

BUSINESS connections



**A Driving Force for
Nearly 100 Years**

Front Row, Pictured L to R: SkyLine Inside Sales Coordinator Robin Miller, Ashe County Ford President and General Manager Jeff Dollar and SkyLine Cable Splicer Steve Hart.
Back Row Pictured L to R: Ashe County Ford Salesman Mike Little, Salesman Jeff Davis, Salesman Tim Hamm, Finance Manager Noel Watson, Salesman Kevin Roland and Salesman Roger Whittington.



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BUSINESS connections

Is your business performing at its best? Before you answer, think about every area of your company: your teams, customer service, marketing, technology and community contributions. Even highly successful businesses can stand to improve, and in this issue of *Business Connections* we explore some ways to do it.

Strong Teams Make Strong Businesses, and on page 3, we give you some achievable ways to improve yours, whether it's a temporary group for one project, a small work team or an entire division. Strong teamwork can lead to improved morale, an enhanced sense of shared purpose and greater accountability.

On pages 4 and 5, you'll read about our Business Spotlight customer, **Ashe County Ford**, an operation that offers a great example of genuine commitment to customer service. Learn what it takes to be a household name in cars for nearly 100 years.

Next, on page 6, we'll tell you everything you need to know to **Get Ready for 10-Digit Dialing**. You'll find out details about the new area code overlay—which is coming soon—including what it is, who will be affected and the new way to dial.

Finally, on page 7, we fill you in on **SkyLine/SkyBest Upcoming Events**. We'd love to see you at our Annual Meeting and Customer Appreciation Day, and would value your contribution to our second annual Rise & Shine Breakfast Food Drive. On page 7, we also let you know how to **Include Your Business in the Real Yellow Pages**. This is an advertising opportunity you won't want to miss.

Give us a call any time to explore your company's telecommunications needs. Remember, we're here to help you perform at your best!

Sincerely,

Jimmy C. Blevins
Chief Executive Officer



STRONG Teams Make STRONG Businesses

Five tips for building a high-performance team



Successful businesses recognize the importance of strong teamwork, which can lead to improved morale, an enhanced sense of shared purpose and greater accountability. Techniques for team building have included everything from completing obstacle courses together to paintball competitions. But, what really works? Here are five keys to building a better team:

Take the Lead

If you're in a position to choose your team members, pick people who complement your skills and knowledge. Remember to include people who may disagree with you sometimes. Once your team is established, model the behavior you'd like them to exhibit.

Set Clear Goals

A collective vision helps team members stay motivated and allows them to know when they've succeeded. Encourage team members to help set targets and determine the best methods for accomplishing them.

Build Trust

Great teams allow members to voice opinions and ideas without fear of retribution. Try a daily check-in meeting, weekly reports or quarterly reviews. Also, make room in the team's workflow for spontaneous discussions.

Empower Team Members

Give team members assignments that stretch their capabilities, and let them know you're there if they need guidance. But, give them the tools and resources they need to meet the team's goals, and allow them to make decisions on their own.

Reward Great Teamwork

Rewards encourage continued team efforts and make employees feel valued. You can use bonuses, gifts, parties, public acknowledgement or other means to show appreciation to your team. Do it when they accomplish a goal, exceed expectations or help the company in a significant way.

By creating a work environment with a positive team approach, you'll have happier employees—and, very likely, a healthier bottom line.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Hollie Brown Inside Sales Coordinator

Hollie Brown has worked for SkyLine for eight years, primarily in the Support Services Department. Her current position is Inside Sales Coordinator, which entails maximizing sales opportunities for the sales staff, following up with customers to ensure they receive the best service and keeping track of all sales activities. She comments, "I enjoy helping customers and getting to know them in the process. SkyLine is all about helping the customer!"

Hollie received an Associate's Degree in general education from Wilkes Community College, and came to work for SkyLine right after graduation. She notes, "I'm very fortunate to have been employed by SkyLine for my entire career."

In her spare time, Hollie loves spending time with her husband, Kevin, and their daughter, Collins, as well as her nieces and nephews. "Family is very important to me," she says.



Ashe County FORD

This long-lived business knows a little something about service



Photo by Todd Bush, www.bushphoto.com

Pictured above: Tim Hamm, Ashe County Ford Salesman, discusses all the options available on the new Ford the customer has selected. SkyBest TV's local weather channel plays in the background.

Page 5, upper photo: Ashe County Ford's Mitel Business System makes it easy for receptionist Kathy Joines to manage the dealerships many daily calls.

Page 5, bottom photo: SkyLine Cable Splicer Steve Hart, splices fiber to bring the latest in communications technology to Ashe County Ford and surrounding businesses.

