

BUSINESS connections



Equipped for easy living at Jefferson Landing

L to R: Craig Poe, SkyLine Field Services Technician; Cheryl Little, Jefferson Landing Lodge Assistant; Cary Farmer, Jefferson Landing Membership Director & Events Coordinator; Graham Brown, SkyLine Outside Sales Executive; Dean Spainhour, Jefferson Landing Golf Professional; Robin Miller, SkyLine Inside Sales Coordinator; Joy Wagoner, Jefferson Landing Accounting Manager; and Brent Keith, SkyLine Business Sales Executive.



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Saving time is a goal that can pay off in a big way. By streamlining processes and reducing inefficiencies, your business can fit more productivity into each hour and more profits into each year.

This December issue of *Business Connections* takes a look at timesaving solutions from a variety of angles. It begins on page 3 with a reminder of the impact that faster Internet speeds can have on productivity. If you haven't upgraded your Internet speeds in a while, it's worth taking a few moments now to consider what such a move could do for your business.

Jefferson Landing is the topic of our Business Spotlight on pages 4 and 5. This resort community has what it takes to help residents enjoy every minute, from picturesque surroundings to impressive amenities. To help its employees save time, as well as be more responsive to members, SkyLine/SkyBest recently installed a new Mitel VoIP phone system with wireless handsets. If your workday has you running from place to place, you'll be able to relate to Jefferson Landing's story.

Also in this issue, we offer a timesaving suggestion for holiday shopping on page 7 —pick up copies of the SkyLine Commemorative Cookbook. Not only does it make a great gift, but the proceeds go to a great cause. This cookbook was part of our year-long "60 Years of Great Connections" anniversary celebration that comes to a close this month. Thanks to all of you for joining our 2011 celebration, and we look forward to every minute of serving you in 2012.

Sincerely,

Kim Shepherd
Executive Director of Customer Operations



Cover photo provided by Todd Bush Photography



Increase Your Internet Speed to **Increase Productivity**

Bandwidth is vital for small business growth and competitiveness

Are your current Internet speeds keeping up with the demands of your employees and customers? Ask yourself these questions:

- Does it take too much time for your staff to do online research or receive large files?
- Are your employees frustrated with the Internet speeds at your business?
- Do your customers have to wait on the phone while their account information is loading or transactions are being processed?
- Is your staff unable to effectively use video conferencing for collaboration?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, it may be time to consider increasing the speeds of your Internet connection. But before you explore what higher bandwidth would do for your business, it's important to understand the terminology.

What exactly is bandwidth? The term refers to how much data you can send through a network or modem connection. Bandwidth is usually measured in bits per second, such as 10 Mbps (10 million bits per second). You can think of bandwidth as a highway with cars traveling on it; the highway is the network connection and the cars are the data. The wider the highway, the more cars can travel on it at one time and the faster they get to their destinations.

The same principle applies to computer data—the more bandwidth, the more information can be transferred within a given amount of time.

Many different businesses can reap rewards by upgrading to a higher-speed Internet connection. This is particularly true for businesses that fit these criteria:

- Conduct business at multiple (two to four) locations
- Leverage the Internet for 60 percent or more of their business operations
- Deploy 10 or more computers, including laptops and desktop machines
- Employ three or more employees

