

BUSINESS connections



Holton Mountain Rentals Makes People Feel at Home

SkyLine/SkyBest works with Holton Mountain Rentals on their latest project. Pictured L to R: SkyBest Strategic Sales Supervisor Brent Keith, Holton Mountain Rentals Zach Smithey, office manager Kelly Holton, bookkeeper Sandra Stanbery, and owners Beverly and Rob Holton.



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Technology and customer service go hand in hand. As more aspects of life become dependent on technology, your customers are likely to expect you to keep up with the changes. Fortunately, there are many options for ensuring that you meet their expectations. This issue of *Business Connections* explores just a few.

First, Does Your Business Have a Technology Plan? If not, consider creating one to confirm you're on the right technology path. We show you on page 3 why such a plan is essential and how to get started.

On pages 4 and 5, our Business Spotlight features **Holton Mountain Rentals**, a property rental agency with a focus on timely and effective maintenance. The company's customer service focus also extends to its technology offerings, with fiber-optic connections in many of its rental units.

Turn to page 6 for tips on using **TV as a Work Tool**. Customers and patients appreciate having something to do when they're waiting for service, and employees value TV to stay informed about current events.

Finally, on page 7, we look at **Why Fiber is Good for You**. Better, faster Internet service for your business translates into an improved experience for your customers.

We're happy to help you use technology to better serve your customers. Just let us know how we can assist.

Sincerely,

Jimmy C. Blevins
Chief Executive Officer



Does Your Business Have a Technology Plan?

Think strategically about hardware, software and technical support



A technology plan is similar to a business plan, financial plan or human resources plan, in that it helps you tie a specific area of your business to overall business goals. A technology plan can help you think about the future, allowing you to prepare for your company's upcoming needs and grow as technology changes over time. Your company needs a technology plan, no matter its size or offerings, and whether or not it specializes in technology.

Benefits of a Technology Plan

With a technology plan, your company can proactively adapt to, and keep up with, technological advances, which is beneficial in a number of ways:

- You'll be more likely to meet technology goals if you have them. A technology plan is where you can record such goals and track their progress.
- Your business will have the right equipment to meet new customer demands.
- You'll be ahead of the technology curve, signaling to customers that you're competent in other areas of your business as well.
- You'll have a budget for purchasing new technology so these expenses won't come as a surprise and throw off your finances.
- Your business may attract younger workers to whom up-to-date technology is not just an added bonus, but expected.

- You may save money. By not planning ahead, you risk having technology that becomes obsolete and needs to be replaced every few years. Thinking ahead and investing in better equipment can also result in fewer problems and less time and money needed to deal with them.

How to Get Started

The first step in building a technology plan is to assess your company's current technology. Ask for feedback from both customers and employees to see what needs to be improved. Look for areas of your business that could use more technology to make the work more efficient. Also, look for places where you may have technology that you don't need (for example, printers in a paperless office).

Next, think about what you want to accomplish in your business and how technology can help. Set goals accordingly. Make sure to consider the feasibility of the goals, including how much time and money it will take to complete each one. Consider what technology might be needed if your company grows and how technology may change over time.

After you create the plan, it's time to start implementation. Then, don't forget to revisit and revise it each year.

Technology plans help businesses reach their goals. For more information about how SkyLine/SkyBest can help meet your technology needs, call 1-844-SKYBEST.

Holton Mountain Rentals

Strong customer focus impresses renters for 35 years



Photo by Todd Bush, www.bushphoto.com

Pictured above: Holton Mountain Rentals and SkyLine! SkyBest review plans for bringing fiber-optic Internet and TV service to another rental property in Watauga County. Pictured L to R: SkyBest's Brent Keith with Kelly Holton and Rob Holton.

Page 5, upper photo: Students enjoy crystal-clear SkyBest TV in their Holton Mountain Rentals apartment.

Page 5, bottom photo: As an effort of quality assurance, SkyLine! SkyBest Field Services Technician Sam Gates checks for adequate bandwidth at a Holton rental property.

Holton Mountain Rentals started in 1980 and has grown considerably since then. Robert and Beverly Holton, co-owners, operated a stereo and TV appliance store at the time and initially managed 10 apartments as a side business. By 1983 they were managing 32 units, and in 1987 they purchased two small property management companies, which allowed them to grow to 100 units.

24/7 Maintenance and Repairs

Today, as one of the largest property management companies in Watauga County, Holton Mountain Rentals manages over 500 dwelling units including apartments, condos, houses, duplexes and some commercial space in the Boone area. Most rentals are long term with one year leases. Robert Holton describes typical renters: "A high percentage of our renters are students, and many of the units we manage are near campus. But we also rent to families and working professionals."

A key to the company's success is keeping all the units in good condition and well maintained. Holton says, "We have 24/7 on-call service, and we pride ourselves on taking care of maintenance and repairs

on a timely basis. Many of our tenants tell us they appreciate this aspect of our company, and that they're surprised by it."

