit refunds or invest it in equipment and training, our profit goes toward building a stronger company — and remember, that company belongs to you.

Thank you for your support of New Hope Telephone Cooperative, and for helping make this company a leader in telecommunications services in north Alabama.



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

Barry Mefford, President
New Hope Exchange

Greg Glover, Vice President
Owens Cross Roads Exchange

Jimmy Segler, Secretary
Grant Exchange

Jeff Cooper, Treasurer
New Hope Exchange

David Ayers
Grant Exchange

Johnny Cobb
New Hope Exchange

Jeff DeArmond
Owens Cross Roads Exchange

Jim Duncan
New Hope Exchange

Dennis Pence
Grant Exchange

The Communicator

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

NHTC is now contracting with Directory Publishing Solutions to produce our annual phone book. In the coming weeks, they will begin contacting area businesses about advertising in the 2004 edition. Directory Publishing Solutions is the only company authorized to sell advertising for the New Hope Telephone directory. If you have any questions, please call our office at 723-4211.

Virginia Mann remembers early days of New Hope Telephone

In July of 1953, a young lady by the name of Virginia Ruth Mann was excited about starting work at a new business in New Hope. Several visionary leaders within the community had worked hard to form a cooperative to provide telephone service in the area, and Mann was hired to help in the office.

"I was here about one month before we did a dial tone," Mann recalls. Owens Cross Roads became the first to receive phone service, with New Hope being added three days later. It would be several years before Grant would be added to the system.

In the beginning, New Hope Telephone Cooperative was housed in a small two-room office on Walnut Street. Milton Bullard was the outside plant manager, and C.V. Lee was the general manager.

Each month Mann would sit down at the manual typewriter and prepare the bills to send to customers. Initially, the company had around 365 customers, as Mann recalls, and bills averaged less than \$4 per month. Few people had long distance charges.

"I also took care of membership applications, and I took complaints," Mann says. "And if I needed to, I

mopped the floor! Just anything that came up!"

It was an eight-party system in those days, and that was the source of many complaints. "With teenagers doing homework, and courting, we had lots of complaints about the party lines," she recalls.

One incident stands out in Mann's memory. "We had one lady on a party line who stayed on it all the time," she says. "Others might as well not have had a phone. We had to disconnect her for awhile... she's the only one I remember us ever disconnecting for talking too much!"

The early days of the cooperative were not glamorous. There was only one service truck, and Mr. Lee could sometimes be found climbing poles and working on lines.

"One of the Board members paid our salaries until the co-op started making money," Mann recalls. "My starting salary was \$125 a month."

While the company struggled to get off the ground, there were also many happy times. Mann remembers the celebration when the cooperative signed up its 1,000th customer. The lucky member was given a new pink telephone.

Phone service was still such a novelty in those days that many people were uncomfortable with it. "One day a woman called," r e m e m b e r s Mann, "and said 'I needed to dust



Virginia Mann still uses one of the early phones. This single piece unit featured the dial at the bottom on the handset. To disconnect, you simply set it down on a flat surface.

my table, would it be okay to move my phone?"

Mann has seen many changes in the telecommunications industry. "One of the biggest changes was when we went from party lines to private lines," she says.

Computer technology also brought another major change, forever removing the manual typewriter from the billing process.

Mann retired in April of 1993. "I enjoyed my 40 years here," says Mann. "It had its ups and downs, but all in all I really enjoyed it.

"This co-op," she adds, "is something this community should be proud of."



Mann still has the cancelled check from her first pay day as a New Hope Telephone employee. On July 18, 1953, she was paid \$14.65 for three days.

Board elections, entertainment, reports highlight Annual Meeting

Members elect two new faces to Board of Directors

The wet weather did not stop hundreds of New Hope Telephone Cooperative members from attending the Annual Meeting on Tuesday evening, May 20, at the New Hope High School.

A total of 767 members cast their votes in the Board of Directors election. They returned David Ayers to his Place 6 position representing the Grant exchange.

Members elected Dennis Pence to his first term on the Board, representing the Grant exchange in Place 7. Jeff DeArmond was also elected as a new Board member, representing the

Owens Cross Roads exchange in Place 9.

Tom Butler, New Hope Telephone Cooperative's general manager, thanked members for attending. He also expressed his appreciation to the cooperative's employees for helping the company have a successful year.

"I also want to thank these men behind me," Butler said of the Board of Directors. "They have had to make some tough decisions this past year."

Despite the challenges in the ever-changing telecommunications industry, New Hope Telephone experienced another profitable year. Butler

reported that in 2002 New Hope Telephone made a profit of \$1.4 million, compared to \$1.1 million in 2001. He projected the company could profit as much as \$1.7 million this year.

"Our four-year long range DSL project should be complete by the end of the year," Butler reported. "If you want high-speed Internet access, you will be able to get it no matter where you live on our system."

Butler stressed this is a major accomplishment for a rural telephone cooperative. "The Public Service Commission wants companies to have high-speed Internet access to 40 percent of their customers by the end of this year," he stated. "We will have access to 100 percent of our customers."

The cooperative is also working on a calling plan that should be quite popular with New Hope Telephone members, Butler announced. For \$39.95 per month, customers will be able to make unlimited calls into the Huntsville LATA, which includes Huntsville, Madison, Cullman, Scottsboro and many other cities in the area. This plan has already been filed with the Public Service Commission, Butler explained, and should be approved soon.

Butler encouraged members to read *The Communicator* each month for news about the cooperative, promotions and new service announcements.