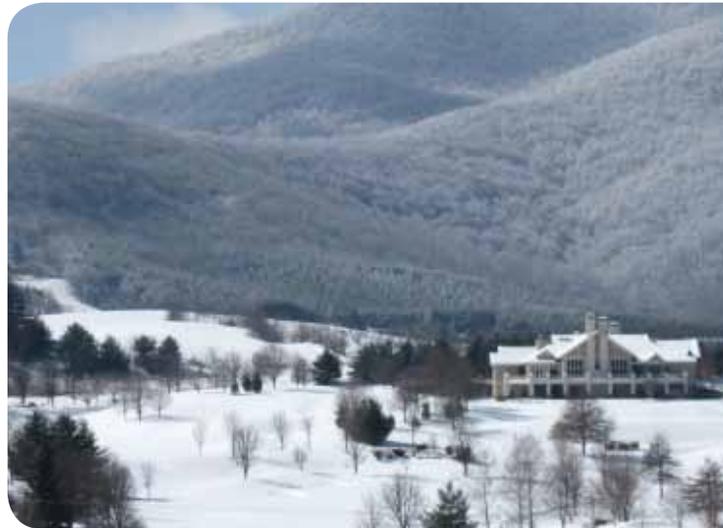
The bottom line is this: An increasing amount of business activity is now done online, and data-intensive applications require faster data speeds. If you want to stay ahead of your competition, you need to be traveling as fast, or faster, than they are. By equipping your business with more bandwidth, your employees can move data more quickly and efficiently, resulting in a better overall experience for your customers.

To find out more about SkyLine/SkyBest High-Speed Broadband Internet plans, with speeds starting at 4 Mbps, please call 1-800-759-2226 and speak with any member of the SkyLine/SkyBest Business Sales Group.

A Look at Jefferson Landing

Inside and out, everything at this resort is designed for easy living

Jefferson Landing is located in the Blue Ridge Mountains along the New River, and this mountain resort community is beautifully equipped on every acre to help residents take it easy. It features an award-winning 18-hole golf course that was fine-tuned by PGA Hall of Fame golfer, Larry Nelson. There's an abundance of outdoor recreation available including fishing, kayaking or simply walking along a scenic trail. And for indoor activities, Jefferson Landing offers a newly renovated fitness center and an exquisite clubhouse for everyday dining as well as special occasions.



The visionaries responsible for this development are Eddie and Mark Vannoy of Vannoy and Sons Construction Company in Jefferson, N.C. In the mid-1980s, the two brothers were building condominiums and townhouses for the Elk River Club in Banner Elk, N.C., and they "got the itch" to build their own golf course. So they started buying property from multiple owners, most of it farmland, over a period of years. Construction of the Jefferson Landing course began in the fall of 1988, taking full advantage of the site's rolling pastoral terrain. Today, the natural beauty of the Jefferson Landing property is enhanced with a variety of impressive homes, townhomes and condominiums.

THE MOST FROM EVERY MINUTE

Everything about Jefferson Landing is designed to help residents enjoy the most from every minute spent there. The resort community is all about making it as easy as possible to relax, socialize and explore the area.

While residents are busy playing, the staff at Jefferson Landing is, of course, busy working. And to help these employees get the most from every minute, Jefferson Landing has long counted on the efficiency of products and services from SkyLine/SkyBest. Recently, the phone system was upgraded to a new Mitel VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) platform.

Joy Wagoner, Accounting Manager for Jefferson Landing, notes, "Our old phone system had been in use for many years and clearly needed to be replaced. We were experiencing issues with voice mail management as well as the sound quality of our calls. Sometimes we heard an echo, as though we were talking inside a barrel."

Brent Keith, SkyLine/SkyBest Business Sales Executive, worked with Wagoner and others at Jefferson Landing to discuss their specific phone requirements and recommend the best solution to meet their needs. The decision was made to

switch to the Mitel VoIP phone system in August 2011.

QUALITY, COST-SAVINGS AND CONVENIENCE

As part of the transition to the Mitel VoIP phone system, SkyLine/SkyBest installed the cost-saving solution of a PRI (Primary Rate Interface). A PRI is a bulk service that provides large numbers of phone lines on one connection, arranged in a flexible configuration. One PRI, which supports 23 simultaneous conversations, is more affordable than buying 23 phone lines and also offers more capabilities.