Rob Holton notes that the company couldn't offer the quality of service it does without its excellent staff. In addition to the Holtons, employees include Sandra Stanbery, who has worked as a bookkeeper for over 30 years; Kelly Holton, the Holtons' daughter, who runs the day-to-day leasing and serves as the office manager; and Zach Smithey, the Holtons' nephew, who handles maintenance, remodeling and other functions. Kelly and Zach have both worked for the family business since a young age and now they are the next generation of management.

Supporting Customers and the Community

Rob Holton has a history of participating in various community organizations. He was the chairman of the Watauga County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) for six years. While he was in this position, the board raised the funds for and built the Rocky Knob Mountain Bike Park with the cooperation of Watauga County. Holton is also a former chairman of the Watauga County Economic

Development Commission and has volunteered for various organizations.

Located at 480 Highway 105 Extension, in Boone, the company office is a nice brick building with a warm, rustic décor. Holton notes, "The first thing you see across the big main room is a welcoming sitting area with a fireplace and two leather sofas. We also have a kiosk—a bar-height table with stools and computers—so folks can look at our website right there in the office and ask us questions. The information includes pictures, floor plans and pricing. We offer one of the best selections in the area, as well as excellent value. We have properties in all price ranges for people's different needs."

Quality Internet Means Greater Value

To offer even greater value to tenants, Holton Mountain Rentals provides SkyBest broadband services, fiber-optic connections, WiFi and Ethernet at some of its properties, with plans to install it at additional properties in the near future. SkyBest Strategic Sales Supervisor Brent Keith notes, "Holton Mountain Rentals has been able to increase tenants' Internet speed with our 12 Mbps download and 1 Mbps upload broadband service at one location, and 20 Mbps/1 Mbps at another." The rental agency also recently added a new phone service to its office and will soon add SkyBest TV for tenants.

SkyBest has gone above and beyond, making sure there are no issues and everything is working correctly."

— ROBERT HOLTON, CO-OWNER, HOLTON MOUNTAIN RENTALS

Holton comments, "These services allow us to give tenants a high-quality Internet connection. In addition, SkyBest has gone above and beyond, making sure there are no issues and everything is working correctly." He adds, "Tenants really like the services SkyBest offers, which are included in their rent."



Top photo by Todd Bush, www.bushphoto.com



Keith notes that SkyBest provides a one-bill solution to Holton Mountain Rentals. He says, "Our ability to offer all of the services they need under one umbrella allows us to provide the best rates, simple billing and one source for support." He adds, "We have had the pleasure of working with Holton Mountain Rentals since the beginning of 2014 and enjoy a great relationship with their entire team. In today's environment, tenants often choose their homes based on the best Internet and TV services available. Holton Mountain Rentals chose SkyBest services to maintain their reputation as the leading top-quality rental housing provider in Boone."

Check Out These Important Business Listings

The following are White and Yellow Page listing omissions and corrections for our 2014-2015 telephone directory. Please keep this list with your directory for future reference.

Ashe Optometric Eye Care Center
306 S Jefferson Ave,
West Jefferson 28694
336-246-8863

Blue Ridge Appraisal Service Inc
903 Bairds Creek Rd, Vilas 28692
828-963-7091

**Blue Ridge Energies
Sparta Office**
1889 US 21 South, Sparta 28675
336-372-1742

**Boondocks Brewing
Tap Room and Restaurant**
108 S Jefferson Avenue,
West Jefferson 28694
336-246-5222

**Johnston & Johnston,
Attorneys at Law**
306 East Main Street
Jefferson 28640
Phone: 336-246-3311
Fax: 336-246-2537

**Lost Province
Brewing Company, LLC**
130 N Depot St, Boone 28607
828-265-3506 or 828-865-1019

**McLean Outdoor
Power Equipment Service**
378 NC Hwy 105 Bypass, Boone 28607
828-297-4101

People's Drug Store
423 East 2nd Street
West Jefferson 28694
336-246-9990

Regency Properties
204 East Main Street
West Jefferson 28694
336-246-2307

**West Jefferson
United Methodist Church**
107 W Second Street
West Jefferson 28694
336-246-5292



Who's Minding Your Business?

Drew Piscopo Media Consultant

Media Consultant Drew Piscopo has been at his job since May 2014 and really enjoys what he does. "This is the friendliest place I've ever worked," he comments.

Piscopo's job involves helping businesses understand how advertising can



be an important tool for them. He explains, "I call on companies to determine if they have an interest in TV advertising, set up appointments and sell the ads. Then I coordinate the commercial production." His favorite part of the job is finding out the goals of business owners and then helping to meet them.

Piscopo previously worked as a sports reporter and a sales consultant. He says, "Both jobs have helped me here at SkyLine." Piscopo has a bachelor's degree (B.A.) in mass communications from Emory & Henry College. While there, he was the football team's starting quarterback.

When not busy with work, Piscopo spends time with his fiancée and helps coach football at Ashe County High School.

Advertising packages start at only \$119 per month.

