

WEST KERR CURRENT

RURAL TELEPHONE COOPERATIVES LINK TO BETTER SERVE CUSTOMERS

On January 19, 2009, Hill Country Telephone Cooperative, Inc. (HCTC) and Southwest Texas Telephone Company (SWTTC) made history by linking their cable facilities to each other for the first time. Officials from both companies gathered on Ranch Road 1050 between Leakey and Utopia to oversee the final splice in the fiber-optic cable joining the two companies.

The linking of the facilities of the two companies is a byproduct of extensive construction projects by both companies as they extend fiber-optic cable farther into the countryside. The goal of both companies is to provide their customers with state-of-the-art telecommunications and broadband services, regardless of where the customer lives.

The interconnection of these two companies will allow more efficient transport of data among the customers of both companies. Over time, the diversity of routes will mean both companies will be much less vulnerable to cable cuts, flooding and other events that could interrupt service to their customers.

SWTTC was founded by Street Gilmer in 1898 as Rocksprings Telephone Company. Through the years, in addition to the original Rocksprings Exchange, the company has acquired the exchanges of Barksdale, Camp Wood, D'Hanis, Utopia and Vinegarroon. "SWTTC is committed to serving the communications and broadband services needs of the communities and people of the western Hill Country area", states SWTTC General Manager Gary Gilmer.

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SWTTC General Manager Gary Gilmer and HCTC General Manager Delbert Wilson (l to r) signify "the linking" of their respective company cable facilities in order to provide more efficient transportation of data required of broadband and other state-of-art communications services.

COOPERATIVE FUNDS \$23,100 IN SCHOLARSHIPS

Deadline Date Nearing

Hill Country Telephone Cooperative, Inc. (HCTC) is currently accepting applications for 2009 scholarships. Available to graduating high school seniors only, twenty-one scholarships of \$1,100 each will be awarded to selected recipients.

ELIGIBILITY

- graduate from high school by the end of the 2009 school year.
- have at least one parent/legal guardian who is a member of HCTC.
- plan to attend an accredited institution (college, vocational or technical school) on a full-time basis (at least 12 hours).

Legal guardianship is defined as court-ordered. Member is defined as having telephone service in the parent or legal guardian's name. Internet service does not qualify as having membership with HCTC.

HOW TO APPLY

- complete an Application for Scholarship (obtained from the high school guidance counselor or online at www.hctc.net).
- return application by March 13, 2009.

Applications received after the deadline date will not be considered.



Each year HCTC actively participates at area livestock shows in support of our rural youth. Reviewing prospective purchases at the Hill Country District Livestock Show are (l to r) Bob Trees (District #1A-Ingram); Nina Kinney (District #7-Center Point); Randy Bass (District #2-Hunt); and Ed Bastian (District #1B-Ingram).

photograph courtesy of West Kerr Current

FAUGHT COMPLETES DIRECTORS CORE CURRICULUM

Five Directors Receive Leadership Awards



Jim Faught, Director-District #4 (Doss Exchange), was recently recognized by the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA) for his completion of the Directors Core Curriculum Program. Faught was honored at a luncheon held at NTCA's Annual Meeting in Long Beach, California.

Designed specifically for directors, these seminars are offered in rotation at various NTCA meetings to expose them to the principles and concepts that will help them become highly effective members of the board. Directors of commercial companies must complete eight required courses. Directors of cooperatives must take two additional courses, "Reviewing and Updating Your Bylaws" and

"Understanding Capital Credits", which are deemed essential to understanding their role as members of the Cooperative's Board.

Faught is also one of five HCTC directors recently recognized by NTCA with an Excellence in Leadership (EIL) Certificate for their outstanding commitment to telecommunications and leadership education. They are Robert Trees (District #1A-Ingram), Randy Bass (District #2-Hunt), James W. Haynie (District #3-Mt. Home & Garven Store); and Charles Loeffler (District #5-Fredonia, Katemcy, Pontotoc and Streeter). EIL awards are presented to NTCA member directors, managers and other telco employees who attend nine or more NTCA educational seminars and conferences during three or fewer consecutive calendar years.



