

**BUSINESS**

# connections



The  
**Eseeola**  
Lodge

**AT LINVILLE GOLF CLUB**



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# BUSINESS connections

**Most of us need to “get away from it all” at times.** Since this is our summer issue of *Business Connections*, it seemed appropriate to go with a vacation theme.

You’ll find tips for **Dealing with the Dreaded Post-Vacation Inbox** on page 3. Be sure to “unpack” the advice in this article to create a smoother transition from relaxing at the dock to working at your desk.

Every vacation needs comfortable and memorable accommodations, and **The Eseeola Lodge** has provided them in Linville since 1892. Don’t miss this **Business Spotlight** on pages 4 and 5, which includes a discussion of the SkyLine/SkyBest service that began in May 2019.

Even when we’re not on vacation, it’s beneficial to explore new territory. As you’ll learn on page 6, **SkyLine/SkyBest Sponsored Vision Northwest North Carolina**, a one-day summit where attendees learned from each other about ideas related to economic and workforce development.

Then on page 7, we explore the answer to the question, **What is a Smart Rural Community?** We hope 2019 has included plenty of restful moments away from your work responsibilities. Remember that SkyLine/SkyBest is here to help make the time you do spend working as efficient and productive as possible. Contact us anytime with questions.



Sincerely,

Kim Shepherd  
Chief Executive Officer

Cover photo by Todd Bush, bushphoto.com

*Pictured L-R: Marcy Ollis, Eseeola Lodge Executive Assistant; Edward Hinson, SkyLine/SkyBest Chief Marketing & Sales Officer; Brent Keith, SkyLine/SkyBest Strategic Sales Supervisor; John Blackburn, Eseeola Lodge President/General Manager; Sam Gates, SkyLine/SkyBest Field Services Technician; Hollie Brown, SkyLine/SkyBest Inside Sales Coordinator; Chris Byars, Eseeola Lodge Rental Agent; Robin Miller, SkyLine/SkyBest Inside Sales Coordinator; James Horney, SkyLine/SkyBest Field Services Technician*



# Dealing with the Dreaded Post-Vacation Inbox

*There are ways to keep email from souring your sweet getaways*

The relaxed state you bring to the office after your vacation can quickly disappear the minute you see your overflowing email inbox. Try these strategies before, during and after your time away to reduce your email stress.

## Be Proactive Before You Leave

About a week before you leave for your vacation, let your most important business contacts—clients and team members with whom you interact on a daily or weekly basis—know your vacation schedule. Include the dates you'll be out as well as your availability by email or phone. If you'll be out of reach and someone else will be handling projects for you, let these contacts know and pass along the colleague's contact information.

This proactive step will not only help reduce the number of emails waiting for you upon your return, it will also reassure clients their business is being taken care of in your absence. In addition, it tells your contacts that if they have a pressing need, they should mention it now.

## Set Boundaries While You're Away

In order to carve out time to actually enjoy your vacation, you need a way to manage incoming emails. There are a couple of options here. You can set up an "out of office" message that includes:

- The date you will return to work
- What people can expect regarding a reply from you—if you'll be checking emails and replying occasionally, for example, or only replying when you return

- The name and contact information for the colleague who will be covering your essential job responsibilities
- Words like "personal vacation" or "out of town with family" to reinforce that you're on a true vacation and not a business trip

Another option is to have all your email messages automatically forwarded to the colleague who will be handling your work while you're away. This alternative saves your correspondents the extra step of having to send a separate email to that person.

## Be Discerning When You Get Back

If your schedule permits, create a "buffer day" by telling business contacts you'll be back in the office one or two days after you're actually back. This will give you some time to get caught up on email and other tasks.

When you finally do go through those hundreds of messages in your inbox, sort by sender instead of by date, which will help you find and tackle the most important messages first, and easily delete those that are no longer relevant.

With a little forethought, you can successfully tame the technology beast and truly enjoy your time off.

# The Eseeola Lodge at Linville Golf Club

*Inside and out, nature's beauty is enhanced by technology's power*



*Pictured L-R: Robin Miller, SkyLine/SkyBest Inside Sales Coordinator; Hollie Brown, SkyLine/SkyBest Inside Sales Coordinator; and Marcy Ollis, Executive Assistant, The Eseeola Lodge*

The Eseeola Lodge served as Linville's social and economic hub since its beginnings in 1892. Locals worked at the hotel, local farms supplied food and visitors came for the exceptional dining, service and leisure activities. Today, The Eseeola Lodge remains steeped in this cherished tradition while benefitting from 127 years of evolution and growth.

