

BUSINESS connections



Caring for Cars
and Customers
Since 1941

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BUSINESS connections

We learn best when we ask questions. Think about the most engaging conversations you've had in recent months. I suspect they included plenty of questions that led to discovering something new about the person, business, or organization.

In this issue of *Business Connections*, you'll find questions and answers in two of the articles. Page 3's **FAQ on Hosted IP Phone Service** shares the answers to common questions we hear about this practical and flexible solution from Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT). Check out **Tech Talk with Richard Pitonyak** on page 6 to get answers from our Tech Support Supervisor on questions we asked him about the challenges of spam.

Pages 4 and 5 contain a **Business Spotlight on Hart & Mead Inc.**, the Hinesburg automotive service center that's served the community well since 1941. As you'll learn from John and Doug Mead, owners and operators, talking one on one with customers (and asking and answering questions) is as important to this family business as selling fuel.

What has WCVT been doing in the community lately? And what's on the calendar coming up? You'll get the answers to those questions on page 7 in our regular feature, **WCVT in the Community**.

No matter what questions you have about communications services for your business, WCVT will be happy to provide the answers. Just ask!



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 managed network.

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 benefits of replacing a traditional phone system with Hosted IP Phone Service?

They 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?

With its flexibility and scalability, Hosted IP Phone Service works as well for a small "mom and pop" store as it does for a large company. WCVT has done installations for Maple Landmark in Middlebury, Neck of the Woods in Waitsfield, and The Warren Store in Warren.

What can it offer to my employees working from home?

The Unified Communications features of Hosted IP Phone Service give remote workers the same phone capabilities they have at the office.

To learn more about Hosted IP Phone Service, call 802-496-8309.

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 Systems Specialist 1
- **Trevor Gaylord**
Business Systems Specialist 1
- **Jada Munro**
Business Services Specialist 1

They're responsible for the coordination of project resources in support of our Hosted products and wiring installations. They plan all aspects of complex projects from inception to conclusion. This helps to provide excellent customer service by building 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.wcv.com
or call 802-496-8309.

(L to R) Kris Merchant, Sales Manager;
Nick Sterner, Business Systems Specialist;
Trevor Gaylord, Business Systems Specialist 1;
Dan Fuller, Business Systems Project
Supervisor; and Kevin Davis, Business
Systems Specialist 1.





Hart & Mead Auto Supply Staff

Hart & Mead Inc.

An emphasis on customer service has always fueled this family business

Hart & Mead Inc. was founded in 1941 by Hugh Hart and L.O. Johnny Mead. Today, Hart & Mead Inc. is owned and operated by John and Doug Mead, sons of L.O. Johnny Mead.

John said, “Doug and I sort of grew up working at the service station. In grade school, we started by sweeping the floor, filling the cold cooler—that kind of thing. Over the years, we tagged along with Dad and the mechanics, and we learned the business from the ground up. We’d ride shotgun on the fuel truck, and when we got old enough, we’d pull the delivery hose. Eventually we were able to deliver fuel.”

Caring for Cars and Customers

The longtime family business is located in the heart of Hinesburg, and is considered one of Vermont’s top automotive service centers. It includes a fuel station offering gasoline, diesel, and kerosene. The latter is used to fuel the many space heaters in Vermont.

“Some customers stop 2-3 times per week for kerosene. It’s a pretty busy spot at the station. The only busier spot is our free air pump,” John noted.

Hart & Mead Inc. still does full service at the pumps including checking the customer’s oil level and tire pressure. “We always felt there was a need for a full-service station. There’s aren’t many of them left. This area mostly has convenience stores offering self-service gas. In addition, Hart & Mead Inc. has a car wash, auto parts store, and auto repair shop. We have third-generation customers coming to Hart & Mead Inc. now. They know we’ll look after them and treat them the way we’d want to be treated,” John explained.

If an issue happens, WCVT takes good care of us. They know a small business like ours needs its communications services in order to operate.”

— JOHN MEAD, OWNER/OPERATOR, HART & MEAD INC.

Doug agreed and said, “It’s good to have a customer relationship one on one. Since we’re a full-service station, so we get to talk to our customers all the time. I think we do a good job for them and are honest with them right up front. We give the best deals we can give. I think it makes our customers feel more comfortable with us. We can spend a fair amount of time discussing their car’s situation and making sure we’re fulfilling their needs. They appreciate that.”

“We treat our customers like they’re more than customers. They’re like a big extended family. Hinesburg is a great community, and we’ve been a part of it for more than 80 years,” added John.

Neighborhood Relationship with WCVT

It’s not surprising that given its community-minded focus, Hart & Mead Inc. chose local provider WCVT for its phone service and high-speed internet.

John said, “WCVT has always given us reliable service. There’s the occasional glitch, like when lines get accidentally dug up. If an issue happens, WCVT takes good care of us. They know a small business like ours needs its communications services in order to operate. If something comes up, we can call Kris Merchant at WCVT to get the answer we need. I can comfortably say, ‘I feel kind of stupid but why is this happening with our internet?’ And I’ll get a straightforward response. After all, we’re mechanics, not techies.”

