

BUSINESS

connections



How Laurel Ridge rejuvenates groups and reduces costs

Director Warren Kaestner and Office Manager Teresa Cude

JUN
13



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BUSINESS connections

Sometimes it's a first-rate idea to take a second look.

We've all had experiences where it paid off to reconsider an earlier decision or perception. Your business changes over time and so does technology, your customer base and your competition.

As you read this June issue of *Business Connections*, I encourage you to **consider new solutions** in this second half of 2013. For example, even if you've never been a TV advertiser, you'll find great reasons to start. **We're now offering SkyBest TV local advertising** and you can read about its affordability and effectiveness on page 3.

Pages 4 and 5 feature a business spotlight on Laurel Ridge camp, conference and retreat center in the Blue Ridge Mountains. **Laurel Ridge recently took a second look at our SkyBest Long-Distance services and rates** and decided to switch to us from its long-time previous provider—a move that's saving the camp thousands of dollars a year on long-distance costs alone.

Speaking of long-distance service, is your business getting the best deal possible? Check out the article on our **Business Freedom Plans** on page 6 and contact us to **schedule a free consultation and long-distance cost comparison**.

You'll also want to take a second look at your summer plans to take advantage of the **community events** listed on page 7. SkyLine/SkyBest looks forward to joining you at these charitable and fun leisure-time activities as well as helping you work smarter with upgraded communications solutions.

Sincerely,

Tim Grosse
Executive Director of Competitive Operations

Cover photo by Todd Bush, www.bushphoto.com

Target Your Customers

With SkyBest TV Local Advertising

It's the affordable, no-waste way to promote your business



You want your advertising message to hit the mark and reach your customers. But you don't want to waste money also reaching people outside the circle of your market area. To get precisely what you want (and nothing you don't), choose SkyBest TV local advertising.

Pinpoint Local Customers Only

Robin Miller, Inside Sales Coordinator, notes, "SkyBest TV local advertising is an easy way for businesses to put their messages on the powerful medium of TV. What's more, it's affordable because it's limited to the local customer base. Starting at only \$5.00 per aired commercial, SkyBest TV local advertising helps businesses get the most out of their marketing budgets."

Michelle Scott, Inside Sales Coordinator, adds, "As an added benefit, these TV commercials are also placed on www.SkyBestTV.com with a link to the advertiser's website. This provides valuable added exposure."

Options to Fit Any Business

The first advertising option your business may want to consider is a sponsorship on SkyBest TV's local channel, SkyZone HD. It features sports programming from area schools in Ashe, Alleghany, Avery and Watauga counties including high school football game coverage. Says Miller, "We offer full season and individual game sponsorships for each county. These are a great way for businesses to reach local families and show their support for school athletic teams."

A second category of TV advertising now available from SkyBest is local ad insertions on these major networks: A&E, TBS, ABC Family, History, USA, HGTV, Discovery Channel, Fox News Channel, Food Network and TNT. Such advertising enables your business to target customers based on their viewing preferences.

For example, if you own a furniture store and want to reach women 25 and older who are homeowners, you may choose to run your TV commercial during a popular decorating program on HGTV. If you want to increase dinner traffic at your family restaurant, you might place an appetizing promotion within a movie on ABC Family. Your sales message will be aired during "big name" programming yet you pay only the "small ticket" price of SkyBest TV local advertising.

Miller encourages even small businesses with small budgets to make TV part of their marketing program. She explains, "No experience in TV advertising is required, because the SkyBest sales and marketing team will walk your business through the entire process. It starts with a consultation where we help determine the channel or channels best suited for your marketing goals and customers. We also offer budget-friendly production of TV commercials—either full video or still image presentations—with quick turn-around times."

To target your customers with SkyBest TV local advertising, contact Robin or Michelle today:



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robin.miller@skyline.org



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Please note: SkyBest TV is available on a limited basis to fiber-optic communities only. Call 1.800.759.2226 to find out if SkyBest TV is currently available in your community.

Laurel Ridge

This camp in the Blue Ridge Mountains is saving plenty of green thanks to SkyLine



The Higgins Lodge offers lodging and conference rooms for large groups.

