

BUSINESS connections



NAPCO is Thinking Beyond the Box



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Extra issues are available to business customers on a limited basis while supplies last. Contact Robin Miller at 1-844-SKYBEST.

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BUSINESS connections

It's amazing what strong partnerships can accomplish.

When the right combination of people work together, each with their own talents and experiences, bigger goals can often be reached in a smaller amount of time.

In this issue of *Business Connections*, we celebrate partnerships—not only between individuals but also between businesses and their communities and between businesses and technology. We begin on page 3 with **Corporate Volunteerism Pays Off**, which reviews the many benefits of partnering with local volunteer organizations.

On pages 4 and 5, you'll find a **Business Spotlight on NAPCO**. This packaging manufacturer tripled its sales in the last four years without increasing its labor force, an accomplishment made possible through increased productivity. Founder CEO Rocky Proffitt is grateful for NAPCO's 45-year partnership with SkyLine/SkyBest and for the support and technology that have helped his company grow.

Fiber Sparks Progress in Sparta, as we explore on page 6, followed by the advice that **You Don't Have to Do It All** on page 7. These articles provide examples of what SkyLine/SkyBest brings to the table, from our fiber network to our Managed Wi-Fi.

One of our goals at SkyLine/SkyBest is to build true partnerships with our customers and help you take your business to the next level. Let us know how we can help.



Sincerely,

Kim Shepherd
Chief Executive Officer

ON THE COVER:

Back row, L to R: Andrew Royal, NAPCO; Carol Draughon, Plant Production Manager at NAPCO; Rick Proffitt, VP of Operations at NAPCO; Dustin Weaver, Field Services Technician at SkyLine/SkyBest; and Hadden Williams, Field Services Technician at SkyLine/SkyBest.

Front Row, L to R: Dan Duncan, Director of New Product Development at NAPCO; Rocky Proffitt, Founder & CEO of NAPCO; Zara Worley, Business Sales Executive at SkyLine/SkyBest; Justin Dalton, Field Services Technician at SkyLine/SkyBest; Haleigh Hogg, Business Sales Executive at SkyLine/SkyBest; Gary Brown, Field Services Technician at SkyLine/SkyBest; and Tony Holt, Business Sales Technical Consultant at SkyLine/SkyBest.

Corporate Volunteerism Pays Off

Lend a hand to help your community and your business



SkyLine/SkyBest Promotions Coordinator Myla Farmer participates in the American Red Cross Blood Drive hosted bi-annually by SkyLine/SkyBest.

SkyLine/SkyBest employees load and deliver Christmas gifts for the Appalachian Seniors Programs' Project Star program. L to R: Matthew Ball, Facilities and OSP Engineer; Eric Church, OSP Engineer; Karen Powell, Public Relations Administrator; Brantley Davis, Plant Manager; Myla Farmer, Promotions Coordinator; Kala Johnson, Marketing Supervisor; Allyson Hart, Marketing Specialist; and Elaine Bentley, Mailroom Clerk.



Recent studies have shown that individuals enjoy improved physical and mental health when they volunteer time for a good cause, most likely as a result of a sense of purpose and accomplishment. But can corporate volunteerism have a positive impact on the health of your business as well?

According to volunteermatch.org, a website that helps match volunteers with needs in their communities, businesses of all sizes may enjoy key advantages including:

- **Improved morale and team-building.** When teams work together on a volunteer project outside the office, they forge stronger relationships with each other and feel good about doing something meaningful.
- **Ongoing learning.** Many volunteers pick up new skills they might not have learned in their normal work environment.
- **A broader customer base.** Studies have shown that the majority of young Americans aged 13 to 25 trust a company more if it is socially and/or environmentally responsible. Likewise, they will pay more attention to a company's message if they find that the company is committed to a cause.

If you've considered giving your employees time to do volunteer work, here are suggestions for getting started:

- **Assess employee interests, business objectives and community needs.** Visit volunteermatch.org or local resources to find current volunteer opportunities. Then narrow it down to ones that align with interests and goals of your business.

- **Pick a project (or several).** Most likely, you'll find it best to focus on volunteer projects that will take advantage of the services and products you provide for your customers. For example, landscapers may choose to plant a garden area at a local school, construction teams may renovate a local shelter or marketing firms may create content to promote community events.
- **Set a schedule.** How much time you commit for volunteering is up to you. You may want to offer each employee one or two hours a week to work on a project, or allocate one full week a year on a large group commitment. Choose a schedule that's practical for you and helps achieve your goals.
- **Track your progress.** Just like a sales goal, it's important to make sure that your volunteer efforts are paying off for your business as well as the community. Your success could be measured by anything from improved employee morale to increased publicity for your business.

Make sure you use social media to let people know how your business is making a difference through volunteerism. You could find yourself with a growing pool of potential workers, not to mention a happier, healthier workplace.



NAPCO

**For 45 years,
SkyLine/SkyBest has
helped this packaging
manufacturer grow**

Dan Duncan, Director of New Product Development at NAPCO, shows SkyLine/SkyBest Business Sales Executives Zara Worley (left) and Haleigh Hogg where they design new product packaging.



