

BUSINESS

connections



A Tale of Taco Takeout



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:

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BUSINESS connections

Remember the days when the term “pivoting” made us think of basketball? Now it’s pandemic pivoting that may come to mind first. Businesses of all kinds are having to reinvent themselves to succeed.

As a technology company, Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT) is no stranger to pivoting. Throughout our history, we’ve had to alter our course and update our equipment to keep up with the evolution of communications solutions.

One of the most common changes many businesses made is the switch to remote workers. Turn to page 3 to learn how to **Work at Home More Easily and Productively** with the help of WCVT resources.

We feature a **Business Spotlight on The Mad Taco** on pages 4 and 5. This restaurant began 10 years ago and will soon have five locations. It had to pivot due to the pandemic and switch to a takeout-only business model. The phone is literally ringing off the hook — a nice problem to have, and one that WCVT is happy to help them solve. Speaking of phones, **The Future is Calling with Hosted IP Phone Service**, as you’ll learn on page 6.

Community activities have also been impacted by the pandemic, as described in **WCVT in the Community** on page 7. For example, our Backpacks for Kids Program pivoted from donating backpacks filled with school supplies to donating cash.

I think we’re all ready to say goodbye to 2020. But let’s take pride in what we’ve accomplished under difficult circumstances.



Sincerely,

Eric Haskin

Eric Haskin

President & CEO

Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom



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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The Mad Taco

Thanks to community support, this business is successfully navigating through 2020



The Mad Taco chose its name primarily as a nod to the Mad River Valley, where co-owners Joey Nagy and Wes Hamilton launched their first restaurant in Waitsfield in 2010. However, General Manager Chris Carter shared another reason for the name. “You could say that everyone on our staff brings their own touch of madness to The Mad Taco,” he said.

Soon to have five locations—in Waitsfield, Montpelier, Middlebury, Essex and a new one at Bolton Valley Resort this winter — The Mad Taco serves inspired and creative Latin cuisine. Its menu features a variety of tacos as well as burritos, enchiladas, quesadillas, tamales, and fajitas. Most of the ingredients are locally sourced, all the meats are smoked in-house, and everything is homemade with the exception of the tortillas and cheeses.

Changing Course After the Pandemic

This business’s 10-year journey took a detour when COVID-19 entered the picture.

“The start of the pandemic was pretty scary with lots of uncertainty. We took a deep look at The Mad Taco and our four shops with 50 employees. We had to close briefly but managed to figure

out a solution for when we reopened. We changed our business model to takeout sales only with no-contact pickup and limited hours. The backbone of a restaurant is usually the social interaction of friends or family sitting at a table, so we weren’t sure about how much product could be pushed out the door with a takeout-only business model. Thankfully, the interest from customers was there. We’re keeping busy and haven’t had to lay off any of our employees,” said Carter.

He added, “We’re exclusively using the phone for takeout orders and customer payment information. We thought about offering online ordering but wanted to retain the level of customer service and interaction that only calls provide. On the phone, we can talk to customers and hear what they have to say. Plus, I think the volume of online ordering may have overwhelmed our staff.”

We're constantly evolving with technology, and we're talking to Kris Merchant at WCVT now about getting additional phone services."

— CHRIS CARTER, GENERAL MANAGER, THE MAD TACO

What WCVT Brings to the Table

The Mad Taco currently gets its internet and business phone services from WCVT and is considering upgrading its phone system to better accommodate the increased demands of takeout orders during the pandemic.

Carter noted, "Our WCVT internet and phone services are performing very well and are integral to our business. Shortly before the pandemic started, we switched to a POS system, so our internet connection is especially important because of that. We're constantly evolving with technology, and we're talking to Kris Merchant at WCVT now about getting additional phone services. We're looking at putting in a phone queue, so callers will be placed in the queue and calls answered in the order in which they were received. This will mean customers won't get a busy signal when they call The Mad Taco to place an order, and they won't have to keep calling back like they're trying to win concert tickets from a radio station. This will alleviate stress for everybody."

What does Carter appreciate most about the customer service and technical support provided by WCVT? He replied, "For me, attention to detail and the expedience of solving any internet or phone issues are what I value most about WCVT. It's easy for us to reach someone on the phone and get a solution in a timely manner, so The Mad Taco can keep doing business."

Deep Gratitude for the Community

While The Mad Taco is grateful to have WCVT on its side, Carter mainly wanted this article to express thanks to the community.

He said, "We have deep gratitude and overwhelming appreciation for the support of our customers. We understand that ordering by phone during the pandemic has sometimes been a struggle, but we're committed to serving our community in the safest manner possible. Right now, that means takeout orders only. But The Mad Taco is looking forward to being able to offer dine-in service again in the future."

THE MAD TACO COMES TO BOLTON VALLEY!

