

BUSINESS

# connections



Green Mountain Solar  
is Making Vermont  
Cleaner and Greener



To mitigate the spread of COVID-19, our business offices will be closed to customer access until further notice. Our Customer Service and Technical Support staff will still be available by phone, email, and online chat.

**OFFICE LOCATIONS:**

Waitsfield Business Office  
3898 Main Street, Waitsfield

Hinesburg Branch Office  
14 Thorn Bush Rd, Hinesburg

**BUSINESS HOURS:**

Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

**BUSINESS TEAM:**

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802-496-8554, kmerchant@wcvt.com

**Kurt Gruending**  
V.P. Marketing and Business Development  
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# BUSINESS connections

**It hasn't been business as usual for any business this spring.** The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted virtually every aspect of daily life—working, traveling, shopping, socializing, and more. Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT) is doing everything we can to keep our customers connected and our communities safe.

In light of social distancing, phone and internet services has become even more vital, and you can count on WCVT for robust solutions to meet your communications needs. On page 3, we share **FAQ on Hosted IP Phone Service**, our internet-based phone solution.

You'll find a **Business Spotlight on Green Mountain Solar** on pages 4 and 5. One of the leading solar businesses in Vermont, Green Mountain Solar uses our Hosted IP Phone Service for flexible call management capabilities. Be sure to check out the benefits this business has to offer, whether you're considering solar at home, at work, or both.

On page 6, we share with you an honor bestowed on my mother for her many years of leadership at WCVT and in the industry. Learn more by reading **Eleanor Haskin Inducted Posthumously into ITPA Telephone Hall of Fame.**

We wrap up this issue of *Business Connections* on page 7 with **WCVT in the Community.** Due to COVID-19, some community events have been cancelled and more plans may change in the weeks and months ahead. But through it all, I'm confident our communities will work together for the common good.

Please let us know how we can help.



Sincerely,

*Eric Haskin*

Eric Haskin

President & CEO

Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom



# FAQ on Hosted IP Phone Service



WCVT's Hosted IP Phone Service uses Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology that runs on our state-of-the-art managed network. This enables you to use one connection for all of your internet and phone needs.

## How does VoIP technology work?

VoIP converts the voice signal from your telephone into a digital signal that can travel over the internet.

## What are the main benefits of WCVT's Hosted IP Phone Service?

Our Hosted IP Phone Service is a great replacement for a traditional phone system. The benefits include:

- **Reduced Capital Investment** – Unlike on-premise phone systems, there's no huge upfront investment in expensive hardware.
- **Low, Predictable Costs** – We maintain and enhance the service for you, so there are no surprise maintenance, upgrade, or replacement costs.
- **Easy Self-Management** – Users can perform their own Moves, Adds, and Changes (MACs) via an intuitive web portal, eliminating the expense of service calls when you have employee moves or changes.
- **Flexibility to Meet Your Growing Needs** – The infrastructure can grow as your business grows; there are no limits to adding users, sites, and features.
- **A Secure and Reliable Solution** – Our network will automatically handle calls and messages during power outages. In case of disaster, employees can forward calls to home or mobile phones.
- **Mobility Options for Remote or Home Workers** – Employees can easily and seamlessly connect to your Hosted IP Phone Service over their home broadband connection and enjoy the same office features.

## Does Hosted IP Phone Service make sense for a small business?

It absolutely does. With its flexibility and scalability, Hosted IP Phone Service can be a smart choice for a small "mom and pop" business all the way up to a large enterprise. What's more, its professional features can help a small business appear larger to its callers.

## MEET OUR HOSTED IP TEAM

When your business uses one of WCVT's Hosted IP products—such as Hosted IP Phone or Business Class Wi-Fi services—you benefit from an expert team behind the advanced technology.

The WCVT Hosted IP team includes:

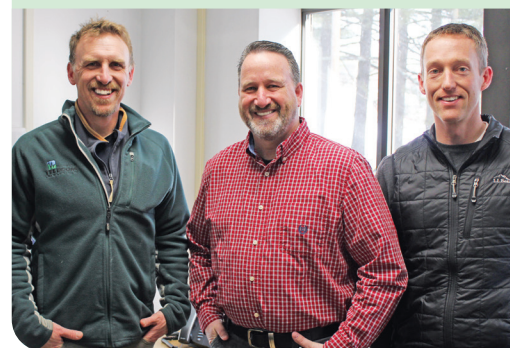
- **Dan Fuller**  
Business Systems Project Supervisor
- **Nick Sterner**  
Business Systems Specialist
- **Kris Merchant**  
Sales Manager
- **Trevor Gaylord**  
Business System Specialist 1

This team is responsible for the overall coordination of project resources in support of WCVT's Hosted products as well as wiring installations. They plan and organize all aspects of complex projects from inception to conclusion. This helps to provide excellent customer service by building and maintaining productive working relationships with WCVT's customers, suppliers, contractors, and vendors.

## Have questions or need support for your Hosted IP Phone Service?

Email the team at [HPBX@corp.wcvt.com](mailto:HPBX@corp.wcvt.com) or call 802.496.8309.

