Area high school seniors whose parents are telephone service subscribers of SkyLine Membership Corporation and SkyBest Communications may apply for the 2013 Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) Scholarship and the FRS Staurulakis Family Scholarship. FRS was established in 1994 by the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA), of which SkyLine is a member. The FRS promotes, educates and advocates rural telecom issues in order to sustain and enhance the quality of life within communities throughout rural America. Through its various programs and initiatives, the foundation strongly supports the continuing education of rural youth.

This year, 30 one-time, $2,500 scholarships will be awarded to rural high school seniors: one per geographic region of the NTCA membership and one to a student sponsored by a NTCA associate member. The remaining 19 awards will be distributed proportionate to the number of applications received per region. FRS will fund $2,000 of each scholarship, with the sponsoring cooperative of each winning student providing a $500 match.

According to the FRS, more than two-thirds of rural Americans with postsecondary degrees never return to their rural communities, so this program gives particular emphasis to those students who plan to return to their community following college. Other eligibility requirements include the following:

- Applicants must be children of SkyLine members or SkyBest customers who subscribe to either company's telephone services.
- Applicants must be graduating from high school this year and reside full-time with their parent(s) in the companies' service area.
- Applicants must have at least a "C" grade-point-average (GPA). FRS scholarships will be awarded to deserving students whose academic credentials fall within an average to above-average range.
- Applicants must be accepted to an accredited two- or four-year college, university or vocational-technical school.
- Applicants must express an interest to return to a rural community following graduation.
- Applications must be sponsored by SkyLine, an NTCA-member company.

A new scholarship established last year by Manny and Leo Staurulakis of John Staurulakis, Inc. will be awarded in conjunction with the FRS Scholarship. The FRS Staurulakis Family Scholarships will provide four $5,000 awards and will give preference to students with an interest in science, math, medicine or engineering. In addition to the FRS Scholarship, all applicants with a focus in the sciences will be automatically considered for the new FRS Staurulakis Family Scholarship.

Scholarship applications are available at all area high school guidance departments and at SkyLine Customer Service Centers in West Jefferson, Seven Devils and Sparta. Scholarship information and application forms also may be accessed through SkyLine's website (www.skyline.org). Completed applications must be submitted to SkyLine's corporate offices by Friday, February 15. All applicants must be sponsored by SkyLine, and completed applications received by this deadline will be signed by a SkyLine official and submitted to the FRS for consideration by the March 1 postmark deadline.

If any SkyLine-sponsored students are named winners, they will be announced in May. Since 2006, nine area students have received FRS Scholarships, including Kaylan Lewis of Ashe County, who was named a winner in 2012.

For more information about these national scholarships, please contact Karen Powell, SkyLine Public Relations Administrator, at SkyLine's corporate offices at (800) 759-2226.
Based in West Jefferson, SkyLine Membership Corporation is a member-owned cooperative which provides a variety of telecommunications services to customers in Alleghany, Ashe, Avery and Watauga counties in North Carolina and Johnson County in east Tennessee. Along with its current focus of building a fiber-to-the-premise (FTTP) network, SkyLine is committed to enhancing the quality of life across the region through various charitable, educational and economic development programs. Its wholly-owned subsidiary, SkyBest Communications, offers de-regulated products and services, including local calling services, business systems and networking solutions, broadband Internet services, long-distance, security systems and digital TV service.