

BUSINESS

# connections



THE SATIE AND J.E. BROYHILL

Caldwell  
Senior Center



Connections  
Enhance Lives



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# BUSINESS connections

**This issue celebrates creativity, community and connections.**

SkyLine/SkyBest believes these are important topics not only for our work lives but our personal lives as well. We hope the content inspires you to consider changes, big or small, in the months ahead.

We begin on page 3 with the **Four C's of Creativity**, which are culture, conditions, context and collaboration. This is a must-read article if you want to encourage creative thinking at your company.

On pages 4 and 5, there's a **Business Spotlight on Caldwell Senior Center**, a tremendous resource offering programs and services for adults age 50 and better and their spouses. Caldwell Senior Center exemplifies creativity, community and connections, as you'll learn from Executive Director April Austin. SkyLine/SkyBest is pleased to provide internet and phone services at the Lenoir facility.

**Does Your Business Need a Wi-Fi Upgrade?** You'll get help answering that question on page 6. Then on page 7, we explain why it's valuable to **Make Room for Humor at Work**. Both of these pages suggest what you can do to enhance connections in your workplace—first with Wi-Fi technology and second with humor.

All of us at SkyLine/SkyBest want the best for you. Let us know if you have questions or concerns about your communications solutions.



Sincerely,

Kim Shepherd  
Chief Executive Officer

**ON THE COVER:**

(L to R) SkyLine/SkyBest Business Sales Executives Zara Worley and Haleigh Seamon stand with Caldwell Senior Center employees April Austin, Executive Director; Amy Taggart, Receptionist; Vicki Wyckoff, Office Administrator; Ingrid Farrar, Assistant Director; and Ethan Gilley, Board of Directors Member, as well as SkyLine/SkyBest's Inside Sales Coordinator Hollie Brown.

Photo credit for local images: Todd Bush



## Four C's of Creativity

### How to encourage creative thinking at your company

When the going gets tough, the tough get creative. Historically, periods of economic decline tend to create opportunities for those with innovative minds. During the Great Depression, for example, several companies made huge bets that led to fame and fortune. DuPont told one of its star scientists to set aside basic research and pursue potentially profitable innovation—he came up with nylon. Douglas Aircraft debuted the DC-3, which within four years was carrying 90 percent of commercial airline passengers. And a group of competing inventors created television.

How many times have you said, “Why didn’t I think of that?” We’re often surprised by, or envious of, great ideas we see at trade shows or in industry publications. We admire those with seemingly innate abilities to create something from nothing but sometimes discount our own potential for creativity. Or we simply wait for breakthrough ideas to emerge spontaneously as the result of “eureka” moments.

While new ideas can turn up “out of the blue,” successful companies make a point of actively and consistently fostering creativity. Now more than ever, your business needs to adjust to changing circumstances to stay competitive and profitable. To encourage the creative process at your workplace, keep in mind the four C’s of creativity—culture, conditions, context and collaboration.

**Culture** – Establish a business environment where creativity is solicited, rewarded and celebrated. Let your employees know that creativity is valued. Ask for new ideas and creative solutions to problems. Reward employees when they come up with ways (big or small) to increase efficiency, improve service or reduce costs. Finally, celebrate those ideas that make an impact and add value to your organization.

**Conditions** – Give your employees the resources they need to be creative. This can be as simple as allotting time during the business day for discussions, research and brainstorming.

**Context** – Provide a clear target or specific goal. “Go be creative” is too vague to produce meaningful results. Instead, ask your employees to develop solutions for specific challenges. Give enough direction to point the way but resist being too directive, since that could actually inhibit creativity. Even “crazy” ideas frequently contain a bit of brilliance in them that can lead to practical applications.

**Collaboration** – Diverse groups tend to generate the most creative ideas since a range of expertise and viewpoints stimulates the kind of discussion that leads to innovation. To take advantage of this dynamic, establish teams comprised of people from different departments. You may also want to involve customers, vendors and key stakeholders in the creative process to bring outside perspectives to the discussions.

# Caldwell Senior Center

*Enhancing the lives of people as they age*

*Two participants enjoy the creativity of a pottery class at Caldwell Senior Center.*



Caldwell Senior Center was the first center in North Carolina built by the community in an effort led by seniors. It began in 1985, when four representatives from three senior groups — Lenoir Senior Citizens, AARP and RSVP (Retired Senior and Volunteer Program) — realized the need for a dedicated space for senior activities.

After forming a Board of Directors and incorporating as a private not-for-profit agency, Caldwell Senior Center began a capital fundraising campaign in 1986. James Edgar “J.E.” Broyhill, founder of the Broyhill Furniture empire, and his wife Satie, were dedicated philanthropists and supported the idea of a localized center for senior activities and assistance. They gave seed money through the Broyhill Family Foundation to build the Caldwell Senior Center that bears their names, and it opened in 1987. Since then, the Broyhill Family Foundation has continued the relationship J.E. and Satie began.

