

# BUSINESS connections

## Celebrating Lives and Serving Families

*Charity Shatley, SkyLine Business Sales Executive and Craig Poe, SkyLine Field Services Technician (seated in front) with Appalachian Legacy Funeral Services owners Josh and Holly Roten (center) and staff*





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## BUSINESS connections

**Communities have power.** We recognize how much can be accomplished using that power, and how we all need to contribute to keep it working for everyone. In this issue of *Business Connections*, we explore the advantages and challenges of serving and building a strong community.

**Is Your Website Mobile Friendly?** If not, members of your community may not be able to easily and conveniently access information from your website while using a mobile device. Learn more about this topic on page 3.

On pages 4 and 5, read about our spotlight customer, **Badger Funeral Home and Ashelawn Memorial Chapel**. The staff of this 164-year old business are highly active in the community. As a result, customers coming in almost always see someone they already know—a great comfort during a difficult time.

Next, on page 6, learn some of **The Business Benefits of Giving Back**. It's obvious that volunteering can be great for employee morale, but did you know it can also boost your bottom line?

Here at SkyLine, we don't just talk the talk of community involvement; we walk the walk. On page 7, we review recent instances of **SkyLine/SkyBest in the Community**. Our participation in the Rise & Shine Food Drive, Project Star and Angel Tree helped hundreds of community members in 2017.

We continue to look for ways to build the community and to support the businesses within it. Please contact us to let us know how we can help make your business even stronger.



Sincerely,

Jimmy C. Blevins  
Chief Executive Officer

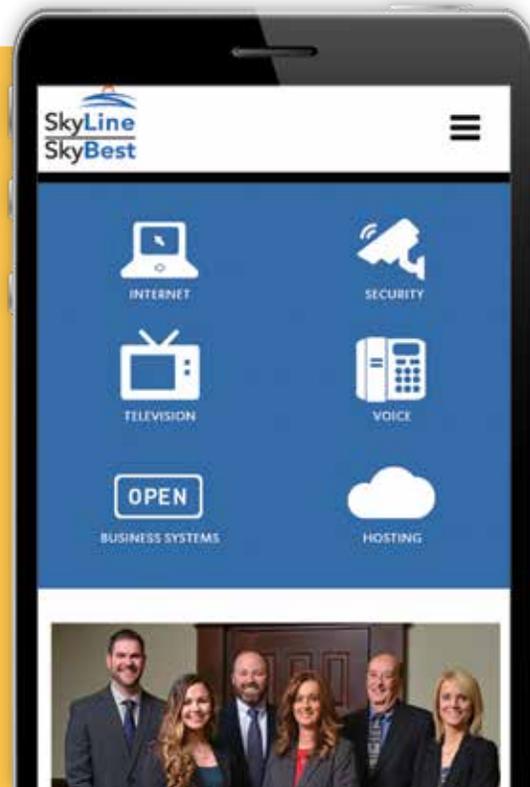


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Cover photo by Todd Bush

# Is Your Website Mobile Friendly?

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



Grab your smartphone 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.

## Opportunity for Improvement

The desktop version of a website is often difficult to view on the small screen of a smartphone or tablet. Given the fact that many of your users will visit your website on a mobile device, it’s important for them to have a positive experience when they get there.

Keep in mind that mobile usage in the U.S. is growing, and desktop usage is falling.

## 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.

If your small business has not optimized your website for mobile, doing so may help you improve your search results and your bottom line.

## Check Out Our Website

SkyLine/SkyBest is “practicing what we preach.” Our website at [www.skybest.com](http://www.skybest.com) features a mobile-friendly design, so you can easily explore our services and customer updates from your mobile device.

**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).**



Craig Poe, SkyLine Field Services Technician



Badger Funeral Home location in West Jefferson

# Badger Funeral Home and Ashelawn Memorial Chapel

*Providing comfort and compassion to grieving families for over 160 years*

As far back as fourth grade, Josh Roten can remember always wanting to be a funeral director. “It’s rare to represent the first generation in a family to go into this business,” he says. “More often it’s a business for multiple generations.” Roten started down the path of following his professional dream at age 16, when he began a high school apprenticeship in a funeral home.

## History of Helping

During the internship, Roten had the opportunity to see what the business was all about. In addition, according to Robin Miller, Inside Sales Coordinator at SkyLine/SkyBest, “Josh received our Frank James-SkyLine Scholarship to assist in pursuing his college career.”