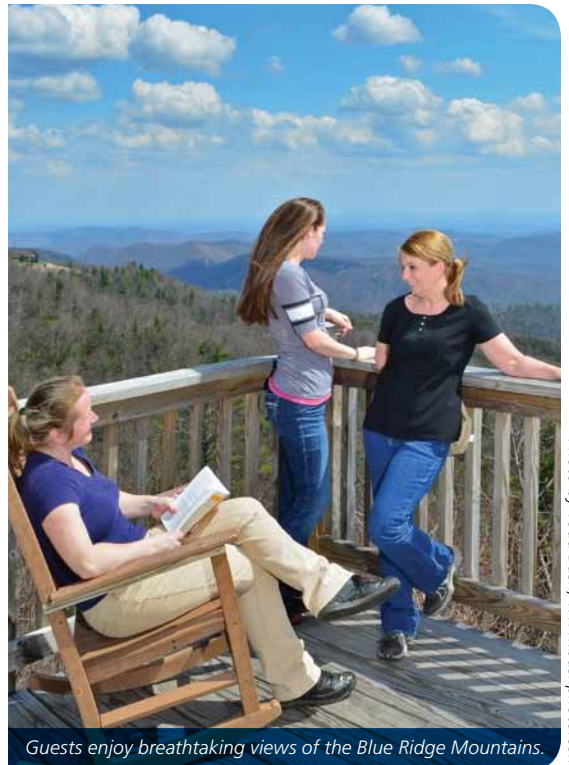


Photo by Todd Bush, www.bushphoto.com

Guests enjoy breathtaking views of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Located in Laurel Springs, Laurel Ridge features more than 700 acres of woods, hiking trails, waterfalls and spectacular mountain views, drawing visitors from around the globe. The nonprofit camp, conference and retreat center is available for use by church and school groups, local businesses, community organizations and public events.

Director Warren Kaestner notes, “Laurel Ridge provides an environment that promotes productive meeting experiences and team-building opportunities by eliminating the noise and distractions of typical everyday surroundings. We have great meeting rooms and dining spaces as well as overnight facilities, plus the kind of service that will help you stay focused on the needs of your specific group.”

Their overnight facilities include a variety of accommodations ranging from the 48-bedroom Higgins Lodge with five conference rooms and a terrace all the way down to the one-person Gemeinhouse cabin.

While being nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains is an asset for Laurel Ridge in terms of natural beauty, the location sometimes proved challenging in terms of receiving certain communications services. Explains Kaestner, “We have operated for years in a location where many services are sporadic at best.”

Fiber Brings Enhanced Services

Laurel Ridge’s facilities have grown tremendously over the years. To keep pace with this growth and meet the increased requirements for communications technology, SkyLine is in the process of installing a full fiber connection at Laurel Ridge.

If we had incorporated SkyBest Long-Distance with our SkyLine service in 2012, we would have saved almost 60 percent on our long-distance charges alone, amounting to more than \$5,000.”

— WARREN KAESTNER, DIRECTOR, LAUREL RIDGE

Robin Miller, Inside Sales Coordinator, is part of the SkyLine team that works on the Laurel Ridge account. Miller says, “We recently converted three of the staff residences to a full fiber connection, complete with SkyBest TV. Up until a few months ago, Laurel Ridge was utilizing a copper connection for telephone and Internet, and had to rely on antenna reception for TV. We are in the process of upgrading its broadband connectivity to fiber at Higgins Lodge, as well

as its office locations. In the past, Laurel Ridge's physical location prevented it from upgrading to a higher Internet speed than the standard offer. But with our fiber connections, Laurel Ridge can experience all the benefits of fiber, including faster Internet speeds and SkyBest TV."

Kaestner is pleased with how the future looks with fiber. He says, "The new fiber capability will greatly enhance the capabilities of our Internet and TV services. Our guests have increasing needs when it comes to the technology required to handle their conferences and meetings. The increased performance we now have with fiber connectivity from SkyLine puts Laurel Ridge in a much better position to provide the technology services our guests expect. It has also dramatically improved the efficiency of our staff and their ability to successfully meet guest needs."