Explains Keith, "One of the biggest benefits of having a PRI is that DIDs are available. This stands for Direct Inward Dialing, which means that employees can each have their own phone number which rings at his or her desk. A PRI is also great for a growing company, like Jefferson Landing. With its ability to handle many incoming and outgoing calls in symphony with

Pictured page 4: A snowy view of the grounds around the clubhouse at Jefferson Landing.
 Pictured below left: Dean Spainhour, Jefferson Landing golf professional;
 Brent Keith, SkyLine/SkyBest Business Sales Executive; and Craig Poe, Field Services Technician.
 Pictured below center: Cary Farmer, Membership Director and Events Coordinator.
 Pictured below right: A traditional Christmas tree decorates the clubhouse for holiday gatherings.



the Mitel VoIP PBX, the PRI will provide the capacity needed by the staff to provide guests and residents the support they expected.”

The Mitel VoIP phone system has been enthusiastically embraced by the staff at Jefferson Landing. Says Wagoner, “The new phone system has helped tremendously. We’re finding that the line quality is much better. And we now have four wireless handsets which enable key office employees to be away from their desks and still answer calls that come into the office.”

ALWAYS ON THE MOVE

Cary Farmer considers her wireless handset to be “extremely handy” in her position as Membership Director and Events Coordinator. Farmer explains, “The Jefferson Landing clubhouse is huge; it includes a dining room for special events as well as a bar and restaurant, locker rooms, a pro shop and offices.

I keep my wireless handset with me as I move about the property, so I don’t have to worry about missing calls if I’m not in my office.”

— CARY FARMER, MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR AND EVENTS COORDINATOR

The challenge is that my job requires me to be everywhere, all the time. I show prospective members around Jefferson Landing, as well as those interested in booking an event such as a wedding. Needless to say, I’m often out of my office.”

Farmer continues, “I keep my wireless handset with me as I move about the property, so I don’t have to worry about missing calls if I’m not in my office. And if I answer a call while in my office, I can also transfer it to the wireless handset and take it with me as I go to another area. Let’s say a bride calls me and needs the measurements of tables in the dining

room. I can take my wireless handset and walk right over there and do the measuring for her. The same goes for florists who might need details about the space. Sometimes I’m in the dining room for long stretches of time while decorating for an event. Now

I can take calls while working there. Our new VoIP phone system has been a lifesaver for me.”

What’s ahead for Jefferson Landing? Wagoner responds, “We’re growing and increasing in membership, so we’re looking for 2012 to be a good year. We expect to see more activities, weddings and meetings. And I know if our communications needs change, SkyLine/SkyBest will be here for us.”

Stress Overload?

Make a few simple changes to your work environment and routine



Workplace stress continues to grow and has serious consequences for individuals and companies. Experts at the Centers for Disease Control and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health have found:

- Stress is linked to physical and mental health, as well as decreased willingness to take on new and creative endeavors.
- Job burnout experienced by 25 percent to 40 percent of U.S. workers is blamed on stress.
- More than ever before, employee stress is being recognized as a major drain on corporate productivity and competitiveness.

If you start feeling stressed, begin by identifying things that are under your control. You may not be able to control a project timeline or a customer's mood, but you can control how you respond. A change of attitude can go a long way in reducing stress.

Take a look at your personal workspace. An organized environment can be a significant stress reducer, since searching through piles of paper to find an important document

wastes time and increases stress levels. Make an effort to bring order to your desk so that you can work more calmly and efficiently. Next, consider the other elements in your office. Are you experiencing stress due to an uncomfortable chair or an awkwardly positioned keyboard? Eliminating these little annoyances can do wonders for your mood. You may also want to add items that help create a more calming environment such as plants, a small water fountain or family photos.

Once your office has been outfitted to reduce stress, consider developing daily routines that include desk exercises, breathing techniques and stretching. These can help you more successfully face the inevitable stresses of your job responsibilities.

Remember, in order to be highly productive, breaks are necessary throughout the day to "reboot" your mind. Make sure even your busiest days include break times to refuel and relax. Get out of the building for a change of scenery and fresh air, have lunch with a friend or do some light reading. You'll be less stressed and more productive when you start working again.

