

BUSINESS

# connections





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## BUSINESS connections

**What's on your plate today?** You can answer this question in terms of the tasks on your business to-do list. Or you can think about the meal you've already enjoyed today or the one you look forward to eating soon. Either way, there's only so much room on your plate, so it's important to choose wisely.

This is the first *Business Connections* issue of 2022, and a great time to remind you of the many solutions that Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT) offers. For example, maybe this will be the year you **Take Wi-Fi Management Off Your Plate** by signing up for Business Class Wi-Fi. Learn more on page 3.

You'll need a grocery store to put food on your plate, so don't miss the **Business Spotlight on Paradise Provisions** on pages 4 and 5. Owner Arik Keller talks about the improvements he set in motion since buying the business in 2017 as well as his experience as a WCVT business customer.

If there's a Zoom call or two on your plate today, learn how to **Make Virtual Meetings More Interactive** with the tips on page 6. Then on page 7, check out **WCVT in the Community**. As you've no doubt figured out by now, our plates are always full with community activities.

I wish you a happy and successful 2022, and thank you for trusting us to provide your communications services.



Sincerely,

*Eric Haskin*

Eric Haskin  
President & CEO  
Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom





# Take Wi-Fi Management Off Your Plate

Sign up for Business Class Wi-Fi from Green Mountain Access, which offers these advantages.

**Eliminates the hassles of trying to do your own installation, maintenance, and troubleshooting.** As a business owner or manager, you have enough to do. Your time is much better spent focusing on your core business activities rather than trying to be your own “tech support” whenever someone has a Wi-Fi issue. With Business Class Wi-Fi, you get 24x7 Technical Support from a local company you know and trust.

**Uses equipment specifically designed for a business environment.** Green Mountain Access uses commercial-grade access points, which provide stronger and more secure signals than the consumer-grade variety. In addition, the access points in a managed system are linked, ensuring that you always have the best possible connection.

**Offers low, predictable costs.** We maintain and enhance the service for you so there are no surprise maintenance, upgrade, or replacement costs. You also have the option to lease or buy the Wi-Fi equipment.

**Easily accommodates your growing needs.** We can add additional access points for a low monthly fee. We can also add a guest network to keep your business and customer traffic separate and highly secure.

**Gives you peace of mind.** You won’t have to worry about security, knowing that your wireless connection is professionally installed with all appropriate security measures in place.

**Arrange a free on-site assessment to discover how Business Class Wi-Fi could work in your business. Contact Kris Merchant, Sales Manager, at 802-496-8554 or [kmerchant@corp.wcvt.com](mailto:kmerchant@corp.wcvt.com).**



## TECH TALK WITH RICHARD PITONYAK

As Tech Support Supervisor, Richard Pitonyak knows a thing or two (or a thousand) about Business Class Wi-Fi. So we asked him a few questions to help you understand this service better.

**Q. What are some examples of Wi-Fi problems that businesses have before they sign up for Business Class Wi-Fi?**

**A.** Businesses both large and small often experience the same type of Wi-Fi issue — coverage without sufficient Wi-Fi performance. While the signal may be available over the entire office or campus, it’s often lacking in strength and quality. This results in connection drops and other Wi-Fi problems.

**Q. What would you say Business Class Wi-Fi customers appreciate most after they’ve had the service for awhile?**

**A.** The fact that they no longer worry or think about their internet connection. It just works!

**Q. If a Business Class Wi-Fi customer experiences a Wi-Fi issue, what should they do?**

**A.** We encourage our Business Class Wi-Fi customers to reach out to our local Technical Support Team at 802-496-8598. We’re ready and available to help!



# Paradise Provisions

*Even paradise can be improved with the right goals and lots of hard work*

What's now called Paradise Provisions has been serving customers for more than 20 years, under multiple owners, from its location at 2367 Sugarbush Access Road near the bottom of the Sugarbush slope in Warren, Vermont. The current owner, Arik Keller, bought the specialty grocery store in 2017 and has been busy writing the next chapter of this community favorite ever since.

Keller said, "I live in Newburyport, Massachusetts, and my family spends winter weekends skiing at Sugarbush. When Paradise Deli & Market came up for sale, I thought, 'How hard could this be to run?' Of course, it's proven to be a lot harder than I originally thought. The management team we have in place, including Manager Ashley Woods, bears the brunt of that hard work and has done a terrific job. Our goal is to improve the business and make it a better place to work with more competitive wages, serving much better food."

