

Pineland broadband

B U L L E T I N

Pineland Telephone Achieves Operation IFAST Certification

Demonstrating Commitment to Combating Human Trafficking

Pineland Telephone proudly announces it has achieved Operation IFAST Certification, a designation awarded to companies that demonstrate a deep commitment to combating domestic sex trafficking through employee training, community collaboration, and financial investment.

Operation IFAST stands for Internet Service Providers Fight Against Sex Trafficking and is a national initiative led by Guardian Group, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing and disrupting the sex trafficking of women and children across the United States. Through IFAST Certification, companies commit to three core pillars: training employees to recognize and report trafficking indicators, connecting local law enforcement with Guardian Group’s advanced analytical resources, and investing annually to fund Guardian Group’s mission.



By completing the rigorous certification process, Pineland joins a growing network of companies nationwide that are taking proactive steps to protect vulnerable populations and strengthen their communities.

“At Pineland, serving our communities means more than providing technology services. Through Operation IFAST Certification, we are equipping our employees, supporting law enforcement, and partnering with Guardian Group to help combat human trafficking. We are proud to take an active role in protecting the communities we serve.” — Dustin Durden, Chief Executive Officer, Pineland Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Jeff Keith, CEO and Founder of Guardian Group, praised Pineland TelCo for its leadership and impact: “IFAST Certification represents more than awareness; it reflects action, accountability, and leadership. Companies like Pineland TelCo are proving that the private sector can play a powerful role in disrupting trafficking and protecting the most vulnerable. Their commitment directly fuels real-world impact, and we are honored to partner with them.” Through its IFAST commitment, Pineland TelCo has trained its workforce, established local law enforcement connections with Guardian Group’s free analytical resources for trafficking cases, and invested \$1,591 annually to support Guardian Group’s national efforts. To learn more about Operation IFAST and IFAST Certification, visit www.guardiangroup.org/operation-ifast.

SUMMER FREEDOM
for them

PEACE OF MIND
for you

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FRIDAY JULY 3RD



Kersey and Gay Selected to Serve as Pineland's 2026 Youth Tour Representatives

Pineland Telephone Cooperative, Inc. is proud to announce the selection of Katelyn Kersey and William Gay as its 2026 Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) Youth Tour Representatives. These outstanding students are currently representing the Cooperative during the FRS Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.

Since 1995, the FRS Youth Tour has provided high school students from rural America with the opportunity to visit the nation's capital, observe government in action, and learn about rural telecommunications.

Students are selected based on their demonstrated leadership in their community through volunteer activities, their academic accomplishments, their insightful essays on broadband in rural America, and recommendations from their high school educators and counselors.



William Gay and Katelyn Kersey at George Washington's Mount Vernon

Katelyn Kersey, the daughter of Ryan Kersey and Karen Kersey, is a rising senior at Swainsboro High School. She is actively involved in Future Farmers of America (FFA), Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), Student Council, and serves as a football cheerleader.

Outside of school, Katelyn dedicates much of her time to serving her community through her church and Weekend Blessings of Swainsboro. Her commitment to service and leadership reflects her desire to make a positive impact on those around her and demonstrates the qualities that make her an excellent representative for the Youth Tour program.

William Gay, the son of Jeremy and Natalie Gay of Matthews, is a rising junior at Thomas Jefferson Academy. He is an active participant in the school's Varsity Football and Varsity Shotgun teams and is a member of the Beta Club.

In addition to his school activities, William is involved with Stevens Creek Church and enjoys opportunities to serve and grow through his faith community. His dedication to academics, athletics, and community involvement exemplifies the leadership and character celebrated by the Youth Tour program.

"We're proud to sponsor Katelyn and William as they represent our community on this year's tour," said Pineland Telephone CEO Dustin Durden. "Both students have demonstrated leadership, commitment, and a desire to serve others. We know they will gain valuable experiences and insights during their time in our nation's capital."

During the weeklong program, participants meet with peers from rural communities across the country, learn about the telecommunications industry, and experience firsthand the history and workings of the federal government.