Lastly, make an effort to unplug during your breaks if at all possible. Wireless phones and other devices are powerful tools, but they can result in an unhealthy 24/7 connection to work. If you're going to take a brisk walk around the building during lunch, consider leaving your smartphone in your office. Or if your stress level is high and you need to focus on the problem at hand, use the "Do Not Disturb" feature on your office phone and close your door.

You can't eliminate stress altogether, but you can take steps to reduce it. Start today, and share these ideas with your employees. Your whole company will feel better.



Wrap Up

Your Holiday Shopping

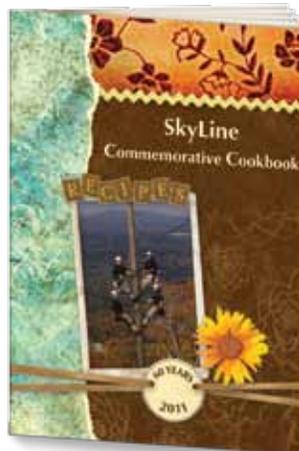
A SkyLine Commemorative Cookbook has all the ingredients of a great gift

It's a practical item that everyone could use, plus it's easy to wrap and very affordably priced. That's why the SkyLine Commemorative Cookbook is the perfect recipe for deliciously quick and easy holiday shopping.

The SkyLine Commemorative Cookbook is a collection of more than 500 recipes from members, customers and employees across our five-county service area of Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Watauga and Johnson counties. Thanks to all of you who shared your favorite recipes with us earlier this year, in conjunction with our "60 Years of Great Connections" anniversary celebration.

Published by Morris Press Cookbooks, the padded three-ring binder includes handy features for cooks such as tabbed dividers, recipe pocket envelopes, an EZel™ stand insert, recipe notes and helpful cooking hints. The categories in this year's edition are: Appetizers and Beverages, Breads and Rolls, Soups and Salads, Vegetables and Side Dishes, Main Dishes, Cookies and Candy, Desserts and This and That.

All proceeds from the sale of the SkyLine Commemorative Cookbook will be donated to local food banks/pantries in our five-county service area, which means it's a holiday gift you can really feel good about giving. Cookbooks are for sale for only \$15.00 each at all SkyLine/SkyBest Customer Service Centers. If you prefer to order by mail, please visit www.skyline60.com for details.



Thanks to all of you who shared your favorite recipes with us earlier this year.

SkyLine/SkyBest 60th Anniversary Celebration Wraps Up

Throughout 2011, we've been celebrating the vision and commitment of SkyLine's founders, along with our many employees (past and present) who have kept this community on the cutting edge of communications technology since 1951. As the year comes to a close, we want to share some highlights from our anniversary activities:

- **More than 6,400 votes were cast on www.skyline60.com for nonprofit organizations.** Based on our member votes, SkyLine Membership Corporation plans to make a \$1,000 commemorative donation in December 2011 to a nonprofit in each of the five counties served by the cooperative. An additional \$1,000 will be donated to the organization that received the most votes overall.
- **Customers earned more than 8,500 extra points on www.skyline60.com.** You earned these points by creating a free BLUEaccount, voting for your favorite nonprofit organization or submitting a recipe for the cookbook.
- **Prizes awarded included HDTVs, digital cameras, laptops, iPads, Xbox consoles and more.** We gave away 60 great prizes to our valued members/customers to recognize "60 Years of Great Connections."

Thanks for helping SkyLine/SkyBest celebrate, and here's to the next 60 years!

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**Lucky
Penny.**

**saved \$\$\$ with a
SkyBest Business Bundle.**

**"I saved \$60 a month
by switching to a SkyBest
Business Enhanced Bundle!"**

Jennele Vaquera,
owner of Lucky Penny

Want to save on your
telecommunications bill?
Call a local Inside Sales
Coordinator to learn
more about SkyBest
Business Bundles.



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Pictured: Jennele Vaquera, owner of Lucky Penny with
Michelle Scott, SkyLine/SkyBest Inside Sales Coordinator.