Guests of The Eseeola Lodge can choose from 24 guest rooms, suites and private cottages, all with picturesque views of the area from a private balcony. This allows them to enjoy what Harvard professor William James, who built the original inn, described as, "One of the most poetic places I have ever been."

## Pampering Perks

Amenities are carefully chosen to help guests relax and feel pampered. They include:

- Traditional hickory sapling furniture
- Pillow-top mattresses with extra length
- Down bedding
- Patchwork quilts
- Luxurious cotton robes
- Refrigerators
- Bottled water
- *The Charlotte Observer* delivered daily
- Afternoon ice delivery
- Turn-down service
- L'Occitane bath and skincare products

In addition, guests of The Eseeola Lodge can easily stay connected to the latest entertainment and information through SkyBest TV and high-speed wireless internet service in their rooms. Guests also gain privileged access to the legendary championship course at Linville Golf Club, which has been challenging golfers since 1924. For a change of pace from golf, The Eseeola Lodge offers a gym, walking trails, tennis courts, croquet, clay shooting and fishing on the Linville River.

After all that activity—or perhaps instead of it—guests can indulge in rejuvenation at the Spa at Eseeola Lodge. It features four private treatment rooms and a variety of services provided by a professional staff of massage therapists, estheticians and cosmetologists.

Breakfast and dinner are included in all stays at The Eseeola Lodge. Dining opportunities include elegant four-course dinners as well as more casual fare at The Red Fox Tavern.



**“Our internet speed is now lightning fast—much faster than we had from our previous provider.”**

— **MARCYE OLLIS**, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT, THE ESEEOLA LODGE

### New Services for a New Season

Executive Assistant Marcye Ollis noted, “We’re a private club, but The Eseeola Lodge is open to the public. Our season is from May to October. We swell from 48 full-time employees during the off season to 220 during the summer.”

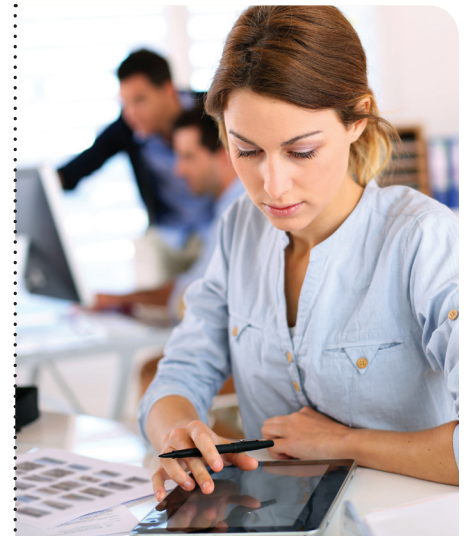
SkyLine/SkyBest began working with The Eseeola Lodge early in 2019 in preparation for turning on new communications services in May. Those services were broadband, Metro-E, SkyBest TV and business phone lines.

Brent Keith, Strategic Sales Supervisor, said, “SkyLine/SkyBest is honored to have The Eseeola Lodge as a new customer and to help connect its rich history with the technology of the future. Our Metro-based 250/250 Mbps connection provides the resort with top-tier broadband access.”

This SkyLine/SkyBest internet connection was an instant hit with both employees and guests.

Ollis shared, “Our internet speed is now lightning fast—much faster than we had from our previous provider. It’s made a big difference for our hotel guests who need to download large files. Everybody loves it.”

She added, “We appreciate the fact that with SkyLine/SkyBest, we’re able to call someone local when we need help. We know our SkyLine/SkyBest service people. With our previous provider, the techs sometimes came from other cities, and it often took several days for them to respond to a service issue. We get much better turnaround on service calls from SkyLine/SkyBest.”



### Your Business Deserves the Best Connections

Choose SkyBest to get everything your business needs from its internet service:

- **The Fastest Speeds Available** – SkyBest offers fiber-based broadband internet service with speeds up to 1 Gig, which equals a mind-boggling 1,000 Mbps.
- **Dedicated Fiber-Optic Internet** – Your connection is not shared with other customers, resulting in maximum reliability and NO peak-hour slowdowns.
- **Symmetrical Internet Speeds** – Your upload speed is as fast as your download speed, which is especially beneficial if your business regularly uploads large data files to the cloud.
- **Knowledgeable Local Support** – The SkyBest team takes your success personally and is just a phone call away when your business needs assistance.

