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SkyLine CEO Jimmy Blevins Retires and is Honored with Building Dedication

WEST JEFFERSON, N.C.--After 32 years of service and 10 years as its Chief Executive Officer (CEO), SkyLine's Jimmy Blevins is retiring from the company, effective June 30. Following the cooperative's June Board of Directors' meeting on June 11, a special ceremony was held on the corporate campus to officially name and dedicate the Engineering Building as "The Jimmy C. Blevins Engineering & Technology Building," recognizing Blevins' long career with SkyLine and contributions he's made to the company. As the architect of the cooperative's present-day network, Blevins spent a significant part of his career working in and leading the Engineering Department.

The ceremony included remarks by SkyLine Board President R.C. Mitchell and was attended by the Board of Directors of SkyLine and SkyBest as well as senior leadership and key staff. "While Jimmy has held several titles in his 32-plus years at SkyLine, his first career passion was engineering," said Mr. Mitchell. Referencing SkyLine as a 'great company,' he added, "Great, due in part to Jimmy's vast engineering contributions toward keeping SkyLine at the forefront of technology and among the leading telecommunications cooperatives in the nation. Jimmy has been an inspiration to many employees with his tireless work ethic, his passion for improving things and his innovative mindset. May his engineering legacy continue to inspire others."

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Earlier this year, Blevins received the “Manager Life Achievement Award” from NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association for his leadership in establishing a company culture that is both forward-looking and customer-centric. During his tenure as CEO, Blevins has introduced and implemented several visionary initiatives including the concept of a “Smart Home” retail center, and under his leadership, SkyLine and SkyBest have introduced new and diversified service offerings including monitored security/medical alert, automation and surveillance, streaming TV, hosted VoIP and hosted data storage. Over the past few years, Blevins led expansion efforts to provide fiber communications services to the business communities of Lenoir, Boone and Mountain City. In more recent strategic initiatives, Blevins and his senior staff have pursued growth opportunities through the acquisition activities to secure the purchase of Chesnee Telephone Company in upstate South Carolina in 2017 through SkyBest Holdings, LLC, a subsidiary of SkyBest Communications, and a second company acquisition in 2018 of Loretto Telecom in Tennessee in 2018.

SkyLine has received multiple national awards and recognitions over the past few years specifically tied to the company’s efforts to complete a fiber-optic overbuild of its cooperative service footprint. NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association named SkyLine among the first rural-based companies in the U.S. to be certified Gig-capable, and the following year received the “Smart Rural Community (SRC) Showcase Award” for being a top-performing broadband provider and having a fiber network to support innovative economic and community development initiatives. Blevins also identified a local need that garnered a SRC grant award for using innovative technology deployments that helped Ashe Assisted Living and Memory Care in West Jefferson to enhance the level of security and care of its residents.

He and his wife Judy reside in Crumpler, and they have a son, Jacob, who is a rising senior and nuclear engineering major at N.C. State University.

About SkyLine

SkyLine Membership Corporation is a local, member-owned cooperative, established in 1951 to bring telephone service to rural residents of Alleghany, Ashe and Watauga counties. Later, the cooperative expanded its service territory to include areas of Avery County and Shady Valley,

Tennessee, when it merged with Cherokee Telephone Membership Corporation. SkyLine serves a 12-exchange network with over 27,000 access lines across a five-county area in northwest North Carolina and east Tennessee. The company has a wholly-owned subsidiary, SkyBest Communications, Inc., and it co-owns with two other cooperatives Carolina West Wireless, a regional wireless carrier operating in 11 western North Carolina counties, as well as wireless company WSS, LLC. Additionally, SkyLine owns a minority percentage of Access/On Multimedia Inc., a regional fiber transport network, which serves north-central and northwestern North Carolina.

About SkyBest

SkyBest Communications, Inc. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of SkyLine Membership Corporation. Established in 1998, SkyBest is a competitive local exchange carrier (CLEC), offering a variety of deregulated services including broadband Internet, voice and long-distance services, business and network solutions, SkyBest Security, video surveillance, automation and SkyBest TV over an expanding fiber network. In 2014, SkyBest established a subsidiary, The Video Exchange, to serve as a source for video content for TV station operators and channel owners across the U.S. Most recently, SkyBest has expanded its service territory to cover more of the Boone business community as well as Lenoir in Caldwell County and Mountain City, Tennessee. In 2017, it established a wholly-owned subsidiary, SkyBest Holding Company, LLC.

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Photo Cutlines

SkyLine CEO Jimmy Blevins is pictured with SkyLine President R.C. Mitchell at the dedication ceremony where the cooperative's engineering building was officially named the Jimmy C. Blevins Engineering & Technology Building.

With members of the SkyLine and SkyBest Board of Directors, SkyLine CEO Jimmy Blevins is honored with the Jimmy C. Blevins Engineering and Technology Building dedication ceremony.

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