

October 1, 2004

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Skyline Plans to Deploy Fiber to the Home and Unveils New Corporate Logo

WEST JEFFERSON, N.C. -- During a special press conference at its corporate offices on October 1, Skyline Telephone Membership Corporation announced the company's plans to deploy fiber-to-the-home services throughout its five-county service area in the next two decades and unveiled a new corporate logo for the cooperative and its wholly-owned subsidiary, SkyBest Communications, Inc.

Skyline Chief Executive Officer John Dixon announced the company's move toward fiber deployment and the new corporate logo. "We believe our future lies in a fiber-to-the-home network," Dixon said. "Although our current backbone network is mostly fiber-based, we still rely on copper to deliver last-mile services to the home."

Over the next year, Skyline will develop a long-range plan to replace its existing copper network with fiber to include such services as video programming, video on demand and other emerging technologies. Due to recent developments and improved manufacturing processes, actual fiber deployment costs to our outside plant are now comparable to the costs of copper-based deployment.

"This network conversion will not happen overnight," Dixon said. "It will take place over a period of years, but the time to start is now." In keeping with the Skyline tradition of providing high quality telecommunications services, our plans are to offer

fiber-based video services in place of video over copper, which we have been researching and testing extensively over the last few years. We will migrate away from further deployment of copper-based broadband services, and devote our energies and resources toward the development of a fully, fiber-based network.

Dixon cited an excerpt from the executive summary of Skyline's 2004 Annual Report, in which he and Skyline President R.C. Mitchell, presented, "Fiber to the home will be the delivery vehicle for the video, entertainment and information services of the future and will reinforce Skyline's position as the carrier of choice in this new, competitive broadband world."

With a greater emphasis on corporate branding, the companies have adopted a new corporate logo. "We believe a key element to the success of the strategic plan is to reinforce the relationship of the Skyline and SkyBest brands by uniting them under a single corporate symbol," Dixon said.

Along with the new logo, an updated Web site for Skyline and SkyBest also made its debut October 1, which includes a comprehensive presentation of both companies and their products and services.

In announcing the new corporate logo for both Skyline and SkyBest, Dixon said, "Our new corporate symbol reflects our companies' honored past, our dedication to serving our members and the communities where we live and work, and our commitment to the technologies of the future."

As part of the press conference, the company also marked the official dedication of an historical exhibit housed in its corporate offices to commemorate the co-op's 53-year history.

"Our historical exhibit captures the spirit of this cooperative and symbolically ties us to

our past,” Dixon said. “You see Skyline’s footprint across the region through its progressive approach to first bring telephone service to the ‘lost provinces’ in the early 1950s to its aggressive move toward digital switching services in the 1980s to the more advanced, broadband-based services in the mid-1990s.”

Throughout its 53 years of existence, the co-op has held fast to its mission as a local, member-owned cooperative. Along with its corporate commitment toward economic development and community support, Skyline’s employees also have dedicated themselves to make area communities better through their personal involvement and charitable-sponsored activities.