**Check your current internet speed using the Broadband Internet Speed Test at <http://skybestsupport.net>. To discuss your options for a speed upgrade, call our Business Sales team at 1-844-SKYBEST.**



*Pictured L-R: Edward Hinson, SkyLine/SkyBest Chief Marketing & Sales Officer; Brent Keith, SkyLine/SkyBest Strategic Sales Supervisor; and John Blackburn, The Eseeola Lodge President/General Manager*

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# SkyLine/SkyBest Sponsored Vision Northwest North Carolina

*One-day summit focused on “Economic Leadership for 2020 & Beyond”*

On May 22, 2019, 180 leaders from the education, economic development and business communities participated in the inaugural Vision Northwest North Carolina summit, held in Boone at Leon Levine Hall. Attendees came from the 12 counties in the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina’s Northwest Prosperity Zone: Alleghany, Alexander, Ashe, Avery, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, McDowell, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey.

Headlined by keynote speakers Christopher Chung, CEO of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, and George Sherrill, Chief of Staff for the North Carolina Department of Commerce, the event featured a total of 16 speakers and panelists to fuel economic leadership discussions.

#### Topics for discussion included:

- Lessons learned and opportunities shared from development-minded leaders in the region and beyond
- Workforce development trends and employee retention and benefit strategies in the Northwest Prosperity Zone
- Talent development and trends in training/education of the workforce of tomorrow
- Developing regional collaboration on economic development projects

Vision Northwest North Carolina was co-sponsored by SkyLine/SkyBest and Carolina West Wireless and organized by the Appalachian State Career Development Center, Boone Area Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina and the Watauga County Economic Development Commission.

As one of the presenting sponsors of Vision Northwest North Carolina, SkyLine/SkyBest is doing our part to keep this event, and North Carolina as a whole, moving forward in today’s technology-driven world. Connectivity is becoming increasingly vital for economic development, telehealth and education — especially in our state’s rural areas.

David Jackson, President/CEO of the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce, said, “We were encouraged by the regional relationship

building that occurred at this event. We were inspired to host this forum after hearing discussion on many of these topics at the State level. Our organizing committee sought to create an event that could bring economic development talking points to Northwest North Carolina, and intimately discuss how these issues effect our region directly. Not only were the messages and success stories insightful when delivered in this geographic context, but the opportunity for economic development professionals to spend time with one another addressing challenges and opportunities will drive our region’s growth moving forward.”

**For more information on being part of next year’s Vision Northwest North Carolina, contact David Jackson at the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce at 828-264-2225 or [david@boonechamber.com](mailto:david@boonechamber.com).**



*Christopher Chung, CEO of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, gives his keynote address.*

# What is a Smart Rural Community?

*Broadband enables rural Americans to enhance competitiveness and quality of life*



You've heard of smart homes, smartphones and the smart grid, which all rely on broadband technology to operate more effectively and efficiently. The same technology can be used to enhance entire communities.

NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association has an initiative—known as Smart Rural Community—that promotes rural broadband networks and related applications. The program encourages rural areas to use broadband to foster economic development, commerce, education, healthcare, government services, efficient energy use and public safety and security. The program is based on the understanding that communities across the U.S. must be able to compete in a global marketplace, and that rural communities are often at a disadvantage in that they typically have less access to the tools and technologies that make it possible.

What makes a rural community “smart”? A truly smart community relies not only on technology, but also on the people who adopt and employ broadband-related services. For example, it uses broadband to gain outcomes such as these:

- **Customized learning environments** for students, including interactive and collaborative components
- **A dynamic healthcare infrastructure** capable of supporting such applications as electronic scheduling and patient monitoring
- **Precision farming tools** such as real-time weather reports and other helpful information that enable them to make better decisions
- **Platforms for connecting citizens** with local, state and federal government resources
- **A next-generation 911 system** that allows first responders to communicate efficiently during emergencies

- **Modern utility networks** that give users more information and control
- **An energy-saving smart home network** that enables appliances and devices to connect with each other

NTCA members that achieve certain network and service standards can apply to become a Smart Rural Community Provider™ and join the national network of innovative rural broadband providers building smarter rural communities. Smart Rural Community Providers™ are NTCA provider members who offer 25/3 Mbps broadband to 50% or more of their service area, have broadband subscription rates of at least 50% and affirm their commitment to Smart Rural Community principles of collaborative innovation.



The SRC program acknowledges there are differences in what makes each community smart. The key is for community leaders to work together to determine needs and interests, as well as specific goals and how to meet them, in each locale. As time goes on, each community's plans should evolve to meet its changing requirements.

**SkyLine/SkyBest was named a Smart Rural Community Showcase Award winner in 2016 and continues to explore new ways to use technology to improve lives in the communities we serve.**



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