

BUSINESS

# connections



## A Cut Above

*Laura Gurdak (left), Owner/Manager of Hinesburg Hair Studio, with stylist Chelsea*

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14 Thorn Bush Rd, Hinesburg

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## BUSINESS connections

### It's the little things that can make a big difference to customers.

I'm sure you can think of examples of this from your own experience — the shop owner who spent lots of time helping you find just the right gift or the welcome surprise of a hand-written note of thanks after a purchase.

In this issue of *Business Connections*, we explore the significant impact that seemingly small changes to your business can make. **The Future is Calling with Hosted IP**, as you'll learn on page 3, and upgrading your phone system to this technology can enhance the experience for your callers.

There's a **Business Spotlight on Hinesburg Hair Studio** on pages 4 and 5. This salon epitomizes the value of always providing a little something extra to guests, whether it's a joke to bring laughter or a unique hair color to boost confidence. Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT) does our best to bring "cut above" phone and internet services to Hinesburg Hair Studio.

**Is Your Website Mobile Friendly?** We ask this question on page 6, since not being able to easily read and navigate your website on a phone can be a little thing that becomes a big annoyance to customers. On page 7, you'll find **WCVT in the Community**, where we mention some of the little things we've done recently to help the communities we serve make progress toward big goals.

Perhaps a little change to your communications services could make a big difference to your business. Let us know how we can help.



Sincerely,

*Eric Haskin*

Eric Haskin

President & CEO

Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom





# 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 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.wcv.com/services/telephone/hosted-ip-phones/](http://www.wcv.com/services/telephone/hosted-ip-phones/).



(L to R) Kevin Davis, Business Systems Specialist II; Dan Fuller, Business Systems Supervisor; Trevor Gaylord, Business Systems Specialist I; Nick Sterner, Business Systems Specialist II; Jada Munro, Business Systems Administrator; and Kris Merchant, Sales Manager.

## 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 Supervisor
- **Nick Sterner**  
Business Systems Specialist II
- **Kris Merchant**  
Sales Manager
- **Kevin Davis**  
Business Systems Specialist II
- **Trevor Gaylord**  
Business Systems Specialist I
- **Jada Munro**  
Business Systems Administrator

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](mailto:HPBX@corp.wcv.com) or call 802-496-8309.

# Hinesburg Hair Studio

*A beautifully unique combination of looking good and feeling good*



Owner/Manager Laura Gurdak

Hinesburg Hair Studio is unique in its concern not just for how guests look when they leave, but also how they feel while there. The all-inclusive salon is a friendly, positive, and comfortable place, filled with laughter and salon-wide conversations.

Owner/Manager Laura Gurdak said, “We enjoy keeping a light-hearted and casual environment. The more laughter, the better! We don’t have dress codes, and we often have kids, babies, and pets running around. As a small salon, we also have the ability to cater the mood to our guests. If someone needs somber support, we’re here for that. If someone needs silly jokes, we’re here for that as well. I think our positive attitude and flexible atmosphere set us apart.”

## A Scientific Mind and Caring Heart

Located at 22 Commerce Street, Unit 10, Hinesburg Hair Studio offers haircuts, color and texture services, hair styling, facial waxing, and wedding hair. Gurdak has been a stylist since 2007 and started the salon in 2015.

“I love all aspects of hair and approach the trade with a scientific mind. Much of what I do is like artwork, but following the rules of chemistry, physics, architecture, and color theory,” Gurdak said.

Of what is she most proud when it comes to Hinesburg Hair Studio? She replied, “I’m really proud of our reputation. We’ve managed to make amazing connections with people and families in this area and beyond! We strive to do our absolute best and feel appreciated by our guests. I’m also proud that Hinesburg Hair Studio is often the best part of someone’s day/week.”

## Looking for the Right Stylist

An ongoing challenge the salon has faced is a shortage of stylists. “We’ve been on the hunt for another stylist or two for most of



the seven years we've been open. People have come and gone, but my partner in crime, Chelsea, has been here from the start. I really appreciate her dedication and support," Gurdak said.

She continued, "This job can be pretty demanding, both physically and emotionally. I think the popularity of the career in general has gone down. It takes a real passion to master the craft and actually enjoy it without getting burned out. I love my job and the community connections we've made. I want to find another stylist who feels the same, but I'm starting to think it may be close to impossible. I keep encouraging guests and friends to pursue this career. I wonder if we lost a lot of the workforce to a combination of retirement (if it was available) and career burnout. Hinesburg Hair Studio is not alone in being short staffed, and I'm sad to see so many of our local businesses shutting down. I try to buy local whenever possible!"

*A couple of years ago, we were struggling with our credit card machine working on the internet speeds that were standard in town. Our WCVT friends went above and beyond to get us hooked up to their fiber service."*

— LAURA GURDAK, OWNER/MANAGER, HINESBURG HAIR STUDIO

### WCVT's Help Goes Beyond Phone and Internet

Given the staffing challenge and the hectic pace of the business in general, Hinesburg Hair Studio relies on the efficiency of phone and internet services from WCVT.

Gurdak said, "A couple of years ago, we were struggling with our credit card machine working on the internet speeds that were standard in town. Our WCVT friends went above and beyond to get us hooked up to their fiber service. We haven't had any troubles with internet outages or slowdowns since. Our scheduling and point-of-sale system is in the cloud, so having access to fast, dependable internet is paramount. I have absolutely no complaints with WCVT, and it's nice having a relationship with another local business."