*(L to R), Business Systems Specialist; Dan Fuller, Business Systems Project Supervisor; Kris Merchant, Sales Manager; and Nick Sterner, Business Systems Specialist (Not pictured; Trevor Gaylord)*





# Green Mountain Solar

*When you look up, the future looks bright for Vermont*

Vermont has a goal of being 90 percent renewable by 2050. Green Mountain Solar is doing its part to help meet that goal by providing the best solar experience in Vermont for residential, commercial, and municipal customers.

Located in the Williston area, Green Mountain Solar is one of the leading solar businesses in the state. One way it distinguishes itself from competitors is through a strong, long-term commitment to treating customers well.

## High Quality, Not High Pressure

General Manager Paul Lesure said, “Green Mountain Solar will never engage in high-pressure sales tactics or play pricing games. We work as your consultants to find the best solar solution for your needs and offer you a great deal right from the start. We consistently receive praise from customers about our helpful and friendly staff. They appreciate the fact that we do what we say we’re going to do.”

Green Mountain Solar carefully selects top-tier products including solar panels, inverters, ground trackers, and energy storage.

All installations are performed by its knowledgeable and experienced in-house staff—never by subcontractors—and are covered by an industry-best workmanship guarantee of 12 years.

## Virtual Site Visits

Normally the process for exploring a solar project would begin with an in-person meeting to discuss specific requirements. However, due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation, Green Mountain Solar is offering virtual site visits instead.

“The well-being of our communities is our top priority. We’re doing most of our conversations with customers over the phone, followed by a ‘zero contact’ virtual site visit to take measurements. With so many people stuck at home now, it can be a good time to research solar. It’s one of the few home investments that pays you back almost immediately,” noted Lesure.

*The WCVT sales team was spot on in helping us determine our phone needs and the best solutions for us, and their tech team walked through our office to check out all the details before installing Hosted IP Phone Service.”*

— PAUL LESURE, GENERAL MANAGER, GREEN MOUNTAIN SOLAR

To keep the staff of Green Mountain Solar connected to each other and to the community, no matter where the day takes them, the business relies on Hosted IP Phone Service from WCVT.

### WCVT Connections

Lesure said, “Hosted IP Phone Service was something I was looking for instead of traditional phone service. We need the flexibility to be able to answer phone calls in our office or remotely through the phone app, and Hosted IP gives us that. It’s important to us at Green Mountain Solar to make sure someone is always there to answer the phone, since that contributes to delivering the best possible customer experience.”



What does he think of the customer service provided by WCVT? He replied, “They’ve been great to us. The WCVT sales team was spot on in helping us determine our phone needs and the best solutions for us, and their tech team walked through our office to check out all the details before installing Hosted IP Phone Service. We recently moved to a larger office, and the WCVT techs did a walk through again to make sure our new space had everything we needed. We’ve loved being WCVT customers, and we’ve experienced no pause in service since our relationship with them began.”

### From Looking Sunny to Saving Money

Speaking of phone calls, Lesure shared an observation regarding the days the office has higher call volume. “When the sun shines, people tend to call us more,” he noted. That makes sense, since seeing the sun shine brightly is a reminder of its powerful energy.

Weather aside, there are three main benefits of solar that encourage homeowners to call Green Mountain Solar for more information:

- **Savings** – You can reduce energy costs and lock in a fixed rate on a portion of your electricity bill for the next 20-25 years.
- **Higher home values** – Studies show that homes with solar panels sell faster and for more money than those without.
- **A cleaner Vermont** – Using solar energy reduces your carbon footprint.  
(Check out the sidebar on the right for additional solar benefits for businesses.)

To learn more, visit [www.greenmtnsolar.com](http://www.greenmtnsolar.com) or call 802-369-9149.

## SOLAR IS A GREAT INVESTMENT FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Paul Lesure, General Manager of Green Mountain Solar, wanted readers of *Business Connections* to know why an investment in solar energy makes so much sense.

“Solar energy is one of the best investments in your company’s future and its bottom line. It lets you control your electric costs by producing your own power and turn that expense into an investment. You start out with an electric cost similar to what you’re paying now, then over time, you’ll save money. What’s more, solar panels last 25 years or longer,” Lesure explained.

He added, “Using solar also provides marketing advantages, since many customers want to do business with a cleaner, greener company.”

A common misconception is that solar is really expensive and requires a big upfront investment. Lesure said that’s not true: “There are federal and state tax incentives, and financing is available. Solar is affordable.”

Every business has different energy needs, so Lesure encourages local businesses to contact Green Mountain Solar to schedule a free site visit.



## WELCOME NEW BUSINESSES

When you buy local (and dine local, play local, and give local), everyone benefits. It improves our local economy, creates more local jobs and opportunities, and retains the unique character of our local communities.

Please support these new businesses by welcoming them to your community and doing business with them whenever possible.