## Delicious Variety

Area visitors and locals alike appreciate the wide selection of items that Paradise Provisions now offers. They include:

- Groceries
- Craft beer
- Good wine
- Breakfast and lunch items
- Freshly made sweet treats
- Grab n Go Cooler with prepared dishes such as salads, Alfredo chicken and broccoli, quiche, and Swedish meatballs



## “Our High-Speed Internet from WCVT is critical to the operation of our business.”

— **ARIK KELLER**, OWNER, PARADISE PROVISIONS

What is Keller most proud of when it comes to Paradise Provisions? He replied, “We’re most proud of our shift into providing better-made food and carrying more local products. We buy directly from over 40 small brands through a company called Mable ([www.meetmable.com](http://www.meetmable.com)) that we started after buying Paradise. Mable enables retailers to shop wholesale from thousands of local and emerging brands. This helps the small business community thrive.”

Keller continued, “We’ve also improved the quality of the food in the Paradise Provisions deli, a space we retained from the previous owners, and we make custom sandwiches along with the deli items on the menu. They’ve been popular.”

### Enhanced Technology

The food isn’t the only thing that’s improved in recent years at Paradise Provisions. Keller has also upgraded the market’s technology, supported by WCVT’s High-Speed Internet and Business Class Wi-Fi with Ubiquiti equipment.

“Our High-Speed Internet from WCVT is critical to the operation of our business. When I bought the store, we rolled out a new point-of-sale (POS) system called Square. The previous POS ran on an old server in the building, but Square runs in the cloud. So without a reliable internet connection, we can’t run our business. WCVT’s service has kept us up and running for the three years since that POS transition,” explained Keller.

Paradise Provisions also appreciates the customer service and tech support it receives from WCVT’s team. Keller said, “When we call someone at WCVT, they answer right away and respond to our inquiries quickly. It’s clear that WCVT appreciates the fact that if our internet stops running, our business stops running. They have our backs.”



### DON'T FORGET ABOUT UPLOAD SPEEDS

Download speeds often get the most attention when people talk about internet service. While important, they aren’t the only metric to consider when determining which plan would be best for your business. Robust upload speeds are also required to support activities like these:

#### Collaboration Applications

When doing business in the cloud, the data you download and edit needs to be uploaded back to the cloud to be saved and accessed by others. That’s why collaboration applications such as Google Drive and Google Docs, which allow multiple people to work on the same files, need an upload speed fast enough to update files nearly instantaneously.

#### Cloud Backup

Most backup solutions offer an off-site, cloud solution. The faster your upload speeds are, the faster your data can be backed up and stored safely and securely. This is particularly key during initial data retrieval processes which may entail uploading huge amounts of data.

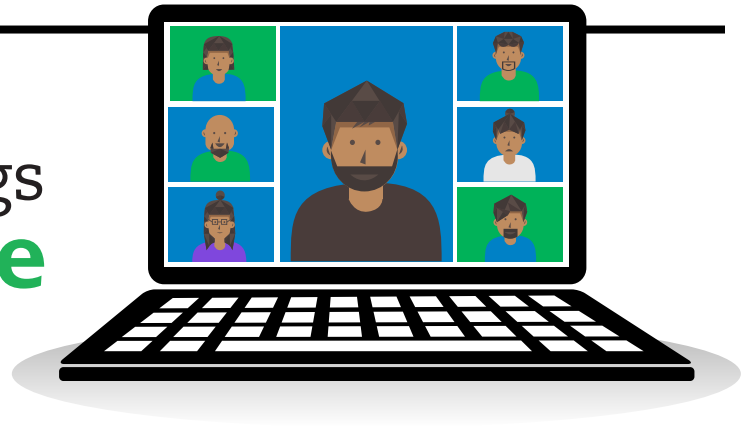
#### VoIP Phone Calls and Video Conferencing

These services are two-way streets, meaning both download and upload speeds need to be fast. If your speeds are too low, your voice and/or video data could lag and cut out.

**Call 802-496-3391 to learn about the internet speeds available to your business.**

# Make Virtual Meetings More Interactive

*A little extra planning can make things a lot more enjoyable*



Virtual meetings have become the new normal, and while convenient, they have their challenges. Without in-person interaction, it's harder to create a communal atmosphere and easier for people to get bored, disengaged, or distracted. If you're responsible for organizing virtual meetings for your business or community organization, try these tips:

## 1. Make sure you actually need to hold a virtual meeting.

If you're making an announcement or sharing information that only requires attendees to listen, consider sending out an email instead. When a virtual meeting is deemed necessary, structure it with an agenda and clear objective.