Hart & Mead Inc. likes doing business with other local businesses, and WCVT feels the same way. For example, Hart & Mead Inc. fuels some of WCVT’s trucks.



John Mead, Owner/Operator, Hart & Mead Inc.

Down the Road

What’s ahead for this family business? Is there a new generation waiting in the wings?

John replied, “No, we don’t have family members wanting to take over. Doug and I are actively looking to find a buyer or someone to lease the business. I’m in my late sixties and Doug is in his middle seventies, and it would be nice to see Hart & Mead Inc. continue. We think there’s a need in this community for a business like ours.”



IT PAYS TO WORK WITH A LOCAL PROVIDER

WCVT’s dedicated team of telecommunications experts live and work alongside you in this community—and this type of local service is something our competitors can’t offer. With us at your side, your business can enjoy advantages such as:

Local, Personal Attention

Just stop in at our office or give us a call when you have questions. You’re not limited to 800 numbers answered by customer service representatives across the country or on the other side of the world. We bring a unique blend of local knowledge, expertise, and support to everything we do.

Faster Response Times

We’re nearby and ready to serve you, and we also value your time. Our team will do everything possible to ensure that your needs are taken care of quickly. We understand how important your WCVT services are to the operation of your business.

Access to Advanced Technology

WCVT always strives to provide our service area with the best telecommunications solutions available for a fair rate. After all, we’re invested in local businesses; we succeed when you succeed.

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.

Bristol Diesel Works

Bristol – 453-6452

DC Group Vermont

Warren – 583-2781

Dubois Farm Inc

Addison – 759-3395

Emily's Bar & Bistro

Waitsfield – 496-9707

Lights Out LLC

Warren – 496-3867

Kitchen-ette

Waitsfield – 496-2665

Minifactory

Bristol – 453-3280

Richmond Community Arts

Richmond – 434-2722

The Waitsfield

Wash Company

Waitsfield – 496-6930



Tech Talk

with Richard Pitonyak



As Tech Support Supervisor, Richard Pitonyak deals with many technology issues including spam—those annoying emails you wish would just disappear. It's a timely topic given the recent upgrade to the WCVT spam filtering solution, so we decided to ask him a few questions about the continuing fight against spam and why it's so challenging.



How does the upgrade to the spam filtering solution benefit WCVT's business customers?

Rather than waiting 24 hours for a Daily Digest of quarantined emails to appear, users now see potential spam emails in the "Junk" folder almost immediately. This provides a more convenient way for businesses to manage their quarantined emails.

What are the most common spam-related issues/problems you hear from your business customers?

Users complained that the old interface they had to use to make changes to the spam filter was overcomplicated and slow.

What security issues tied to spam should business customers be aware of and take precautions against?

Spam, or junk email, is often a security risk in

addition to being an annoyance. Some messages contain malicious malware or viruses and/or links intended to get recipients to hand over sensitive information and user identities, compromise computers and devices, and do other damage. In addition to using security software and keeping it updated, businesses should educate employees on what to watch out for and how to respond to spam threats.

Why is spam so difficult to eradicate or even diminish? What progress has been made on this front in recent years?

It's a game of "cat and mouse," in which the anti-spam tools are implemented but the spammers find a way through or around them. That's why the spam filter parameters are constantly changing. We also have to deal with spammers targeting people with social attacks, using techniques like impersonating real companies.

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 Partners with Mad River Valley Chamber to Bring Back Flags

The Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce has received a \$3,500 grant from the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS). This grant will allow the Chamber to purchase new American flags as well as "Welcome to the Mad River Valley" banners that will be hung on telephone poles along Route 100 in downtown Waitsfield. The Foundation for Rural Service awards grants to rural communities served by NTC members, and Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom is a member. These grants are designed to provide support to a variety of local efforts to build and sustain a high quality of life in rural America. The required matching funds contribution was provided by Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom.

It's been several years since the flags were flown in Mad River Valley. They'd become worn and were in need of replacement, and the volunteer group that originally coordinated the effort is no longer active. WCVT employees will once again assist with the annual hanging and maintenance of flags. Flags and banners will be in place prior to Memorial Day and remain flying until after Labor Day.



For more information on FRS and community development grants, please contact Lorraine Keener at 802-496-8379 or lkeener@wcv.com.



Kris Merchant, Sales Manager

Team WCVT Helps Out in the Sugar Bush

A crew of WCVT employees spent a day in early March at the Green Mountain Audubon Center in Huntington to help prepare for this year's sugaring season. Employees trekked through the sugar bush with drills in hand and sleds full of buckets and tapped 500+ trees the old-fashioned way. The Audubon Center has a working, traditional maple sugaring operation that produces between 50-75 gallons of syrup each year. Thousands of people visit annually to learn about their wood-fired, bird-friendly process of maple sugaring. Sweet job, Team WCVT!



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 this summer:

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

Congrats to Our Raffle Winner

Steve Stewart of Hinesburg won our Annual Customer Survey Raffle. In the photo, WCVT employee Kurt Gruendling



presents Steve his prize — an iPad Pro. Thanks to all who completed our survey. We're constantly making service improvements based on customer feedback.

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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