## Access to Many Opportunities

Located at 650-A Pennton Ave. SW in Lenoir, Caldwell Senior Center is for adults age 50 and better and their spouses. Its mission is to provide innovative programs and services that enhance the lives of people as they age.

Executive Director April Austin said, “Caldwell Senior Center serves more than 30,000 people each year. We offer a variety of programs and services, and our most popular ones are related to health and wellness. They include ballroom dancing, line dancing, senior cardio, strength training and hiking.”

Other activities available at Caldwell Senior Center range from creative pursuits such as wood carving and oil painting to practical assistance with smartphones. Participants also have access to computers, notary service, assistance with Medicare questions, blood pressure checks and more.

## SkyLine/SkyBest Connections

Three full-time staff members are employed by the Caldwell Senior Center and a part-time staff member is employed by the Senior Community Service Employment Program. To keep the staff and participants connected, Caldwell Senior Center uses several SkyLine/SkyBest services including broadband internet, Managed Wi-Fi and a hosted phone system.

“The broadband internet and Wi-Fi from SkyLine/SkyBest enables us to offer high-quality digital skills classes to older adults in the community. It’s fast and reliable, no matter how many people are using our internet connection. We average more than 100 people per day at Caldwell Senior Center, and many of them are using our Wi-Fi when they’re here. Trying to teach these classes with unreliable internet, as we had to do with our previous internet service, increased the frustration of the participants and instructors,” Austin said.

She continued, “The hosted phone system from SkyLine/SkyBest has so many more time-saving features than our old phone system did, and this helps to increase the productivity of our staff. It also supports more work flexibility, as calls can be easily transferred to staff working offsite. My personal favorite as far as features is being able to check my voicemail via email when I’m working out of the office.”

When there’s a service issue, how would Austin describe the response from SkyLine/SkyBest? “The customer service from SkyLine/SkyBest has been exemplary. We’ve had very few issues with our internet or phone system, but when we contact the SkyLine/SkyBest team, they respond quickly,” she answered.

**“The broadband internet and Wi-Fi from SkyLine/SkyBest enables us to offer high-quality digital skills classes to older adults in the community. It’s fast and reliable, no matter how many people are using our internet connection.”**

— APRIL AUSTIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CALDWELL SENIOR CENTER

### Highlights of Upcoming Events

Looking ahead, Austin wanted to share with *Business Connections* readers what Caldwell Senior Center has planned for September 2024:

- A celebration of National Senior Center Month with a number of special events during September
- Senior Center Picnic at Heritage Valley Farm on Friday, September 6
- 5th Annual STEP-tember Walking Challenge, which challenges participants to keep track of how many steps they walk to help Caldwell Senior Center meet its collective goal

Regarding the STEP-tember Walking Challenge, Austin noted, “In 2023, we walked a combined total of 10,782,936 steps. We look forward to going even farther this year.”

SkyLine/SkyBest applauds what Caldwell Senior Center is accomplishing—one step at a time.



Vicki Wyckoff, April Austin and Ethan Gilley from the Caldwell Senior Center pose in the facility with SkyLine/SkyBest’s Haleigh Seamon.



### Helping Hands Clinic and The Wig Bank Enhance Local Lives

Caldwell County is fortunate to have strong community organizations that make a difference in people’s lives. We’re highlighting two of them here, both located in Lenoir.

**Helping Hands Clinic** was founded on the belief that the inability to pay should not prevent people from receiving quality healthcare. It provides 3,000+ patient visits each year for uninsured adults, life-saving prescription medication, patient education, on-site labs and diagnostic tests—all free to patients thanks to community partnerships and volunteer support.

**The Wig Bank** began as the vision of a hair salon owner and an oncology nurse, who recognized a growing community need. They started by gathering a few wigs in a closet for patients who lost their hair during cancer treatment. Services beyond wigs were later added including support groups for adults and children, makeup kits and instruction, educational resources and funds for gas and food.

Both of these organizations are SkyLine/SkyBest customers, and Helping Hands Clinic was the first business to sign up for our service in Lenoir. The Wig Bank received customer-funded donations in 2024 through our SkyChange program.



## See What a Difference Broadband Speed Makes

Broadband is an essential component of modern life and a requirement for economic growth, education, healthcare and public safety. The BroadbandUSA program, housed within the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), serves state, local and tribal governments as well as industry and nonprofits that seek to expand broadband connectivity and promote digital inclusion.

