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Pineland Telephone Cooperative Holds 70th Annual Meeting

“Your participation in this annual meeting is a vital part of the operation of Pineland, and we are pleased you made the time to be here”, began Chief Executive Officer, Dustin Durden.

“Thankfully we have moved past one of the worst times in our country’s recent history and there’s no reason to continue to discuss it. It is important, however, that we discuss the impacts and opportunities that lie before us now that this period has passed.” The 70th Annual Meeting of Pineland Telephone Cooperative, Inc., held on June 9th at the Metter PreK-8 Complex, welcomed over 215 registered members.

“Over a decade ago, the board of Pineland Telephone Cooperative made the commitment to its members to bring robust broadband to rural areas such as Metter, Twin City, Midville, Bartow, and Davisboro,” states Durden. Pineland did the hard work long before the many government funding opportunities offered today were even thought of, but by completing the fiber to the home project in 2018, we are not eligible for the funding support recently made available. “Simply put, we did our jobs too well.”

In his President’s Report, Mark Bland acknowledged the strength behind Pineland’s success, “Quality here at Pineland is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, and skillful execution.”

Based on the most recent data estimate, over 482,000 homes in Georgia lack access to a very minimal level of internet service. Earlier this year, Governor Kemp announced over \$408 million in grants awarded to telecommunication providers to aid in the delivery of reliable broadband services to underserved areas in the state. Pineland, along with its respective partners, was the recipient of two awards which has allowed for the securing of projects in the areas of Jenkins County and Sumter County. Although unsuccessful in securing a grant for expansion in Emanuel County, Pineland will be proceeding with the development of its fiber network to serve the remaining portion of the county, making it 100% gigabit enabled. “Pineland’s extraordinary employees have focused on planning for multiple projects here locally and throughout the state to continue to provide much needed broadband to underserved communities,” Bland remarked. “Pineland was able to garner these grants more than any other provider because of our stellar reputation in providing unmatched service.”

“These three projects will bring much needed service to nearly 9,000 unserved homes and businesses in rural Georgia which will be life changing for those communities,” stated Durden.

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“I am extremely grateful to Governor Kemp for his commitment to rural Georgia and for his willingness to invest these awards into those that have shown the track record of success like Pineland. “

During the meeting, three directors were re-elected, unopposed, to serve Pineland Telephone Cooperative, Inc. for another three-year term. Brinson Lanier (Northeast Metter) will represent District 7, Carson Cross (Midville Northeast Emanuel County) will represent District 4, and Will Donaldson (Lexsy and Oak Park) will represent District 1.

The entertainment for this year was delivered by singer/songwriter and Vidalia native Justin Dukes, who was accompanied by Pineland’s own Casey Yarbrough on the Caj’on. The duo performed a combination of classic covers and original works to an enthusiastic audience.

Ten employees were recognized for their achievement in years of service: Sidney Rhoney (35 years), Chad Tapley (25 years), Stewart Jarrell (25 years), Toby Tobin (20 years), John Olsen (20 years), Audra Lee (15 years), Richard Lee (10 years), Denny Newham (5 years), Heidi Miles (5 years), and Kevin Beasley (5 years).



L to R: Sidney Rhoney (35), Denny Newham (5), Chad Tapley (25), John Olsen (20), Toby Tobin (20), Richard Lee (10), Kevin Beasley (5), Audra Lee (15), and Heidi Miles (5)

Pineland

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Pineland serves over 1,300 square miles with its traditional Phone and Internet services in all or parts of ten counties in South Georgia. In its 71st year, 100% of Pineland's Phone and Internet customers receive their services via a dedicated Fiber-to-the-Home network offering Gigabit enabled broadband connections. Pineland's mission is to offer an outstanding customer experience through the efficient delivery of progressive technology solutions in the markets served. We will achieve this mission by applying our Core Values of Excellence, Integrity, Innovation, and a Servant's Heart in everything we do.

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