

The

# Communicator

JULY/AUGUST 2013

Published for  
customers of

**New  
Hope**  
Telephone  
Cooperative  
*Your Broadband Connection*

## **FAMILY FARM** modernized by technology

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

from NHTC's Annual Meeting

### **JUST PEACHY**

Recipes for summer fruit



## Time for FCC to count the cost

Have you ever botched a job because you got in a hurry? Maybe you cut a 2-by-4 too short because you only measured once. Or perhaps you missed that big buck because you didn't take time to aim. "Haste makes waste" can be a hard lesson learned.



Sometimes you just need to slow down. And that's the message hundreds of people who work in the telecommunications industry recently took to Washington, D.C.

NTCA's 2013 Legislative and Policy Conference was held toward the end of April. I attended the event, along with a delegation from New Hope Telephone Cooperative. We joined some 500 other NTCA members from across rural America to take your concerns to Capitol Hill.

There are hundreds of companies like NHTC in the United States that are working hard to bring advanced broadband services to rural areas — communities where the cost of providing service is much higher than in the larger cities. As you have read in these pages before, we are concerned that changes in regulations by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) are driving up the cost of delivering service to you. These changes are also making it difficult for companies like ours to predict how we will recover the cost of future investments in our networks.

In April, as we met with lawmakers and their staffs, we asked for their support in telling the FCC to slow down and count the cost. Specifically, we asked them to support a bipartisan bill that seeks greater analysis of the FCC's 2011 Universal Service Fund (USF) reforms that are limiting support for many rural providers.

The bill, sponsored by Sens. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., and Mark Begich, D-Alaska, calls on the Government Accountability Office to study the effects of the FCC's reforms, and to give us a clear idea of how broadband speeds and rates are being impacted. At times it feels like the FCC has taken a "Ready, Fire, Aim!" approach to reforming the telecommunications industry, and it is time for a comprehensive study to gauge the true effect of the agency's actions.

### YOUR VOICE HAS BEEN HEARD

In early June, NTCA informed us that the federal government is indeed listening to your voice, and that our outreach campaign was effective. The Government Accountability Office has confirmed that it will begin a study to provide answers to the questions we are all asking. Are the changes being made by the FCC actually improving broadband service in rural America? Are broadband speeds increasing? Are consumers paying more, less or the same for service? The GAO plans to report on its findings later this year.

This is an important victory for the communities we serve, for two reasons. Not only do we need to know whether the FCC's changes are good for consumers today, but we also need the facts to help lawmakers and regulators make better, more informed decisions in the future. Our grassroots efforts are paying off as we work through our national association, taking your concerns to Washington to ensure that your voice is heard. ☎

**JIM COOK**  
General Manager

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

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## The Communicator

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### On the Cover:



Childers Farms in New Hope is embracing technology and new farming methods. Read more on Page 12.

# Community Calendar

## Every Tuesday

### Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS)

New Hope City Hall

Weigh-in is between 8:30 and 9 a.m.; meeting from 9 to 10 a.m. For more information, visit [www.tops.org](http://www.tops.org) or call Linda Harris at 256-479-9628, Pansy Kimbrough at 256-723-4656 or Jean Stapler at 256-723-4738.

## New Hope Library

### July 1 – 2:30 p.m.

Learn About Lacrosse!

Presented by the Huntsville Lacrosse Association as part of the library's Summer Reading Program. For ages preschool to 5th grade.

### July 2 – 10:30 a.m.

Dance! Presented by the Alabama Youth Ballet as part of the library's Summer Reading Program. For ages preschool to 5th grade.

### July 8 – 2:30 p.m.

Operation Green Team will teach about recycling! For ages preschool to 5th grade.

### July 9 – 6 p.m.

Genealogy – Find the branches of your family tree. Don't know where to start? We can help! Come join us the second Tuesday of each month.

### July 16 – 10:30 p.m.

Mr. Krugh's Magic Show – join us for magical fun for all ages.