It's new! It's exciting!
And every 3rd Saturday of the month you too can compete in online gaming tournaments with other participants from around the world! It's all FREE from Hill Country Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Check out games such as **Command & Conquer: RedAlert 3** and other details at our website.

www.hctc.net

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'Lo' and behold! The Internet turns 40

The message wasn't anything like "What hath God Wrought?" or "Come here, Watson, I want you." According to Professor Leonard Kleinrock, "We weren't that smart." On October 29, 1969, programmers at the University of California (UCLA), under the direction of Kleinrock, were to type in "log", and Stanford Research Institute (SRI) in Menlo Park, California, would reply "in". The UCLA programmers only got as far as "lo" before the SRI machine crashed, thus, the first recorded message on the Internet.



Representing HCTC at the 2009 TSTCI Legislative Conference in Austin, Texas, were (l to r) John Ivy, Gordon Purl, Delbert Wilson, Alan Link, Eric Lantz, Roger Ayala, Larry Pechacek and Lorna Weiershausen. The Texas Statewide Telephone Cooperative, Inc. (TSTCI) is a state coalition that represents the interests of rural telephone cooperatives and companies. This year's annual conference was the largest with more than 60 attendees representing 22 Texas rural telephone cooperatives and companies. Together, they 'swept' the Texas Capitol on February 3, making contact with all 150 state representatives and 31 senate offices of which HCTC visited a total of 28 offices.

EXPANDED LOCAL CALLING PASSES IN FRIO CANYON EXCHANGE

Expanded Local Calling (ELC) Service between the Frio Canyon and Uvalde exchanges has been approved by the Public Utility Commission of Texas. The new 'local' calling area, which was voted on and passed by members of HCTC's Frio Canyon Exchange, will allow residents and businesses to call anywhere in the Uvalde Exchange without incurring long-distance charges.



This expanded toll-free calling initiative comes in response to a petition received from several Frio Canyon Exchange members. Effective upon implementation of this new service, HCTC will impose a monthly rate of \$1.74 per telephone number for residential service and \$3.49 per telephone number for business service, in addition to regular monthly charges.

Frio Canyon members also petitioned for Expanded Local Calling to Kerrville and Sabinal. Requiring at least a 70 percent passage rate, Kerrville and Sabinal both failed with passage rates of only 62.2 and 55.04 percent, respectively. Uvalde narrowly passed with an approval rate of 70.05 percent. The deadline for implementation of ELC Service from Frio Canyon to Uvalde is April 15, 2009.

IMPORTANT SECURITY NOTICE

HCTC does **NOT** solicit its members for personal information via email or telephone. Personal information includes name, address, telephone number, email address, user name and/or password, credit card numbers, bank account information, and social security or driver license information. Please protect your privacy by **REFUSING** to provide such personal information to anyone who contacts you by email or telephone claiming to represent HCTC.

Rural Telephone cont.

HCTC's service area was formed by a small group of men in 1951 and included Mason, Gillespie and Kerr counties. Today, HCTC is the third largest telephone cooperative in the state of Texas, serving 15 exchanges in 14 counties with over 3,500 square miles of rugged Hill Country terrain. "Realizing the importance of broadband availability in an ever-changing telecom environment", according to General Manager Delbert Wilson, "HCTC sees investing in our network as an investment in the rural economic development of our area, bringing untold future benefits, opportunities and services to the residents and communities of the Hill Country area".



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PLANT MODERNIZATION PROGRAM AIMED TO MEET CONSUMER NEEDS

New DSL Speeds Announced

As our plant modernization project continues to progress, the availability of DSL throughout our service area also continues to expand. Chances are DSL is now available at your location. And HCTC is pleased to announce the following new plans. Simply contact one of our CSRs who will be happy to quickly verify if DSL is available at your location and assist you with a plan that best suits your needs.

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Value (up to 512kb/256kb) – Best choice for Internet users who are more serious about emails and surfing the web.

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Come visit us at the **HILL COUNTRY HOME SHOW** on March 7 and 8 at the Inn of the Hills Conference Center. And don't forget to **register** for some **great prizes!**

Win **CONCERT TICKETS** to see **ELTON JOHN** and **BILLY JOEL FACE 2 FACE** at the AT&T Center on March 21. Sign-up on March 9-13 (8am-5 pm) or on March 14 (11 am-1 pm) at our Ingram Business Office. Two tickets will be given away to one lucky person.....brought to you **LIVE....by RevFM.....from HCTC.....on March 14.** Come enjoy free **hotdogs, drinks, prizes, music and more!**



Patty Feagan

Bob Harris

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