Rocky Proffit founded NAPCO in 1977 in an 1,800-square-foot basement in Sparta, North Carolina. Now a leader in the custom packaging industry, NAPCO has over 340,000 square feet of manufacturing and warehouse space with a 60,000-square-foot addition in the works.

This growth reflects an expanding product line that includes custom rigid boxes for project premiumization as well as binders, sample kits, drawer and cabinet boxes, tote boxes and short-run folding cartons. NAPCO's product development and structural engineering team love a challenge and work with customers to bring innovative packaging ideas to life, from prototyping and Computer-Aided Design (CAD) to digital embellishments.

Revolutionizing Technology

"Technology has totally revolutionized the packaging industry since I started in 1977. Jack Martin, the president of Dr. Grabow Pipes came to me and asked if I'd be interested in going into the box business. He was having trouble getting the boxes they needed. I decided to take the opportunity and completed a two-day crash course in how to make boxes," Proffit said.

He added, "Virtually everything has changed since then—our products, markets, production equipment and work flow management. Today it's all about electronic graphic files, digital printing and digital finishing. Turnaround times are much

faster. Automation is used much more. Thanks to technology, NAPCO can be much more productive."

Ongoing Support from SkyLine/SkyBest

Another factor in NAPCO's growth and increased productivity, according to Proffit, is its long relationship with SkyLine/SkyBest.

"We've been a customer for 45 years, and SkyLine/SkyBest has always been very supportive and accommodating, giving us excellent customer service and technical help. We've counted on the internet connections, phone services and security systems to improve the efficiency of our operations," he said.

Proffit added, "SkyLine/SkyBest is also a great community leader and has consistently done things over the years to help our residents and businesses. When NAPCO wanted to buy the old Hanes plant here in 2005, SkyLine/SkyBest granted us a zero-interest business loan, which was instrumental in helping us purchase the property and renovate."

What impact did the completion of the SkyLine/SkyBest fiber network in Allegheny County have on NAPCO? Proffit replied, “The fiber optics have been a tremendous improvement for us in terms of being able to access incredibly fast fiber internet. We can send and receive our large graphic files more quickly, which makes our customers happy and improves our efficiency.”

When NAPCO wanted to buy the old Hanes plant here in 2005, SkyLine/SkyBest granted us a zero-interest business loan, which was instrumental in helping us purchase the property and renovate.”

— ROCKY PROFFIT, FOUNDER & CEO, NAPCO

More Productivity, More Growth

NAPCO combines this state-of-the-art fiber internet from SkyLine/SkyBest with state-of-the-art production equipment and automation capabilities. The result has been impressive gains in productivity.

Proffit noted, “NAPCO tripled its sales in the last four years without increasing our management staff and minimal increase in our labor force. How? By using automation technology that helps our people be more productive. It’s been a challenge to attract all the skilled labor we need—a challenge shared by businesses everywhere—and still continue to grow. Good benefits and pay are certainly key to attracting employees, and when people are more productive, you can pay them more.”

A big growth area for NAPCO in the future will be in its short-run promotional package group, which now produces mostly samples.

“We’re turning our sample department into a profit center. We’ll be able to handle any small packaging job—from five to a couple of hundred units. There’s a large need in the market for smaller quantities of boxes and other packaging for customers to use for trade shows, marketing presentations and new product launches and tests. This is a huge opportunity for NAPCO. We can leapfrog our competitors and become the leader in that space. Our ultimate goal is for NAPCO to be a one-stop shop for customers to go to for a full range of services, including product design and development, prototypes and samples, graphic design and assistance, printing and manufacturing.”

As its tagline says, NAPCO is
“Thinking Beyond the Box.”

Shown is an example of NAPCO’s cosmetic product packaging.



Fiber Broadband Connections Bridge the “Last Mile”

Fiber broadband is the fastest and most reliable method of delivering high-speed internet. Here’s why:

Like DSL, cable and fixed wireless, fiber broadband connections bridge the “last mile” between the mainstream internet “backbone” and the customer’s location. But that’s where the similarities stop. Only fiber networks transmit data using light over specialized cables packed with glass fibers. Since light moves at 186,000 miles per second, this enables internet speeds up to 1,000 Megabits (one Gigabit) per second.

While you may think of fiber as a new technology, the internet “backbone” that connects cities and countries has been built with fiber-optic cables since the dawn of the internet. The first submarine fiber-optic cable connected the U.S. to France and Britain in 1988. The latest application of fiber broadband is the increasing use of fiber-optic cables to connect the end user, often referred to as the “last mile.”

SkyLine/SkyBest has been a leader in deploying “last mile” fiber-optic technology. Because of this investment, your business can connect to more opportunity, more productivity and more efficiency. For details, call 1-844-SKYBEST.

Fiber Sparks Progress in Sparta

SkyLine/SkyBest technology is enhancing this town's appeal



Sparta is described at www.townofsparta.org as “a step back in time—friendly people, relaxing atmosphere and beautiful countryside.” Fortunately, Sparta is also taking steps forward as a result of the expansive SkyLine/SkyBest fiber network in Alleghany County.