### July 25 – 6 p.m.

Get your game on and try lacrosse – Don't know how? No problem. Equipment will be provided. For ages 10 and up.

## NHTC Awards Scholarships

At NHTC we believe in investing in the future — not only for the sake of our cooperative, but for our members, communities and families. One way NHTC accomplishes this is through the NHTC Scholarship Program, which provides two \$500 scholarships each year to help students with college expenses.

Congratulations to the 2013 recipients of the NHTC Scholarship!



### Caroline Grace Franks

is a 2013 graduate of DAR School. At DAR, she was a member of the National Honor Society, a class officer and SGA

President. She was in the dual-enrollment program at Northeast Alabama Community College, where she plans to continue her education before transferring to Auburn University. Caroline will pursue a degree in veterinary science.



### Kaitlyn Olivia Walls

is a 2013 graduate of New Hope High School. At NHHS, she was a member of the National Honor Society, an Ala-

bama Girls State delegate, a class officer and received the DAR Good Citizen and Chieftain awards. Kaitlyn plans to attend Auburn University this fall, where she will pursue a degree in pre-pharmacy/bio-medical sciences.



## Annual clean-up day a huge success

In April, the Lions Club hosted their annual clean-up day, where volunteers removed litter from roughly 18 miles of roadway around New Hope. Enough debris was removed to fill a dump truck.

This annual event is made possible thanks to the New Hope City Council, Commissioner Eddie Sisk, Madison County DOT, Green Team, Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle and donations from many local businesses.

Please help keep the streets clean by reporting those who litter and by removing trash from roadways whenever possible.

## INSPIRATION CORNER

July elicits a groan to those not accustomed to southern summer heat, and a special day to celebrate our nation's beginning. John Adams said, "I am well aware of the toil and blood and treasure that it will cost us to maintain this Declaration, and support and defend these States. Yet through all the gloom ... I can see that the end is worth more than all the means." Follow that up with Samuel Adams' quote, "We have this day restored the Sovereign, to Whom alone men ought to be obedient. He reigns in heaven and ... from the rising to the setting sun, may His Kingdom come."

Those words could be applied to the covenant God makes with those who believe. Every signer of the Declaration of Independence expected to be caught and hung. Benjamin Harrison told Elbridge Gerry, "I shall have great advantage over you, Mr. Gerry, when we hang for what we are doing. With me, it will be over in a minute, but you'll be dancing on air an hour after I'm gone."

Many of Jesus' disciples were killed because they would not give up independence gained by believing in Christ. While a lot has changed in government leadership since 1776, one thing is for sure: those who follow Christ still pay for their treason against a sinful world, but the end is still worth more than the means. Won't you learn why in a church near you? May your summer be blessed. (Quotes taken from the book "Under God" by Toby Mac and Michael Tait).

### MICHAEL CARPENTER

Pastor of New Hope  
United Methodist Church &  
Oak Bowery United Methodist Church

## TAKING BIDS

NHTC is currently accepting bids for lawn maintenance. Contact NHTC's business office at 256-723-4211 for complete details. All bids must be submitted by close of business on Aug. 30.



# New services highlight the 2013 ANNUAL MEETING

New Hope Telephone Cooperative members were treated to music, door prizes and an update on NHTC's new fiber network when the cooperative held its Annual Meeting on May 21. Members began arriving at the New Hope Elementary/Middle School auditorium at 5 p.m. to vote in the election for board members. Singer Josh Troup of Grant entertained the crowd.

A map was on display, showing members the fiber construction and a neighborhood-by-neighborhood timeline for completion of the project. They also received information about new TV packages and new bundles that are being offered. A booth for digital literacy held information about free classes offered to help educate and teach members basic computer skills. (Watch future issues of this magazine for more details on the classes, which will include an introduction to the Internet, Microsoft Word and even how to set up wireless devices.)

Rusty Bright, network manager for NHTC, was on hand at the PC repair booth to answer questions related to computers and Internet service.