Ashe County Ford started as the first Ford dealership in Ashe County in 1919. Though different owners have come and gone, the operation has remained the same for nearly 100 years. President and General Manager Jeff Dollar, and his wife Amy, have owned the business since 2011. From 1968 - 2002, it was co-owned by Amy's father, Howard Turnmire. From 2002 to 2007, the dealership was under other ownership before Howard, Jeff and Amy returned to Ashe County Ford as co-owners.

Commitment to Customers

The dealership is located in West Jefferson and also serves surrounding areas including Lenoir, Boone and Mount Airy. It sells a wide variety of Ford vehicles including new trucks, vans and SUVs as well as used vehicles. Customers can visit the dealership's extensive website, www.ashecountyford.net, to search for new and pre-owned vehicles, learn about specials, value trade-ins, explore financing or make an appointment with the service department.

Dollar notes that much of his business comes from repeat customers. He says, "We have families who have done business here throughout the years—first with Amy's dad, and then with us. Any time they need a new car, parts, service, tires or anything else—if it has to do with cars—we try to take care of it for them."

Customers continue to return because of the friendly, laid-back staff in all areas of the dealership, including the body shop, parts, service and sales. The staff of 40

is committed to answering all questions customers may have to ensure that they make the best purchase and financing decisions. Dollar comments, "We see our customers at church, school, sporting events and other places around town, so we want to maintain the best friendships possible. Our commitment to our customers doesn't stop at the sale; for everything they need to keep their vehicles in the best shape, our service department is here for them every time."

Giving Back and Looking Ahead

Employees appreciate the familiar hometown atmosphere of the dealership. Dollar says, "I'm not too hard on them. We all know each other, and work well together, like a big family." The community also appreciates Ashe County Ford for its many contributions to local events. The business donates to Ashe County Relay for Life, Drive for Our School, Ashe County Boosters Club and local schools, including a grant known as Ashe County Driving Toward a Brighter Future for teachers to use in classrooms.

In the near future, Dollar expects to continue offering the same top-quality service to customers and to remodel the dealership's service and parts department to bring it up to date. He says, "I'd like to make it more user-friendly and efficient for customers. This will include a different layout with a larger and more comfortable customer waiting area with air conditioning and easier access to department counters."

Keeping on Top of Technology

To keep the dealership functioning well, Ashe County Ford has utilized a number of services from SkyLine/SkyBest beginning in 2008. Services include local dial tone and long-distance, high-speed Internet, SkyBest digital TV, a multi-function phone system and TV advertising. Dollar describes the many benefits of these services: "The fiber connection allows us to provide digital TV for customers, as well as a faster Internet connection. High-speed Internet is faster and more efficient and allows us a quicker turnaround on paperwork. With SkyLine/SkyBest, we've seen a substantial cost savings on long-distance service, and if we have a problem, I call and they're right on it—the service is very reliable and helpful." Dollar appreciates the services from SkyLine/SkyBest so much that he also uses them at home.

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— JEFF DOLLAR, PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER, ASHE COUNTY FORD

Robin Miller, Inside Sales Coordinator at SkyLine/SkyBest, notes that the communications provider is happy to have the dealership as a customer. She says, "Ashe County Ford has been a household name for car dealerships here in the High Country for many years. Not only are they a provider of premier car sales and high-quality service and parts departments, they offer a car rental service, wrecker service and have had a loyal sales force that is top notch. The sustainability of a car dealership is largely based on its owners and employees and how they relate to their customers. Ashe County Ford cares about retaining those customers, and their customer service has proved to be one of the best."

Ashe County Ford Chooses Fiber from SkyLine/SkyBest

Just as Ashe County Ford's customers appreciate the hometown approach, the dealership chose to work with a local provider for its communications needs. SkyLine/SkyBest Inside Sales Coordinator Robin Miller explains why: "To give them the most up-to-date resources to support all their telecommunications needs, we worked with them to determine the areas that would benefit them the most. We evaluated their current phone system, updated their phone sets and provided a long-distance cost analysis, so upgrading to a better long-distance plan provided a substantial monthly cost savings."

In addition, SkyLine/SkyBest was able to offer a fast fiber connection that allowed the dealership to provide digital TV and a faster Internet connection. Miller says, "We bring fiber to the premise for businesses, meaning faster streaming videos, solid connections and crystal-clear TV. Our customers are also prepared for 'the next big thing' in Internet technology, whatever that might be. At this time, more than 90 percent of our service area is fiber-connected, and we're reaching into more communities every day."



Photos by Todd Bush, www.bushphoto.com



Ashe and Alleghany:

Get Ready for 10-Digit Dialing

Dialing local calls from 336 area code is about to change



How Businesses Need to Prepare for the Area Code Change

In addition to changing your dialing procedures, all services, automatic dialing equipment or other types of equipment that are programmed with a 7-digit number will need to be **re-programmed** to use the new dialing procedures after October 24, 2015 but prior to April 23, 2016.

