

March 24, 2006

For Immediate Release  
CONTACT:

Karen P. Powell, Public Relations Manager  
SkyLine Membership Corporation  
336-982-3800, ext. 6117  
[Karen.powell@SkyLine.org](mailto:Karen.powell@SkyLine.org)

### **SkyLine Receives “Above & Beyond” Award from ESGR**

SkyLine Membership Corporation was one of 64 North Carolina employers to receive the “Above and Beyond” award from the North Carolina Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR).

Presented during a special program held in late January in the Speedway Club at Lowe’s Motor Speedway in Concord, the award is presented to the top 10 percent of employers who hire Guardsmen and Reservists in North Carolina. Selection is based on information supplied by Guardsmen or Reservists who work for selected companies.

The Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is an agency within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. The committee was established by Presidential Executive Order in 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding between Reserve component members and their civilian employers and to assist in resolution of conflicts arising from an employee’s military commitment. Today ESGR operates through a network of more than 4,500 volunteers in 55 committees located in each state, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Europe. The North Carolina ESGR Committee is tasked to promote understanding of the National Guard and Reserve with both Public and Private Sector employers.

SkyLine’s award was based on a nomination by one of its employees, Joe Taylor. Taylor

- more -

is a Field Services Technician in SkyLine's Service Operations Department. He and another employee, Tim Stamper, a Staking Engineer in SkyLine's Outside Plant Engineering Department, served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon of the 1450<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company in the N.C. National Guard, which was deployed to Iraq from January 2004 to May 2005.

SkyLine was noted for its support of the two employees, whose positions and benefits were held for them while in service.

“When we were given orders to be deployed, the support from our employer and fellow employees was tremendous,” said employee Joe Taylor. “Our management team made sure we understood that we had nothing to worry about while we were gone. Our jobs were secure, plus our package of benefits would be taken care of. Also, we were assured that if our families needed anything while we were gone, SkyLine would be the first ones there to help.”

The company and its employee-funded crisis relief program—Project Teamwork—purchased needed cabin cots for members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon. Project Teamwork also sponsored a benefit motorcycle run to raise money for the Family Support Group of the 1450<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company. At that event, employees, family and friends had the opportunity to videotape messages to the soldiers of the 1450<sup>th</sup>. SkyLine employees also sent numerous letters of support and care packages to the two servicemen while they were in Iraq.

Taylor was accompanied by SkyLine Human Resource Manager Angie Miller and his immediate supervisor, Brent Keith, to receive the ESGR award. The award was presented to SkyLine by General Dan K. McNeill, Commanding General of the U.S. Army Forces Command. A native of Warsaw, North Carolina, General McNeill serves as commander of all active and reserve forces stationed in the continental United States, and he leads the 750,000 soldiers of the nation's largest Army command, which consists

of active and U.S. Army Reserve conventional forces and includes oversight of the training and readiness of the Army National Guard.

SkyLine is a member-owned cooperative, providing a variety of telecommunications services to its members in Alleghany, Ashe, Avery and Watauga counties in North Carolina, and Johnson County in east Tennessee. Along with its current plans 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 and initiatives. Its wholly-owned subsidiary, SkyBest Communications, offers de-regulated products and services, including local calling services, business systems solutions, broadband Internet services and long distance.