Long-Distance Costs Cut by 60 Percent

This switch to fiber isn't the only major development brought to Laurel Ridge by SkyLine. Dramatic savings in long-distance costs is another.

Notes Kaestner, "For many years, Laurel Ridge had been a customer of another

service provider. In an effort to find ways to save money, we asked representatives from SkyLine to do a side-by-side comparison of our 2012 long-distance rates with that provider versus what SkyLine could offer us. What that side-by-side comparison revealed was incredible. If we had incorporated SkyBest Long-Distance with our SkyLine services in 2012, we would have saved almost 60 percent on our long-distance charges alone, amounting to more than \$5,000. That amount of money would have provided full scholarships for 18 campers in our Summer Camp program—a monumental sum for our kind of nonprofit organization."

Not surprisingly, Laurel Ridge switched its long-distance service to SkyLine/SkyBest. Kaestner says, "In addition to the huge savings, we also have services available to us that we did not have with our previous phone provider. We're able to take advantage of SkyLine's triple play package of telephone, high-speed Internet and TV. What's more, it's very important to Laurel Ridge to build as many business relationships as possible in our local community. Our experience with SkyLine representatives has been one of very prompt, courteous and professional service. The only downside is that we didn't sign up for SkyBest Long-Distance years ago."



Laurel Ridge makes a splash with campers.

The Many Facets of This "Hidden Gem" in the Mountains

In addition to private events arranged by a variety of guest groups, Laurel Ridge also has its own public Calendar of Events for 2013. It includes the following:

- **Summer Camp Overnight Programs** for youth from grades two through college.
- **Mission Camp Programs** where junior and senior high school students coordinate with local agencies to do work projects for those in need in our mountain communities.
- **Ridge Cruisin'** classic car event on August 3.
- **Golf Tournament** on August 16.
- **Moravian Mountain Christmas**, a celebration of traditional favorites on December 7.

Is your business or community organization planning a conference? Contact Laurel Ridge at 336-359-2951 or visit www.laurelridge.org. Director Warren Kaestner says, "We would love to provide a tour of our facility and discuss how we can serve your needs."



A variety of conferences are held at Laurel Ridge.



A SkyLine fiber connection improved Internet speeds.

Photos by Todd Bush, www.bushphoto.com



Take A Minute To Pick A Bucket Of Minutes

Get out your phone bills and look at the average number of long-distance minutes your business uses each month. Then, let's talk about which money-saving Business Freedom Plan best fits your calling needs.

Regardless of which plan you choose, the bucket of minutes can be shared between multiple phone lines on your account.

Business Freedom 500 Plan

Get a bucket of 500 minutes for a monthly rate of \$34.95. Each minute above 500 minutes is billed at \$0.08 per minute.

Business Freedom 1000 Plan

Get a bucket of 1,000 minutes for a monthly rate of \$59.95. Each minute above 1,000 minutes is billed at \$0.08 per minute.

Business Freedom 2000 Plan

Get a bucket of 2,000 minutes for a monthly rate of \$119.90. Each minute above 2,000 minutes is billed at \$0.06 per minute.

Business Freedom Plans are Great Long-Distance Values

Business customers can save money by switching to SkyBest

SkyBest introduced the Business Freedom 500 Plan in August 2008. It offers a bucket of 500 long-distance minutes for a flat monthly rate with additional minutes billed at a per-minute rate. With this plan came requests for even larger buckets of minutes. As a result, SkyBest added the Business Freedom 1000 Plan in June 2012 and the Business Freedom 2000 Plan in December 2012. (See sidebar for details.)

Could your business save money by switching to a Business Freedom Plan? Robin Miller, Inside Sales Coordinator, suggests calling for a free consultation to find out. Miller notes, "If your business doesn't have SkyBest Long-Distance now, we would be happy to do a cost analysis between SkyBest and your current long-distance provider. In my experience, most business customers save money with one of our Business Freedom Plans."

Miller shares several examples of how local businesses were able to save by switching to SkyBest Long-Distance:

- "A small municipal agency inquired about pricing on SkyBest Long-Distance packages versus what it was currently paying its provider. After a quick review, I was able to save the agency \$68.00 per month."