Several prizes were given away, including a big-screen television won by Joe Wooten of Grant. ■



SONG AND DANCE—The DAR Show Choir, directed by Natasha Tidmore, entertained the crowd with a variety of musical styles — from rock to country to patriotic tunes. These enthusiastic students share their talents at school events and community functions.



Members register to vote and hopefully win door prizes.



Volunteers count ballots in the Board of Directors election.

More scenes from the Annual Meeting



Visiting with friends.



Voting for Board members.



Grant's Joe Wooten wins a big-screen TV.



THE NEW HOPE TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS—Following the Annual Meeting, members of the Board of Directors met at the New Hope Telephone Cooperative office for a brief organizational session. During this meeting, officers for the Board were elected. From left to right are: (seated) Barry Mefford, President, New Hope Exchange; Greg Glover, Vice President, Owens Cross Roads Exchange; Jimmy Segler, Secretary, Grant Exchange; Jeff Cooper, Treasurer, New Hope Exchange; (standing) Dennis (Denny) Pence, Grant Exchange; Johnny Cobb, New Hope Exchange; Jim Duncan, New Hope Exchange; David Ayers, Grant Exchange; and Jeff DeArmond, Owens Cross Roads Exchange.

~ RECIPES ~

Fast-Frosted Angel Food Cake

ingredients:

- 1 Angel Food Cake
(homemade or purchased)
- 1 large carton whipped topping
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 1 large can pie filling

Use dental floss to split cake into two layers. With electric mixer, mix whipped topping, sugar and cream cheese until creamy. Frost cake. Pour pie filling on top, letting it drizzle down the sides of the cake. Keep chilled.

Submitted by Patsy Martin

Saucy Ladies Pasta

ingredients:

- 1/2 lb. angel hair pasta
- 1 small can diced black olives
- 8 oz. Zesty Italian dressing
- 1 cup chopped bell pepper
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 can Rotel tomatoes
- 1 tsp. pepper
- 1 tsp. salt
- 6 cherry tomatoes, sliced
- 1/2 tsp. parsley

Cook & cool angel pasta as directed on box. In a large bowl, mix olives, dressing, bell pepper, onion, tomatoes, pepper & salt. Spread pasta in a long casserole dish and pour contents of bowl on top of pasta. Mix thoroughly. Garnish with cherry tomatoes and parsley.

Submitted by Johnna Mann

Spring Photo Contest Winners



1ST PLACE - Hannah Hill, age 3 exploring Sara Warren's flower garden. Photo taken by Sharon Hill of New Hope.



2ND PLACE - Garrett Lee Dudley, age 2. Photo by Sharon Hill of New Hope.



3RD PLACE - Allison Ruth Burleson. Photo by Sara R. Burleson of New Hope.

PHOTO CONTEST: Summer is here, and we're looking for great photos that highlight the vacation season. Send your vacation photos to NHTC, and we will select winners for publication in our next issue of *The Communicator*! If your entry is selected, you'll see your photo in print, plus receive a free gift from New Hope Telephone. Deadline for entry: June 30, 2003

NOTE: Be sure to include photographer's name, address and phone number, as well as name of any people featured in your photos.

All submissions become the property of New Hope Telephone Cooperative and will not be returned. By submitting your photos: (1) you attest that you are the creator and owner of the photos, (2) you give New Hope Telephone permission to publish your material in *The Communicator*, (3) you agree to offer said photos without the expectation of payment from New Hope Telephone, and (4) you understand that photos are selected for publication in *The Communicator* at the sole discretion of New Hope Telephone, and that submission of your photo does not guarantee your photo will appear in the magazine.



New Hope Telephone represents the concerns of its members during recent trip to nation's capital

Members of New Hope Telephone's Board of Directors and management team traveled to Washington, D.C., in April to represent members at the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA) annual legislative conference.

The conference is an important event held annually to provide telecommunications professionals an opportunity to discuss industry issues with their elected officials.

Of particular concern for rural telecommunications providers is the future of the Universal Service Fund,

which helps provide the U.S. with a quality nationwide telecommunications system. Representatives of New Hope Telephone and other Alabama telephone companies discussed this issue with a number of lawmakers, including Sen. Richard Shelby, Sen. Jeff Sessions, Rep. Bud Cramer and Rep. Robert Aderholt.

"Companies moving into rural areas to compete with existing providers like New Hope Telephone shouldn't be able to subsidize their competitive operations by drawing on the Universal Service Fund," says Dewey Doss, NHTC Asst. Manager.



Those attending the NTCA Conference were (left to right) Board member Greg Glover, Asst. Mgr. Dewey Doss, and Board members Bob Layne, David Ayers, and Sonny Cantrell. Not pictured is Office Manager Teresa Hunkapiller.

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Grant Chamber of Commerce Annual Golf Tournament

June 28, 2003
at Twin Lakes in Arab
4-man scramble
Entry fee: \$200/team
Prizes for 1st & 2nd place winners



A LIVING MEMORY—The OCR Homemaker's Club, along with the Mayor, community members and employees of the town of Owens Cross Roads planted an eight-foot crepe myrtle tree at the OCR Town Hall in memory of Mr. Eugene Maples. Mr. Maples, who passed away in March, had been employed by the town for 15 years. Mr. Maples' wife Jamie, his son Billy Russel and Billy's wife Jamie were present for the planting, which took place on Earth Day 2003. Mr. Maples will always be remembered for his hard work and dedication to the town.

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