Mountains of spicy flavor will be available on the mountain this winter. The Mad Taco is bringing call-ahead food service to Bolton Valley for takeout orders — the perfect complement to the ski resort's deli and main base lodge food.



IT'S EASY TO LIKE BUSINESS-CLASS WI-FI

You have enough to do when running a business, so why waste time on Wi-Fi management? Instead, get Business-Class Wi-Fi from Green Mountain Access, which makes everything easy:

- **Easy to meet the demands of your business.** We use commercial-grade Wi-Fi access points for stronger, more reliable, and more secure signals.
- **Easy to expand coverage.** It's simple to add access points or a guest network.
- **Easy to collect user data.** Have us create a captive portal hotspot that gives customers free Wi-Fi and allows you to collect email addresses and manage users.
- **Easy to get Wi-Fi issues resolved.** 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 afford.** We'll design the most efficient network for your space at a competitive price.

It's also easy to find out more about Business-Class Wi-Fi. Contact Kris Merchant, Sales Manager, at 802-496-8554 or kmerchant@wcvt.com.

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
- **Kevin Davis**
Business System Specialist 1
- **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 or call 802.496.8309.

(L to R) Kevin Davis, Business Systems Specialist 1; Dan Fuller, Business Systems Project Supervisor; Kris Merchant, Sales Manager; and Nick Sterner, Business Systems Specialist (Not pictured, Trevor Gaylord)



The Future is Calling with Hosted IP Phone Service



Is your business using the same traditional phone system you've had for years? If so, you may want to consider upgrading to a more cost-efficient and flexible solution that can accommodate your future needs.

WCVT's Hosted IP Phone Service uses Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology that runs on our managed network. VoIP converts the voice signal from your phone into a digital signal that can travel over the internet, enabling you to use one connection for all of your internet and phone needs.

The many benefits of our Hosted IP Phone Service include:

- **Reduced Capital Investment** – Unlike traditional on-premise phone systems, there's no huge upfront investment in expensive hardware.
- **Low, Predictable Costs** – WCVT maintains and enhances 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.

What's more, our Hosted IP Phone Service makes sense for businesses of all sizes — from a small “mom and pop” shop all the way up to a large enterprise.

To learn more about our Hosted IP Phone Service, including the variety of features and phones available, visit www.wcvt.com/services/telephone/hosted-ip-phones/.

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.

Vermont COVID-19 Arrearage Assistance Program (VCAAP)

VCAAP can assist Vermonters suffering economic hardship from COVID-19 pay their arrearages for residential and non-residential accounts. Eligible Vermont utility customers can get help with unpaid past due balances that put an account at risk for disconnection. The past due balance must be more than 60 days old for service provided after March 1, 2020.

Apply for help now at <https://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/vermont-covid-19-arrearage-assistance-program-0>.



Even Ducks Need Wi-Fi

Dependable Wi-Fi is becoming a top priority for many of our customers. It used to be most important in the business sector, but now with many people working and learning from home, WCVT is getting more residential inquiries about Wi-Fi.

Now we have a new Wi-Fi market—rubber duck racing! The Mad River Valley Rotary Club approached us with the desire to livestream their annual duck race, the biggest fundraiser of the year. Due to COVID-19, they were worried about participation. Without this event, their financial status for the year would be put in jeopardy. They felt if they could livestream the event, perhaps the fundraiser could still be a success.

The challenge was this: There's no cell service or Wi-Fi coverage near the Mad River where the race would be taking place. Thanks to the efforts of WCVT Sales Manager Kris Merchant, who spearheaded the effort, a plan to bring Wi-Fi to the Mad River turned a wish into reality.

The race took place on September 6 under sunny skies, and it was a huge success. To see which duck crossed the finish line first, check out the video of the recorded livestream on Mad River Valley Rotary Club's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/MRV.Rotary/.

Changes to Backpacks for Kids Program

For many years, WCVT's employees and Contributions Committee have donated backpacks and school supplies to local school children. This year, WCVT decided to divide the donations equally among 20 schools in our serving territory who requested assistance. Money donated helped purchase items they needed the most. Tammy Field, coordinator of the Backpacks for Kids Program, said recently, "We were really happy to help the students, especially in light of the difficulties they're experiencing because of the coronavirus. While we missed picking out the backpacks and school supplies and delivering them, we're just happy to help out any way we can."

We thank our committee members and employees for their generosity. The schools were incredibly grateful for the donations!



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.

A L St. Onge Contractors
Waitsfield – 496-3062

Collaborative Solutions Corp
Richmond – 434-3353

Cool Motion Outdoor Sports
Bristol – 453-4584

Sky Crane Service
Lincoln – 453-4743

The Big Spruce
Richmond – 434-4111

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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