- "A local law firm requested assistance on ways to save money on its telecommunications bill. We switched its long-distance to SkyBest and now the firm is enjoying cost savings of around \$63.00 per month."
- "When we were looking at the overall savings package we could offer Laurel Ridge Moravian Camp, we compared our Business Freedom 1000 Plan with its current long-distance provider. We've saved the camp hundreds of dollars per month since it switched to SkyBest."

To arrange a free consultation and long-distance cost comparison, call 1.800.759.2226 or contact:



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Teaming Up for Communities

SkyLine employees regularly team up to contribute their time and talents for the good of our communities. This reflects our mission statement, which states in part, “we will be good corporate citizens and strive to enhance the quality of life in the areas we serve.” Here’s a snapshot of some community activities in which we participate:



Pictured at our booth during the Boone Business Expo, left to right, are: Outside Sales Executive Graham Brown, Inside Sales Coordinator Robin Miller, Customer Service Representative Debbie Stephens and Business Sales Executive Brent Keith.

BOONE BUSINESS EXPO, HIGH COUNTRY HOME & REMODELING EXPO AND ASHE COUNTY HOME SWEET HOME SHOW

In April and May, SkyLine/SkyBest was among several local businesses to participate in the annual Boone Business Expo, sponsored by the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce, and the High Country Home & Remodeling Expo. At these events, our staff met with customers and the public to answer questions about our wide array of products and services.

On July 20, come see SkyLine/SkyBest at the Home Sweet Home Show in Ashe County at the Faith Fellowship Building located on the four-lane between West Jefferson and Jefferson. You’re sure to pick up lots of ideas for making your home sweet home even sweeter.

AREA RELAY FOR LIFE EVENTS NEED YOUR SUPPORT

SkyLine has been a supporter of the American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life for several years. In some counties, we field SkyLine teams; in other counties, our employees may take part as members of other community, family or church teams. Collectively, we are all making a difference in the fight against cancer.

Listed below are Relay for Life events across our service area. We appreciate your support of these life-changing fundraisers.

- **Watauga County** - Watauga High School, Boone, NC - June 14
- **Alleghany County** - Alleghany High School, Sparta, NC - July 13
- **Ashe County** - Ashe County High School, West Jefferson, NC - July 19
- **Avery County** - Avery County High School, Newland, NC - July 26



CALL 811 BEFORE YOU DIG



Each year, lives are endangered, money and time are wasted and property is destroyed because individuals fail to follow safe digging practices. The “One-Call” system, which is free to the excavator as well as the business owner or homeowner, helps those who dig comply with the safety rules and regulations of the construction industry.

In a typical community, a complex web of utility lines are buried under lawns, sidewalks and driveways. When digging, one wrong move might cause residents or businesses to be cut off from heat, electricity, telephones, water, 911 calls and other vital services.

To help prevent these damages, simply call the toll-free telephone number, 811, and the One-Call staff will notify its member utilities to mark the ground on your property with color-coded paint. In fact, North Carolina state law requires homeowners, contractors and excavators to contact the One-Call Center at least two business days before digging. Our Shady Valley customers can also call the Tennessee One-Call Center at 811 from their homes or businesses located in the 739 telephone exchange.

When you contact the One-Call Center, you’ll need to provide the following: county and town, street address of the location of excavation or digging project, nearest cross street, area to be marked, date and time of excavation or digging, type of work, your name and number or the contractor’s contact information. Thanks in advance for your cooperation.

Local Business. Local Advertising.



"As a dealership, we constantly have to keep our name in front of our local area customers. With SkyBest TV, we can pinpoint a time of day to attract more visibility, as well as the type of programming we support based on values. If the family can't watch it together, we don't want it! SkyLine/SkyBest has made it convenient and cost effective to accomplish our goal of direct and efficient advertising. Plus, we know we are part of the High Country's family television time together. Great company and easy to work with, all while keeping it local! Thanks SkyLine/SkyBest!" - **Owner Jeff Dollar**

Visit www.SkyBestTV.com or contact
your local Sales Representative
to begin advertising today!

SkyBest TV

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