TV as a Work Tool

Patients, customers, and employees all appreciate TV service



Have your patients run out of patience? Has your lobby's waiting room turned into a "bored" room? Or are your employees hungry for entertainment while they eat their lunch? SkyBest TV could be just the solution. SkyBest TV brings you the best in digital television with digital quality picture and sound including a wide selection of local, premium and digital music channels. By adding SkyBest TV to your workplace, you can watch your business benefit in several ways.

Prevent Patient Impatience

Busy people see their time as valuable and want to make the most of it. If patients need to wait for medical appointments, for instance, they appreciate being able to use that time to watch the news. Supplying digital television in your waiting room demonstrates your medical office's thoughtful concern for patients and their families. Some dentists take this idea a step further by offering TV viewing during treatment to help distract and relax patients.

Make Waits More Enjoyable

SkyBest TV can be an effective way to keep customers occupied and happy while waiting for service to be completed at a vehicle repair shop or similar facility. If your business has a waiting room, consider using digital television to enhance your level of customer service.

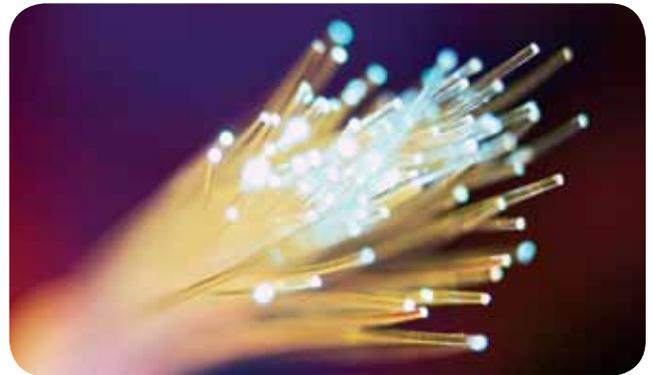
Keep Employees Informed

Of course, your employees will enjoy being able to relax with a favorite show during their lunch break. But the benefits go beyond just improving employee morale. SkyBest TV can also serve as an important information resource for employees to keep up to date on current happenings. With TVs in the lobby and break room, everyone in your building can have access to information about breaking news or extreme weather.

Interested in providing SkyBest TV at your business? To find out more, visit skybesttv.com.

Why **Fiber** is Good for You

Future-proof technology offers faster service and yields higher home values



Fiber to the Premise (FTTP) refers to extending fiber-optic cable to the premises of homes and businesses. Optical fibers are flexible, hair-thin strands of glass that use light instead of electricity to carry a signal. They are unique in their ability to carry high bandwidth signals over long distances.

A Better Delivery Method

FTTP contrasts with other fiber-optic communication delivery strategies that depend on less robust materials for “last mile” delivery. FTTP has a much longer lifespan than cable or copper systems and is up to 1,000 times faster than DSL or cable modems.

Continued Growth Expected

According to the Fiber to the Home Council, about one-fifth of U.S. households now have fiber connections available, which is less than the rest of the developed world. But American broadband providers are working hard to catch up.

Call 1-844-SKYBEST today to see if FTTP is available in your area!

Benefits to Local Customers

SkyLine/SkyBest is pleased to be a leader in this exciting FTTP infrastructure transformation as we already have connected more than 80 percent of our service area to our fiber-optic network. FTTP offers potential benefits to area homeowners, businesses, developers and the environment:

- **Homeowners and business users enjoy better, faster services.** With FTTP, users gain increased bandwidth quality, quantity and capacity.
- **Developers command premium prices.** Homes in FTTP-connected communities command premium prices compared to homes in communities without optical connectivity.
- **More connected homes benefit the environment and provide flexibility for businesses.** As more homes become connected to fast, reliable Internet service, more workers can telecommute, cutting down on gas usage.

As illustrated on this map, the shaded areas represent fiber deployment throughout North Carolina and a significant concentration of fiber presence appears in the four northwestern N.C. counties SkyLine serves. In



addition, SkyLine’s service area in Shady Valley, Tennessee is completely fiber-based. “When we decided to embark on a complete fiber overbuild, it meant constructing a future-proof network, enabling us to offer a superior and reliable service,” SkyLine CEO Jimmy Blevins said.

Today, more than 80 percent of SkyLine’s service area is fiber ready, meaning that customers can access fiber-optic services that deliver a triple play of services including voice, the fastest available Internet speeds and digital TV services.

Directory Collection Drive Helps Support Schools



Now through the end of March, please bring any outdated telephone directories you have on hand to your local SkyLine customer center location or to one of the 17 local participating public schools. SkyLine donates 25 cents to those schools for each directory they collect. Call us at 118 to learn more.

The North Carolina and Tennessee One Call Centers provide a toll-free telephone number, 8-1-1, to help reduce damages to underground facilities. This reduces the loss of service to the public and the loss of time and money to excavators, utilities and taxpayers.

Be sure to call the One Call Center at 811 before you dig.



Pictured: SkyLine Cable Splicer and Locator, Steve Hart