To help businesses of varying sizes and types make smart decisions about their data needs, BroadbandUSA offers a speed demonstration tool on its website. This tool visually demonstrates how long it takes for different amounts of data to move at speeds ranging from 1 Mbps to 1 Gbps:

- Video Chat - 4 MB
- Remote Education Streaming - 5 MB
- 10 Restaurant Card Processors - 10 MB
- MRI - 30 MB
- Download Medical Records - 39 MB
- 20 Customers on Wi-Fi - 50 MB
- 8K Video Streaming - 80 MB
- Download Data Files - 100 MB
- Download Large Health Care Datasets - 10,737,418,240 MB

**You can check out the speed demonstration tool at [broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/about/speed-simulator](https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/about/speed-simulator).**

# Does Your Business Need a Wi-Fi Upgrade?

Like virtually any technology your business uses, Wi-Fi equipment evolves over time to offer more advanced features and improved performance. What also evolves are the Wi-Fi needs of your business, depending on changes in the number of employees and devices, your reliance on cloud applications, the size of your workplace and other factors.

If your business is experiencing any of these Wi-Fi issues, it may be time to think about a Wi-Fi upgrade:

**Slow Internet Speeds** – You might notice that webpages or dashboards take longer to load or video conferences frequently buffer or freeze. This could mean your Wi-Fi connection is too slow to accommodate the demands of your business. If the upload and download speeds of your current internet plan are plenty fast enough, the problem is likely with your Wi-Fi equipment. The hardware may not be designed to process data or carry information at today's ultra-fast internet speeds, or it may have simply gotten old and begun to underperform. In either case, you need to replace the Wi-Fi equipment.

**Weak Signal Strength** – You and your team members should be able to get strong Wi-Fi signals throughout your office space. Dead zones—areas with weak Wi-Fi signals or no connection at all—mean your Wi-Fi equipment isn't providing adequate coverage. Perhaps the router is in the wrong place, has become outdated or can't function optimally due to the makeup of your building's walls. You may want to consider a new router, mesh system or signal boosters.

**Security Concerns** – Cybersecurity threats continue to grow, some of which are directed at routers. If yours is more than a few years old, security updates may no longer be available for it, which leaves your business vulnerable to attack. You'll have more solid protection if you upgrade to new Wi-Fi equipment that provides the latest wireless security enhancements.

**SkyLine/SkyBest offers Managed Wi-Fi that includes the right Wi-Fi equipment to meet your needs. Call 1-844-SKYBEST to arrange a free on-site assessment.**

# Make Room for Humor at Work

*Laughter reduces stress and builds camaraderie*

In recent years, more and more companies have begun to recognize the need for a little levity around the office. So much so that many consultants now make a living offering advice on how to infuse humor and fun into the workplace. Why?

The answer is simple. Studies have demonstrated that laughter has positive effects on both our physical and mental health. In fact, laughing enhances the immune system, lowers blood pressure and even releases natural antidepressants and painkillers in the body. This boost to our systems can result in fewer missed days, less illness and reduced stress.

Many employers now say that a good sense of humor is a key factor when choosing new hires. This trait is often reflective of a person's flexibility at work and an ability to build good rapport with colleagues. Improved morale, greater creativity and increased productivity have all been reported by companies making efforts to add humor to their environment.

Of course, injecting humor into the workday isn't always easy. Many workers don't feel there's time for it — and if used inappropriately, it can even be offensive. With that in mind, consider these tips on constructive ways to add some light-heartedness to your day:

## Be self-deprecating

We all appreciate people who can laugh at themselves from time to time. Don't take yourself too seriously!

## Find humor in stressful situations

By pointing out the funny side of a task or project your team is working on, your colleagues will easily relate—and no one will get their feelings hurt.



## Create a humor space in the office

Whether it's a room filled with *Dilbert* cartoons or just a big box stuffed with chattering teeth and other toys, your team should have access to things that will help break the ice, especially when deadlines are looming and stress is high.

## Add humor to the agenda

Devote the first two or three minutes of each meeting to humor and lighten the conversation before getting down to business.

## Avoid sarcasm

Sarcasm may work with your closest friends but in a work environment, it can be misinterpreted as a put-down or a thinly veiled comment on someone's actual work habits or skills. Likewise, remarks and jokes related to race or gender are strictly off-limits.

With just a little effort, you can make sure that the workplace is a little less serious and a little more fun for everyone. After all, Americans typically spend more waking hours at work than at home, so it's a good idea to find ways to enjoy it. And in the long run, you may even see an improved bottom line as a result.

# SkyLine SkyBest Business Solutions

We specialize in offering the most reliable Gig-capable fiber broadband internet, Managed Wi-Fi solutions and Hosted Voice services. 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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