NHTC General Manager Jim Cook presented a video showing highlights of the past year and informing members of the cooperative's plans for the future. Cook told members he and his leadership team "are laser-focused on growing the business in 2013 and beyond."

Cook explained that the core foundation for that growth is the completion of the fiber-to-the-home buildout, and he laid out a three-phase plan that will extend the network to all members of the cooperative.

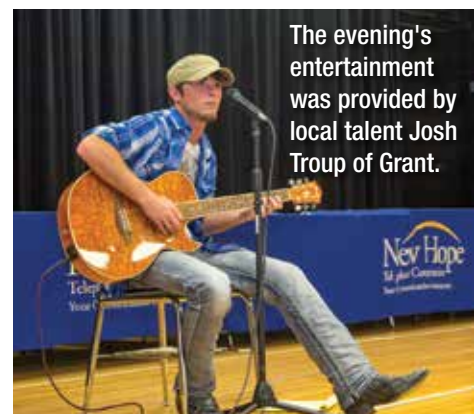
Members also learned the challenges NHTC and other television providers face with the network programming costs escalating at alarming rates with no end in sight. All the while, members are requesting more programming options. Cook



explained that while NHTC must increase prices for some television packages, the cooperative is committed to providing a better value. "We are excited to introduce members to New Hope Vision, our vision for providing greater channel selections at a greater value than ever before," he said. "We will be adding channels and more high-definition programming on both our digital TV line-up over our fiber network and our traditional CATV coaxial network. We will also be introducing new bundles that will offer additional savings by combining various products and services."

Several great door prizes were given away, including iPads, a Kindle Fire, TV sets, free services from NHTC and a \$500 grand prize.

At the conclusion of the business meeting, Greg Glover, board president, announced the election results. Members overwhelmingly voted to return Jim Duncan and Jeff Cooper to their board seats. 📞





**NHTC BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** After the business meeting, board members met to elect officers. Pictured are (Front Row, L to R): Mike Whitaker, secretary; Barry Jones, vice president; Greg Glover, president; and Jeffrey Cantrell, treasurer. (Back Row, L to R): Jim Cook, general manager; Jeff Cooper; Jimmy Segler; Jim Duncan; Garland Elders; David Ayers; and Doug Martinson, NHTC attorney.

## Madison County Cattle Family of the Year: **John Ed Butler Family**

Earlier this year, the John Ed Butler family was honored with the distinction of being named the Madison County Cattle Family of the Year by the Madison County Cattleman's Association.

Beginning in the 1850s with John Ed's great-grandfather, the family has farmed land off Poplar Ridge Road in New Hope for six generations.

John Ed's father raised cotton, corn, small grains, cattle, hogs and sheep. Upon returning to the farm after graduating from Auburn University with a degree in agricultural science, John Ed worked the grain and livestock operation while his father continued to manage the cotton and sharecropper relations.

He has raised a number of different cattle breeds over the years including Hereford, Charolais, Simmental and Angus.

John Ed also served a number of leadership roles in the community including a position as one of the original board members of New Hope Telephone Cooperative, a trustee of New Hope School and president of both the Madison County Farm Bureau and Madison County Cattleman's Association.

Today, John Ed's son, Charles, and his grandsons, Sam and Matt, operate the farm. John Ed still occasionally rides his horse over the farm and is still advising his son and grandsons on the farming operation. 🐾



Photo submitted by Regina Clonts

**THE JOHN ED BUTLER FAMILY** was named the Madison County Cattle Family of the Year at a ceremony at Trinity Methodist Church in Huntsville earlier this year. Shown are: Mr. John Ed Butler (seated). Standing (L to R): James Eaton (grandson); Brad and Alice Butler Eaton (daughter); Charles (son) and Donna Butler; Sam Butler (grandson); Matt (grandson) and Brandie Butler.



**J**D Childers has seen a lot of changes in his 89 years, from the days of the Great Depression, World War II, hand-cranked telephones and black and white televisions to air-conditioned tractors and broadband Internet.

