

BUSINESS

connections



Mad River Valley Chamber Helps Businesses Stay Afloat

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Our community will get through this together. The pandemic has shone a light on the importance of community relationships. We all need to help each other in order to navigate the unprecedented challenges our businesses face.

Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT) has always placed a high value on forming strong relationships within the community, and our commitment has only intensified since COVID-19 entered our world. On pages 4 and 5, you'll find a **Business Spotlight on the Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce**—an excellent example of an organization whose members are working together for the good of all.

In light of our changing business routines, it's a good time to take a look at your communications services to see if additions or updates could enhance efficiency. We feature two articles in this issue about WCVT solutions. On page 3, you'll learn **It's Easy to Like Business-Class Wi-Fi**. On page 6, we share resources that enable you to **Work at Home More Easily and Productively**.

Page 7's **WCVT in the Community** celebrates good news and encourages us to support one another. We announce the students who received Eunice B. Farr Incentive Award Scholarships, welcome new businesses to our community, and tentatively look forward to some local events this summer.

I'm honored to be part of this community and inspired by the hard work and dedication I see around me. Remember, you're not alone. WCVT is here to lend a hand.



Sincerely,

Eric Haskin

Eric Haskin
President & CEO
Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom





It's Easy to Like **Business-Class Wi-Fi**

Because we make everything so easy for you

You have enough hard work to do when running a business, so why include Wi-Fi management on your to-do list? Instead, turn those tasks over to Green Mountain Access. Our Business-Class Wi-Fi is the easy route to reliable and secure Wi-Fi connectivity for your employees, guests, and customers.

Easy to Meet the Demands of Your Business

Green Mountain Access uses commercial-grade Wi-Fi access points specifically designed for the business environment. They provide stronger, more reliable, and more secure signals than the consumer-grade Wi-Fi access points available through retail channels, and are linked to ensure you always have the best possible Wi-Fi connection.

Easy to Expand as Your Business Grows

Need additional coverage? No problem. Business-Class Wi-Fi offers flexible Wi-Fi network design, so we can easily add access points when your needs increase. We can also add a guest network to keep your business and customer traffic separate and highly secure.

Easy to Collect User Data

With Business-Class Wi-Fi, you can have us create a captive portal hotspot that gives your customers the convenience of fast, free

Wi-Fi. This also allows you to collect customer data such as email addresses and manage users.

Easy to Get Wi-Fi Issues Resolved

Should your business experience Wi-Fi performance issues, all you have to do is contact Green Mountain Access. Your Business-Class Wi-Fi includes 24/7 Technical Support, so you'll get a fast response from a local company you know and trust.

Easy to Fit in Your Budget

Business-Class Wi-Fi offers competitive pricing options to accommodate any size of business. Our team can select from a range of Wi-Fi products from leading manufacturers including Ubiquiti and Ruckus—starting as low as \$14.95 per month—to design the most efficient network for your space and meet all your Wi-Fi needs. Plus, there are no surprise maintenance, upgrade, or replacement costs since the ongoing support is included in your monthly fee.

It's also easy to find out more about Business-Class Wi-Fi. Contact Kris Merchant, Sales Manager, at 802-496-8554 or kmerchant@corp.wcvt.com to discuss a Wi-Fi solution for your business. He can also conduct a free on-site assessment to determine your Wi-Fi coverage needs and make recommendations for the number and placement of access points.

Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce

Information and collaboration help its members weather the storm



Eric Friedman, Executive Director

Eric Friedman, Executive Director of the Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce (MRVCC), got emotional when asked how local businesses are doing. “Our business owners are scared and uncertain of the future. They can’t plan anything. I’ve lived here for 30 years, and it’s hard to see longtime, good business owners who have done everything right face the loss of their business through no fault of their own,” Friedman said.

He continued, “What’s inspiring to me is that despite how scared they are, they’re pulling together to help each other. The business community is still concerned about those who are less fortunate, and they’re coming up with creative ways to collaborate and continue to serve customers.”

COVID-19 Causes a Pivot

MRVCC members have access to a variety of marketing, educational, and networking opportunities to benefit their businesses. Before the pandemic began, the organization concentrated mainly on destination marketing efforts, serving as the official resource for visitor and traveler information to the Mad River Valley. But since spring 2020, the focus of the MRVCC has changed dramatically.

“We’re doing the best we can to help our members by disseminating information about the regulations that keep changing. Business owners are stressed and don’t know what they need to know. Our organization has made a pivot, from being mostly marketing driven in the past – bringing visitors to Mad River Valley—to mostly providing pandemic-related information to our members. I’m sending emails to them twice a week with update on topics including restrictions on out-of-state visitors, social distancing rules, capacity limits, and so on. I’ve received really good feedback on these emails. People appreciate them,” he noted.

Local Support is Essential

Since few out-of-state visitors are coming to Vermont due to

travel restrictions, the MRVCC is encouraging Vermont residents to support businesses in the area. For example, Friedman regularly posts on Facebook with ideas for fun and creative things to do in the Mad River Valley.

He said, “Our community is very compliant in terms of helping to decrease the spread of COVID-19. I’d say 95% of people wear masks around here, and I’m thankful for that. Our residents have always enthusiastically supported local businesses, and it’s important for them to keep doing that during the pandemic. With limited capacity allowed at retail stores and restaurants, small business owners are struggling to make money and keep their doors open.”