### 151 Warehouse

Waitsfield – 496-3100

### Bokay

Warren – 496-4362

### Bristol Downtown Community Partnership

Bristol – 453-8575

### Evolution Building Company

Charlotte – 425-5595

### Gemini Properties

Charlotte – 425-5815

### Green Mountain Hay

Charlotte – 425-5833

### ScuttleShip Farm

Panton – 475-3717

### Valleywide Veterinary Services, Inc.

Bridport – 758-6888

### Vermont Food Collaborative

New Haven – 453-4333



# Waitsfield's Eleanor Haskin

## Inducted into ITPA Telephone Hall of Fame

Eleanor G. Haskin, former owner of Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom, has been inducted (posthumously) into the Independent Telecom Pioneer Association's (ITPA) Telephone Hall of Fame, which recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the independent telecommunications industry. She is only the second woman inducted into the Telephone Hall of Fame and its 103rd inductee.

Eleanor passed away in 2015 at the age of 83. She was the daughter of the late Alton and Eunice F. (Buzzell) Farr and was a 1950 graduate of Waitsfield High School. Eleanor continued her education at the University of Rochester (NY) Eastman School of Music, graduating in 1957. She always said getting into the phone business was easy—she was born into it and learned the industry and business from its infancy. When her father, Alton Farr, died in 1940, the sole ownership of Waitsfield-Fayston Telephone Company passed to Eleanor's mother, Eunice. In 1959, when Eunice's health started to decline, Eleanor and her husband, Dana Haskin, took over daily operations. This change ushered in a new era of progress and leadership at the phone company.

The breadth of Eleanor's industry involvement spanned over 50 years, before she "retired" in 2005. She was active in many state, regional, and national organizations in the independent phone industry, became the first female president of the Telephone Association of New England (TANE), and was the first woman inducted into the TANE Hall of Fame. In addition, Eleanor's voice was heard on the national level through the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telephone Companies (OPASTCO). In 1980, she was elected OPASTCO's President, the first woman to lead a national telephone industry association.



In 2005, Eleanor turned the reigns over to her sons Eric and Gregg Haskin. Gregg passed away in 2018. Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom is now in its third generation of family ownership with Eric Haskin serving as president/CEO. Today, Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom is a progressive and innovative company offering a variety of telecommunication options. This is a result of Eleanor's vision and business acumen.

With Eleanor Haskin's induction into the ITPA Telephone Hall of Fame, her legacy in this industry can now be considered complete.

# WCVT in the Community

*Being a local business means that our customers are also our neighbors and friends. Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom feels strongly that community involvement isn't just a nice thing to do; it's the right thing to do. Here's a look at some recent activities.*

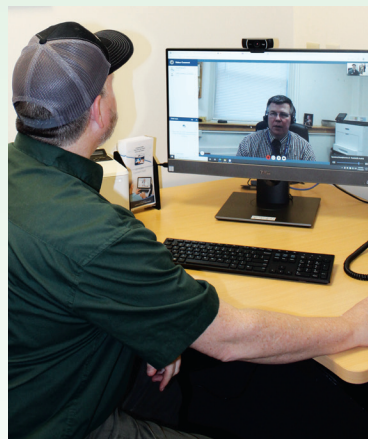


## WCVT Works with Community Partners to Open Virtual Living Room®

The American Legion Post 19 in Bristol, Vermont, is now the proud home of the nation's second Virtual Living Room®, a place where veterans can use a robust fiber-optic broadband connection to easily access Veterans Administration (VA) telehealth services with their VA healthcare provider.

We all know getting convenient access to telehealth services can sometimes be a challenge for our veterans in rural communities. The Virtual Living Room inside the American Legion Post 19 is a comfortable and private space for them to go for telehealth appointments.

Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT) equipped the Virtual Living Room with a high-speed, fiber-optic internet connection capable of speeds up to one gigabit per second. According to Eric Haskin, President/CEO of WCVT, "We are very proud to be working with our community partners to support our local veterans here in Vermont. I served in the United States Navy aboard the aircraft carrier USS Constellation (CV-64) and understand firsthand the challenges our veterans face. This is one way we can give back to our local communities and support our veterans by leveraging our gigabit fiber-optic network to help provide access to the VA's ever-expanding telehealth initiatives."



The Virtual Living Room was made possible through an innovative partnership between WCVT, the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS), CoBank, the White River Junction VA Healthcare System, and the American Legion Post 19. This collaboration is a perfect example of how crucial community partnerships are in meeting the needs of veterans in our rural communities.

## WCVT Will Support Many Local Events This Summer

Year after year and season after season, WCVT demonstrates our commitment to the communities we serve through our community relations programs and our support of local events. We are proud to sponsor the following events which will hopefully take place this summer (barring cancellations or postponements tied to COVID-19):

- Addison County Fair & Field Days
- Movies in the Park - Bristol
- Summer Concerts in the Park - Hinesburg
- Richmond 4th of July
- Vermont Festival of the Arts



# Meet Our Business Sales Team

WCVT is committed to moving your business forward with a comprehensive line of communications solutions. Our Business Sales Team is ready to discuss your needs and recommend the right combination of services to help increase efficiency and productivity.



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