Childers, a New Hope Telephone Cooperative member, began farming when cotton was still picked by hand and plows were pulled by mules. Now, he, his son and two grandsons drive tractors equipped with GPS systems and use the Internet to research the latest technology for no-till crops. But Childers says he doesn't long for "the good ol' days" before modern technology changed their Alabama farm.

"These are the good ol' days," he says. "You've got everything up-to-date, running water and everything like that. You can get in

touch with people without having to drive or walk somewhere. Back then, I was having to work all the time. Now I just do what I want."

All four of the men who work on the farm — JD, his son Leonard, and his grandsons, Len and Ryan — have tried other jobs such as construction and working for the TVA. But in the end, they all came back to work on the farm where they grow corn, cotton, soybeans and wheat on more than 3,000 acres.

"Farming is more enjoyable," Len says, talking about the jobs he has worked in the past. "Some years aren't as good as others, but you always hope the next year will be better."


Farming has changed a lot from the days when Leonard was a teenager and his father bought the first cotton picker for the farm.



## generations of farmers

*Using modern technology to succeed*

*By Mariann Martin*



CHILDERS FARMS - JD Childers (front row, right), his son Leonard (front row, left) and grandsons Len (back row, left) and Ryan farm about 3,000 acres of corn, cotton, soy and wheat.



**Childers Farms uses the no-till method for the wheat crop, which prevents erosion and helps retain moisture.**



In the last 15 years, the family has transitioned completely to no-till farming, which means they do not plow the fields before planting them. The method, used widely throughout the South, prevents erosion and increases the amount of organic matter in the soil.

Technology has also changed the way they plant seeds, spray for diseases and weeds, and harvest every crop. And while farming uses technology and is more of a science than it used to be, it still hinges on things that farmers can't control: plenty of rain and the right kind of weather.

The variety of crops the family grows means that if one crop doesn't do as well or prices fall, other crops make up the difference. At one point, the family grew almost no cotton because boll weevils destroyed the crops. But now, after an extensive effort, the boll weevil has been nearly eradicated, and cotton is once more a staple crop. The family has also raised livestock in the past, but doesn't have a huge variety of animals today.

JD says he doesn't use computers or the Internet very much. Instead, he leaves that part of farming to his two grandsons, who regularly research the latest farming

methods. They frequently plant test plots of the latest seeds or try out other technology, and they try to use environmentally-friendly methods of farming.

"I love what I do," Leonard says. "I like being out there in the fields, and I know what I have to get done."

As he talked about the long decades of life on the farm, JD remembered the days when people often worked 12-hour days for as little as 50 cents. Cotton sold for two or three cents a pound. His father owned a Model A Ford in those days, before the beginning of the Great Depression.

Changes first came when President Roosevelt passed the New Deal legislation and the TVA came to eastern Tennessee and northern Alabama, JD remembers.

Soon telephone lines dotted the countryside, and JD had a hand-crank phone installed. Those were the days of party lines, he says, when anyone could listen in on someone else's conversation.

"I never did," JD insists with a laugh. "My wife might have."

JD joined the military during World War II, traveled, and met his wife in Florida. Leonard grew up on the farm and left to



**"The farm equipment has computers with GPS technology that enables them to run automatically and know within six inches of where they've already been," says Ryan Childers.**

work other jobs for a while. He returned to farming full time in 1983. His two sons left to go to school, but they also returned.

"They didn't have much choice; they've been riding tractors since they were little boys," Leonard says.

Even though the methods may have changed, the satisfaction of being close to nature and watching plants grow is a miracle that is still new every day. When he hears other people talking about the "good ol' days," JD says he is just thankful for how blessed he and his family have been for so many decades.

"It's by the grace of God that we have what we have," he says. 📞



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***Hurry, this offer ends August 30, 2013!***

Not all packages available in all areas. Lineup subject to change without notice. Contact NHTC for complete details.