She also appreciates the excellent customer service WCVT provides to Hinesburg Hair Studio. "We've always received help when we've needed it or asked for it. Our WCVT friends even mentioned some of the pandemic programs available to small businesses when we struggled after being shut down for 10 weeks during spring 2020. I'm not sure I would have looked into those programs had they not been proactively mentioned to me by a WCVT team member. It was very helpful, and they've been a great resource for my small business," noted Gurdak.



### 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.

#### Creekside Marine

Ferrisburgh – 802-475-2465

#### Cutting Hill Beef Company

Hinesburg – 802-482-6462

#### Hanger Steak LLC

Warren – 802-583-9499

#### Mad River Outfitters

Waitsfield – 802-496-2500

#### Rogue Tattoos

Bristol – 802-453-8563

#### Three Peaks Medical Clinic

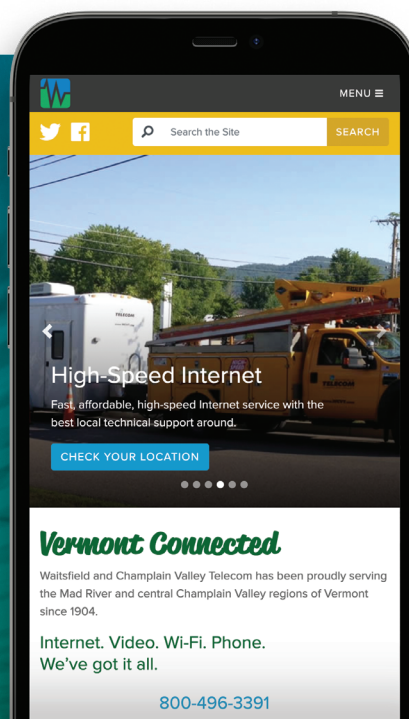
Warren – 802-496-2634

#### Vermont Fine

Richmond – 802-434-8686

# Is Your Website Mobile Friendly?

*If the answer is, “No” or “I’m not sure,” this article is for you*



Grab your phone right now and go to your company's website. Is there a lot of text? Do you have to pinch or zoom in to read it? If so, your users may get frustrated and go elsewhere.

The desktop version of a website is often difficult to view and use on a mobile device. Years ago, websites were not commonly formatted for small screens. Given the fact that many of your users are likely to visit your website on a phone or tablet, it's important for them to have a positive experience when they get there.

## Mobile-Friendly Features

What makes a website a mobile-friendly one? Generally speaking, it's designed with features including:

- Larger text of an easily readable size on a small screen
- Mobile-friendly navigation which quickly displays the most relevant content
- Touch-friendly buttons and page elements, placed far enough apart to be easily tapped
- Faster download speed
- Avoidance of software (like Flash) not typically available on mobile devices

## Benefits for Your Company

In addition to improving the user experience, having a mobile-friendly website can provide your company with other valuable benefits. Topping this list is improved search visibility, meaning your company may appear higher up on the list when prospects

search for the products/services you offer. This is because Google uses mobile-friendliness as a ranking signal and favors these types of websites in its search rankings.

Having a mobile-friendly website can also help your company stand out from the competition. There are still many businesses, particularly small ones, which are not yet optimized for mobile. This could provide your company a good opportunity to differentiate itself and enhance its reputation as being concerned with the customer experience.

## Tips for Getting Started

Are you ready to plan your new mobile-friendly website? The two most common approaches are to either design a separate website optimized for handheld devices, or to develop your main website so that it utilizes responsive design that scales to any screen size. While there may be cases where a separate mobile website makes sense, responsive design has increasingly become the modern standard since it provides the improved efficiency of maintaining a single website.

To find out if your website has a mobile-friendly design and get recommendations from Google, visit [www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly](http://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly).



# 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.*



## FRS Congressional Broadband Tour Visits Vermont

In late summer, Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom hosted the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) Congressional Broadband Tour. FRS hosts a trip each year so Congressional staff members can get out in the field to see first-hand how broadband is delivered in rural communities and how these services impact the local economy.

The group enjoyed a packed schedule of presentations as well as the opportunity to visit these local businesses over the course of three days: A Johnson, American Flatbread, the American Legion, Basin Harbor, Smilie Memorial School, Bolton Valley Resort, Dakin Farm, Mad River Glen, and Sugarbush Resort.

After the trip, the Congressional staffers had a better understanding of the challenges and costs associated with building rural broadband as well as an appreciation for the critical role rural broadband plays in building a thriving community.

## WCVT Helps Local Schools

WCVT has for many years been donating backpacks filled with supplies to schools in our local serving area. Due to an increased need this year, monetary donations were given instead to 25 schools in our service territory from WCVT's employees as well as our company's Contribution Committee. This enabled these schools to purchase items for their students that would be most beneficial to helping them have a successful school year.

Tammy Field, Administrative Supervisor and coordinator of the Backpacks for Kids Program, said, "I continue to be overwhelmed by the generosity of WCVT and its employees, and I'm very proud to work with such a great group of people." WCVT would like to wish each and every student a very successful, safe, and fun school year.



## WCVT Supported Many Local Events This Fall

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 were proud to sponsor the following events this fall:

- Waitsfield Children's Center / Mountain Film on Tour
- Bristol Harvest Festival
- Richmond Art Crawl
- Bristol Pumpkins in the Park

# 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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