A Small Town with Big Internet

Lisa Bottomley is Executive Director of Alleghany Chamber and VP/Marketing of Alleghany Chamber for Economic Development. She said, “Sparta has access to stronger internet connectivity than many larger cities. People are finding that if they can work from anywhere, why not work from somewhere like Alleghany County, where they have access to the open spaces, mountains, rivers and trails? Due to SkyLine/SkyBest’s fiber internet, people can work from their homes—or in some cases, second homes—here in Alleghany County. This became increasingly important during the pandemic, and many businesses have maintained a work-from-home option,” said Bottomley.

“A recent development due in large part to SkyLine/SkyBest’s expansive fiber availability across the region was the launch of NC Tech Paths, a nonprofit serving Wilkes, Alleghany and Ashe counties. NC Tech Paths is devoted to connecting residents of NWNC with high-growth jobs in technology. Wilkes Community College has been a central partner in the launch, and NC Tech Paths is also partnering with companies across North Carolina to develop programs that allow individuals to live, train and remain in their home counties while working in the digital economy and breathing life into the region’s beautiful downtowns.”

Downtown Improvements

Speaking of beautiful downtowns, Sparta completed the Streetscape project in July 2021. How are things looking in downtown Sparta?

“Things are looking great,” said Bottomley. “After the Streetscape project was complete, we began working with Sparta on ways to enhance the downtown experience with beautification projects. These are occurring in stages as funding becomes available. Visitors, residents and business owners are enjoying the wider sidewalks, new benches, floral hanging baskets and sidewalk planters. New street banners representing our assets—such as agriculture, the New River, mountain music and the Blue Ridge Parkway—will be forthcoming.”

This investment in downtown Sparta is helping attract business owners and visitors.

“The quaint downtown is a draw for those looking to start their own business in a small-town environment as well as for visitors looking for small-town charm, away from the hustle and bustle, crowds and long lines of a big city. Plus, downtown Sparta is now an even more beautiful backdrop for events and festivals,” said Bottomley.

In the near future, SkyLine/SkyBest will provide Wi-Fi to the Farmers Market in Sparta. This will allow vendors to take credit or debit card payments from visitors, making for a convenient and expedited shopping experience. Wi-Fi will also allow for SNAP EBT to be accepted at the Farmers Market, providing access to organic fresh food for all.



You Don't Have to Do It All

Take Wi-Fi management off your plate by getting Managed Wi-Fi from SkyLine/SkyBest. This service offers many valuable advantages.

Eliminates the hassles of trying to do your own installation, maintenance and troubleshooting. As a business owner or manager, you have enough to do. Your time is much better spent focusing on your core business activities rather than trying to be your own “tech support” whenever someone has a Wi-Fi issue. With Managed Wi-Fi, you get 24/7 technical support from a local company you know and trust.

Uses equipment specifically designed for a business environment. We use commercial-grade access points, which provide stronger and more secure signals than the consumer-grade variety. In addition, the access points in a managed system are linked, ensuring that you always have the best possible connection.

Offers low, predictable costs. You lease the Wi-Fi equipment, and we maintain and enhance the service for you so there are no surprise maintenance, upgrade or replacement costs.

Easily accommodates your growing needs. We can easily add additional access points for a low monthly fee. We can also add a guest network to keep your business and customer traffic separate and highly secure.

Gives you peace of mind. You won't have to worry about security, knowing that your wireless connection is professionally installed with all appropriate security measures in place.

Want to learn how Managed Wi-Fi could work in your business? Call 1-844-SKYBEST for more details and to arrange a free on-site assessment.

Security Reminders for Wi-Fi Networks

It's important to stay on top of Wi-Fi security, since unsecured Wi-Fi connections can allow hackers to steal identities, passwords and other sensitive data. Small businesses with limited IT resources are particularly vulnerable.

Be sure to do the following:

- 1. Replace a router's default login credentials.** Most routers come with a default username or password that can easily be found online by hackers. Always change the login credentials of a new router to something complex and random.
- 2. Create a strong, long password and change it regularly.** We know you might prefer to come up with a short, easy-to-remember Wi-Fi password and use it for years. But that makes things easier for hackers as well. The strongest passwords have at least 15 characters with a mix of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers and special symbols.
- 3. Update firmware.** Firmware is software that gives the router or wireless access point its functionality. Like any software, firmware sometimes has bugs or security vulnerabilities that require security patches and upgrades.
- 4. Set up private and public access.** Having both employees and customers on the same Wi-Fi network increases your security risk. Use a Service Set Identifier (SSID) to create two separate access points for your network.



SkyBest Managed Wi-Fi

Managed Wi-Fi is a versatile solution for customers needing a more robust, enterprise-grade Wi-Fi system for larger spaces, including outdoor areas. Your time is valuable. Let SkyBest handle your complete Wi-Fi experience, from installation to network set-up. Call us today to sign up or learn more!

- Cost-Effective
- Reliability
- Scalability
- Security