Friedman is having to do more with less these days at the MRVCC, since budget cuts forced the organization to lay off an employee in May. He’s juggling many responsibilities, including membership services and lobbying, but remains confident the MRVCC will be able to weather the storm and keep serving the Mad River Valley’s business community.

“The business community needs the services of our Chamber now more than ever. We’re counting on the continued support of our members, since we rely on dues to fund our organization,” he said.

Partnerships and Pragmatism

WCVT has been a member of the MRVCC since the Chamber was founded, and Friedman was eager to talk about that: “WCVT is one of our two biggest supporters and has been amazing to us.

It’s times like these when you really appreciate partnerships with locally owned businesses like WCVT. They’re committed to helping our community.”

Friedman also wanted to share his perspective on how Vermont is responding to the challenges of COVID-19. He said, “Vermont has the highest percentage of any state (more than 80% of the population) who are supportive of the way the governor is handling the pandemic. We have a Republican governor in a very liberal state. Our country could learn a lot from Vermont. We’re pragmatic people.”

We’re doing the best we can to help our members by disseminating information about the regulations that keep changing. Business owners are stressed and don’t know what they need to know.”

— ERIC FRIEDMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MAD RIVER VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



MRVCC OFFERS RESOURCES FOR RECOVERY

To help businesses cope with the challenges of the pandemic, the MRVCC shares links to important information at www.madrivervalley.com/resources and updates them when needed.

As stated on this webpage, the goal is to be stronger together: “We know that this is an incredibly uncertain time for you, your employees, and our community. We are working hard to support you, offer information, and bolster resilience. We know that our community will be changed by this. That said, throughout this crisis we have seen our business community show their true colors amidst an unprecedented challenge. We have always been glad to represent our members, but you make us proud and you make us confident that we will, as a community, get through this and be stronger together.”

The resources include:

- Standardized Employee Screening Questionnaire
- Customizable Workplace Flyer
- CDC’s Reopening Decision Tree Guide for Employers
- CDC Coronavirus Resource Center for Businesses and Workplaces
- CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers (Updated May 2020)
- CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Workplaces and Businesses
- CDC FAQs: General Business Operations
- OSHA Guidance for Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19
- A Road Map to Reopening

Stay informed and stay together!

Work at Home

More Easily and Productively

*Get help from these WCVT
business solutions*



Many of you are now working from home and relying on your home phone, internet, and Wi-Fi more than ever before, and WCVT's employees are working around the clock to keep you connected to the world. Check out these WCVT features and services to help make your new work space function as effectively as your old one.

MaX UC Meetings for Video Conferences

While working remotely, you still need to have regular meetings and engagement with your employees. Our new MaX UC Meetings solution enables you to host video meetings with up to 100 participants with no time limits. MaX UC Meetings also offers chat functionality and the ability to share your screen with others participating in your meeting.

MaX UC App for Phone Calls

The MaX UC app runs on your Apple or Android smartphone or tablet, turning it into a portable extension of your home or office's landline phone service. So no matter where you're working, you can still answer important business calls.

Voice Mail to Email Feature

As a WCVT Voice Mail subscriber, you can automatically forward your voice mail messages to your email inbox. This makes it easier to access and manage your messages. To activate email notification, simply log into your voice mail account online and follow the instructions, or give us a call and we'll set it up for you.

WCVT Conference Bridge

Our Conference Bridge is available for free to WCVT customers. Once you're registered for access, you can set up a conference call and contact the people you need to reach anytime—24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When moderating a conference call, the web interface lets you view and control the conference.

To register for a Conference Bridge account, call Customer Service at 800-496-3391. You'll be assigned an Administration ID Number and Attendee Number. We recommend keeping these numbers readily available to your team as you'll need them when setting up and conducting future conference calls. Learn more at www.wcv.com/services/telephone/conference-calling.

For more information on these business solutions to meet work-from-home requirements, contact:

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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.

Students Receive Eunice B. Farr Incentive Award Scholarships

The Class of 2020 has faced unique challenges—from online classes to drive-by or virtual commencement ceremonies—and proven to be up to the task. Through their resiliency and flexibility, these graduates not only made it to this milestone, they did it with grace and dignity.

Every year, WCVT awards six scholarships—one to a student at each of the public high schools in our service area. These scholarships are presented in memory of the late Eunice B. Farr, former owner and operator of the Waitsfield-Fauston Telephone Company. Each student selected for a scholarship has shown a steady improvement in his or her academics and plans to continue studying at a college or trade school.

We congratulate this year's scholarship recipients:

- **Brianna Bachinski**, Champlain Valley Union High School
- **Laili Iskandarova**, Harwood Union High School
- **Sydney Perlee**, Mount Abraham Union High School
- **George Zelman**, Mount Mansfield Union High School
- **Jeffrey Lokatys**, Middlebury Union High School
- **Nathan DeVos**, Vergennes High School



WCVT Supports 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're proud to sponsor the following events which will hopefully take place this summer (barring cancellations or postponements tied to COVID-19):

- Movies in the Park – Bristol
- Our Community Cares Camp in Richmond
- Vermont Festival of the Arts

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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.

Dr. Travis J. Elliott,
Naturopathic Physician
Hinesburg - 482-2770

First Season Greenhouses
Ferrisburg - 475-3720

Open Hearth Pizza
Waitsfield - 496-9152

The Hindquarter
Huntington - 434-4056

Ubuntu Living
Starksboro - 453-7961

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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