Roten continued his education at Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science in Cincinnati, OH to learn additional skills and techniques applicable to the craft. He then returned to Ashe County to find work. Roten and his wife, Holly, have fully owned Badger Funeral Home and Ashelawn Memorial Chapel since June 2017 and were part owners for 10 years prior. The company has been in operation since 1854. It’s the oldest ongoing business in Ashe County and the 16th oldest funeral home in North Carolina.

Badger Funeral Home evolved from the cabinet and casket building skills of William Badger, a veteran of the Confederate Army in the Civil War who migrated to Ashe County from Petersburg,

Virginia, before the war. For many years, the funeral home operated out of the second floor of what is now the Dollar Tire building in West Jefferson. In addition to conducting funeral services, the staff of the funeral home handled the ambulance service for Ashe County. The funeral home has been at its present location since the 1930s in a building formerly used as a residence and as a boarding house for a nearby school.

Ashelawn Memorial Gardens and Ashelawn Memorial Chapel were eventually established as part of Reins-Sturdivant Funeral Home and merged with Badger Funeral Home in 2004.

## Modern Services

In recent years, Roten has seen funeral services become less somber and more celebratory of the life of the deceased. “Technology has played a big part in that shift,” he notes. “We’re doing exciting things with photography and digital videos, and we’re also able to use web-based software to include loved ones who may be unable to attend the service physically.”

Roten and his staff of 12 derive satisfaction from knowing they've helped family members through one of the most difficult times in their lives. He notes, "We know we've made a hard time just a little easier by taking some of the load off of them. We're pleased that we can provide both funeral and cemetery services with our two locations. We try to offer the most professional and personalized service possible, and treat customers as though they were members of our own family."

## “Roten gives SkyLine an “A++” for customer service”

— JOSH ROTEN, OWNER, BADGER FUNERAL HOME AND ASHELAWN MEMORIAL CHAPEL

The staff serves the community in other ways as well. Roten says, "We donate to different causes throughout the year. I'm currently serving as Rotary Club President and Ashe County Chamber of Commerce Treasurer. I'm also a member of the board of trustees for our local community college. Many members of the staff are involved in their churches, and one is the chief of a local fire department. As a result of us knowing so many people in the community, most customers who walk through our door already know someone here."

### Efficiency and Security

SkyLine provides Badger Funeral Home and Ashelawn Memorial Chapel with a phone system that includes Mitel 250 phones as well as VPN (Virtual Private Network), broadband and security services. The phone system enables easy transferring between locations, and the security system is used to monitor the facilities. Security cameras in the parking lot protect families from those who may try to take advantage at a vulnerable time.

Roten gives SkyLine an "A++" for customer service. He explains, "Whenever we have an issue, we tell a SkyLine representative what's going on. Most of the time they're able to fix it within minutes."

For Miller, the feeling is mutual. She comments, "We've watched as Josh has taken on both of these businesses, updated many aspects of each one and provided the best services to his customers when they need it most."



(L to R) Robin Miller, SkyLine Inside Sales Coordinator; Graham Brown, SkyLine Business Sales Executive; and Josh Roten, Appalachian Legacy Funeral Services Owner



## SkyLine/SkyBest Voice Services Promote Clear Communication

Nothing is more important to a successful business than clear communication. We offer local and long-distance calling, a host of calling features and even 800 service with a variety of packages and bundles to help you meet your budget.

We make switching easy! You can keep your existing phone number and equipment. Most importantly, you can count on 24/7 knowledge support from local technicians who make your business top priority.

**Small to medium businesses should consider a key system, which offer the following benefits:**

- Easy to scale up or down to address a growing business
- More responsive even when away from the desk
- Extend business communications into a home office
- Get notifications with voice mail to email
- 4-digit dialing from extension to extension
- Automatic extension transfers without the need for an operator

**Trust your phone service to the experts at SkyLine/SkyBest. Contact a Business Sales Team at 1-844-SKYBEST to create the best voice solution for maximum productivity and reliability.**

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# The Business Benefits of Giving Back

*Now is a great time to get involved with local organizations*



Giving back to the community feels great, and many companies see it as “the right thing to do.” But did you know it can also be a profitable thing to do? Here are just a few of the benefits of volunteering for, and donating to, local organizations:

- **Improved image.** Companies that give back are perceived as having integrity and a community spirit. This goodwill can translate into more business.
  - **Stronger employee engagement.** Studies have shown that most employees aren't fully engaged with their jobs. But, the good news is, company giving can contribute to fuller engagement. More engaged employees provide better service, leading to more business for you.
  - **More networking opportunities.** Through the process of volunteering or donating, you get to know others in the community. Expanding your network is a great way to spread the word about your business.
- Companies can help local organizations in multiple ways. Be creative to come up with ideas that work for your business and groups in need. Here are some suggestions to get you started:
- **Donate and/or match employee donations.** Organizations that help others are always looking for donations. Your company can contribute directly, provide a match when your employees make a donation or do something fun like throw a party for employees if a certain donation dollar amount is reached.
  - **Volunteer and/or help employees to volunteer.** Discuss with organizations you want to assist how your company or team could put in hours as a group to help. For example, your team could spend an afternoon working on a Habitat for Humanity house. Or, you could allow employees to choose their own organizations and give them time off to volunteer.
  - **Offer services.** Providing your products for free or at a reduced rate is another great way to contribute to local organizations. Basic services like health care, food and clothing are especially useful to offer.
  - **Serve as a “middle man.”** You could make your business a drop-off location for needed items, such as school supplies or hygienic items. Or, collect donations from your customers to benefit your favorite organizations. SkyLine/SkyBest recently served as a drop-off point for Santa's Toy Box.
  - **Use social media.** Use your Facebook, Twitter and other social media accounts to announce fundraising events, suggest donating to a particular organization or simply tell a wider audience more about what they do.

# SkyLine in the Community

*Helping those in need during the holidays and beyond*

During the Christmas holidays, SkyLine employees joined many others in the community to reach out to those less fortunate through their support of area Christmas charities.



## Angel Tree

Our employees provided Christmas for 11 children ranging from toddlers to teenagers through the Ashe County Interagency Children's Christmas Project. Led by Ashe Baptist Association with support from various denominational churches throughout the county, businesses and scores of individuals, approximately 1,000 children were sponsored.



*SkyLine employees with food donations collected for the Solid Rock Food Closet in Sparta, one of five pantries benefitting from the 2017 breakfast food drive*

## Rise & Shine Food Drive

Our fourth annual "Rise and Shine" Breakfast Drive, collected more than 1,800 donated food items to share with area food pantries. SkyLine also presented donations to each of the five area food pantries sponsored in this drive, totaling \$500. We're grateful for the outpouring of support by our customers, board, staff and the community! As more than one in six adults and more than one in four children are considered food insecure across our region, this important drive brings immediate relief to area families and helps to restock area pantry shelves and replenish backpack initiatives.



## Project Star

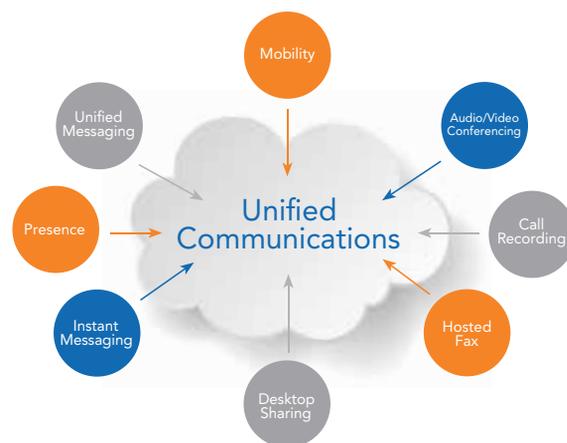
Another important Christmas outreach initiative SkyLine employees support is Project Star, a program led by Appalachian Senior Programs to provide Christmas gifts and basic necessities to older adults throughout Ashe County. SkyLine staff generously fulfilled the Christmas wish lists for 20 individuals in Ashe County. This year's Project Star program benefitted more than 250 seniors.

These efforts have helped SkyLine demonstrate the seventh cooperative principle, "concern for the community." Thanks to everyone who shared that concern by contributing to local families' health and happiness in 2017.

# SkyBest Hosted VoIP

## More Features, More Innovation, More Productivity

SkyBest Hosted VoIP is more than a phone system; it's a complete communications solution that gives businesses the ability to be accessible anytime, anywhere, on any device. Easy to personalize and easy to use, SkyBest Hosted VoIP will link everyone in your company, allowing you to communicate more efficiently and effectively. And, since it's from SkyBest Communications, you can count on expert installation, thorough training and local personal service.



Front L to R: Hollie Brown, Robin Miller, Charity Shatley  
Back L to R: Graham Brown, Brent Keith, Brett Yates



Contact a SkyLine/SkyBest Business Sales Representative to find the best options for your business needs and build a customized solution that fits your budget.

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