## 2. Adopt a mandatory video-on policy.

There are several reasons for this. Communication is more effective when non-verbal clues are involved, and seeing facial expressions will help to humanize virtual meetings and build comradery. In addition, when attendees appear live on screen, there's less temptation to do other, unrelated tasks during the meeting.

## 3. Start with an icebreaker question.

Remote work can feel lonely and isolating. Devote a few minutes at the beginning of a virtual meeting for everyone to answer a fun icebreaker question. This sets the stage for creativity and participation and helps attendees get to know each other better. Examples of questions include:

- What career did you want when you were a child?
- Would you rather have a pet seagull or a pet bat?
- What was the last movie you saw?

## 4. Encourage all attendees to participate.

Sometimes extroverts can dominate a virtual meeting. To engage the more introverted attendees, make a point to directly ask them questions about their tasks or workloads.

It's also a good idea to actively solicit ideas and get people to collaborate. Conduct brainstorming on free virtual whiteboard apps or sticky note tools like Miro and IdeaBoardz. Implement collective note-taking on Google Docs or Confluence so that everyone gets involved (and invested) in meeting outcomes.

## 5. Keep virtual meetings short and sweet.

Strive for between 30 and 60 minutes so everyone stays focused and productive. If you can't manage all the agenda items within that time frame, then perhaps one meeting could be divided into two or three.

## 6. Agree on the next steps before the meeting ends.

Be sure to write down all action points, decide on deadlines, and distribute work tasks to attendees. Also decide if and when a follow-up meeting should be scheduled.

## 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 newcomers.

**Cushman's Auto  
and Diesel Repair**  
Panton – 475-3774

**Freedom Properties, LLC**  
Waitsfield – 496-3733

**Nordic Farm**  
Charlotte – 425-2283

**Our Lady of  
Mt. Carmel Church**  
Charlotte – 425-2253

# 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.*



## Is There a High School Senior in Your Family?

WCVT is proud to partner with the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) in the 2022 College Scholarship Program, which annually awards scholarships to an exceptional group of rural students for their first year of college or vocational school. FRS has awarded over \$1 million in scholarships since its inception, empowering rural students to advance their communities with invaluable skill sets and experiences.



FOUNDATION FOR  
RURAL SERVICE

All local applicants require sponsorship by WCVT as an NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association member company. Applicants must also be a graduating high school senior and an active customer or whose parents or legal guardian are active customers of WCVT and reside full-time in the WCVT service area.

Application deadline is March 4, 2022. For more information and to apply online, visit the FRS website at [www.frs.org](http://www.frs.org) or contact Lorraine Keener at 802-496-8379 or [lkeener@corp.wcvt.com](mailto:lkeener@corp.wcvt.com).



## Nishi Named Chair of Lake Champlain Chamber's Board of Directors

Roger Nishi, Vice President of Industry Relations for WCVT, is one of six new members of the Board of Directors for the Vermont Chamber of Commerce. The Board is committed to helping further the Chamber's mission to ensure a thriving Vermont economy. Thanks for volunteering, Roger!

For more information on the Vermont Chamber of Commerce, visit <https://www.vtchamber.com/>.

## WCVT Employees Shared Helping Hands and Warm Hearts in 2021

Giving back to the communities we serve has always been an important part of who we are at WCVT. We wholeheartedly contribute to many community organizations and events including those listed here. Because you support us, we can support them.

- Addison County Chamber of Commerce
- Bristol Recreation Department
- Fill a Backpack Program
- Giving Tree
- Hinesburg Business and Professional Association
- Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Mad River Valley Rotary Club
- Our Community Cares Camp (Richmond)
- Red Cross Blood Drives
- Special Olympics Vermont
- Vermont Chamber of Commerce
- Vermont Foodbank
- Vermont State Parks Forever

...and more!

We also give each employee 16 hours of community service time yearly to be used on local projects. If your organization is looking for help, contact Lorraine Keener at 802-496-8379 or [lkeener@corp.wcvt.com](mailto:lkeener@corp.wcvt.com) for more details.

# 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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**Call 802-496-3391 to learn more.**