Some examples are life safety systems, PBXs, mobile phone contact lists, fax machines, alarm and security systems, gates, speed dialers, call forwarding settings, voice mail services, automated messaging services, etc. You may also want to check your business stationery, website or advertising materials and your personal or your pet's ID tags to ensure the area code is included.



To ensure a continuing supply of telephone numbers, the new 743 area code will be added to the area served by 336. This is known as an area code overlay. **Get ready to change the way you dial your local calls!**

What is an area code overlay?

An overlay is the addition of another area code (743) to the same geographic region as an existing area code (336). **An overlay does not require customers to change their existing area code or telephone number but it will require ALL callers to dial 10 digits for local area calls.**

Who will be affected?

In SkyLine/SkyBest's area, the 336 area code covers Ashe and Alleghany counties. Generally, this area code also covers the Piedmont area and includes High Point, North Wilkesboro, Winston-Salem, Greensboro and Asheboro. The new **743 area code** will serve the same geographic area.

What will be the new dialing procedure?

To complete local calls, the new dialing procedure requires callers to dial **area code + telephone number**. However, the price of local calls won't change. Long-

distance dialing will still require dialing **1 + area code + telephone number**.

When will the change begin?

Beginning **October 24, 2015**, you should begin using the new dialing procedures. If you forget, your call will still be completed.

Beginning **April 23, 2016**, use of the new dialing procedures will be mandatory. If you don't use the new dialing procedures, your calls won't be completed.

Effective **May 23, 2016**, new telephone lines or services may be assigned numbers using the new 743 area code.

What will remain the same?

- Your telephone number, including current area code, will not change.
- You can still dial just three digits to reach 911.
- If 211, 311, 411, 511, 611, 711 or 811 are currently available in your community, you will still dial these codes with just three digits.

If you have any questions regarding the new area code overlay or dialing procedures, please call 1-800-759-2226.

SKYLINE/SKYBEST Upcoming Events

You won't want to miss these important activities

Pictured at right: "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night..." On a snowy December day, SkyLine's Kirk Houck and Josh Crumpton helped to deliver numerous boxes of donated breakfast food items to Ashe Outreach Ministries, one of five area food pantries to benefit from the 2014 Rise & Shine Food Drive.



Join us in the next few weeks to get involved with SkyLine/SkyBest and help out the community.

Annual Meeting

SkyLine's 59th Annual Meeting will take place on **Saturday, September 26, 2015**, at Ashe County High School. Member registration starts at 9:30 a.m., and the business meeting starts at 10:30 a.m.

Customer Appreciation Day

On **Thursday, October 8, 2015**, let us thank you in person for being a member of our cooperative. Stop by any SkyLine/SkyBest Customer Center or Call Center location to enjoy a snack, pick up a free souvenir and register for some great door prizes.

Second Annual Rise & Shine Breakfast Food Drive

SkyLine would like to say thank you to everyone who supported our inaugural Rise & Shine Breakfast Food Drive last year. Breakfast items are among the most needed but in shortest supply on area food pantry shelves, and this program helped re-stock the food inventory and refill backpacks for children.

Thanks to the generous efforts of our directors, employees and you—our members and customers—more than 1,300 breakfast items and cash donations totaling \$500 were collected to distribute to area food pantries. We hope to exceed that number with our second annual Breakfast Food Drive, **beginning this month and continuing through October.**

To participate, drop by any SkyLine/SkyBest Customer Center location now through October to pick up a Rise & Shine shopping tote. Then fill it with non-perishable breakfast food items, return them to any of our locations and keep your shopping tote for your own future shopping!

This effort helps us demonstrate the seventh cooperative principle, "concern for community." Thank you for sharing in that concern by helping to fill a critical need for many families across our mountain communities.

For more information, visit our website at www.skyline.org.

Include Your Business in the Real Yellow Pages

Formerly AT&T Advertising Solutions, YP is SkyLine's authorized Real Yellow Pages sales agent. It's the largest search, media and advertising company in North America. Over the next several weeks, representatives of YP will call on business members across our service area to coordinate their advertising for the 2015-16 telephone directory.

One ad purchase can push your message to the right people, at the right time, resulting in calls, leads and sales for your business. The new directory—which covers Alleghany, Ashe, Avery and Watauga counties—will be delivered to members in late December/early January.

This year's sales team includes the following individuals:



Letty Sanchez
Market Manager



Steve Campana
Account Executive



Marlo Wright
Area Sales Manager



David Pirie
Account Executive



Tom Neeley
Major Account Executive



Tina Miles
Account Executive



Hayes Bolton
Performance Manager



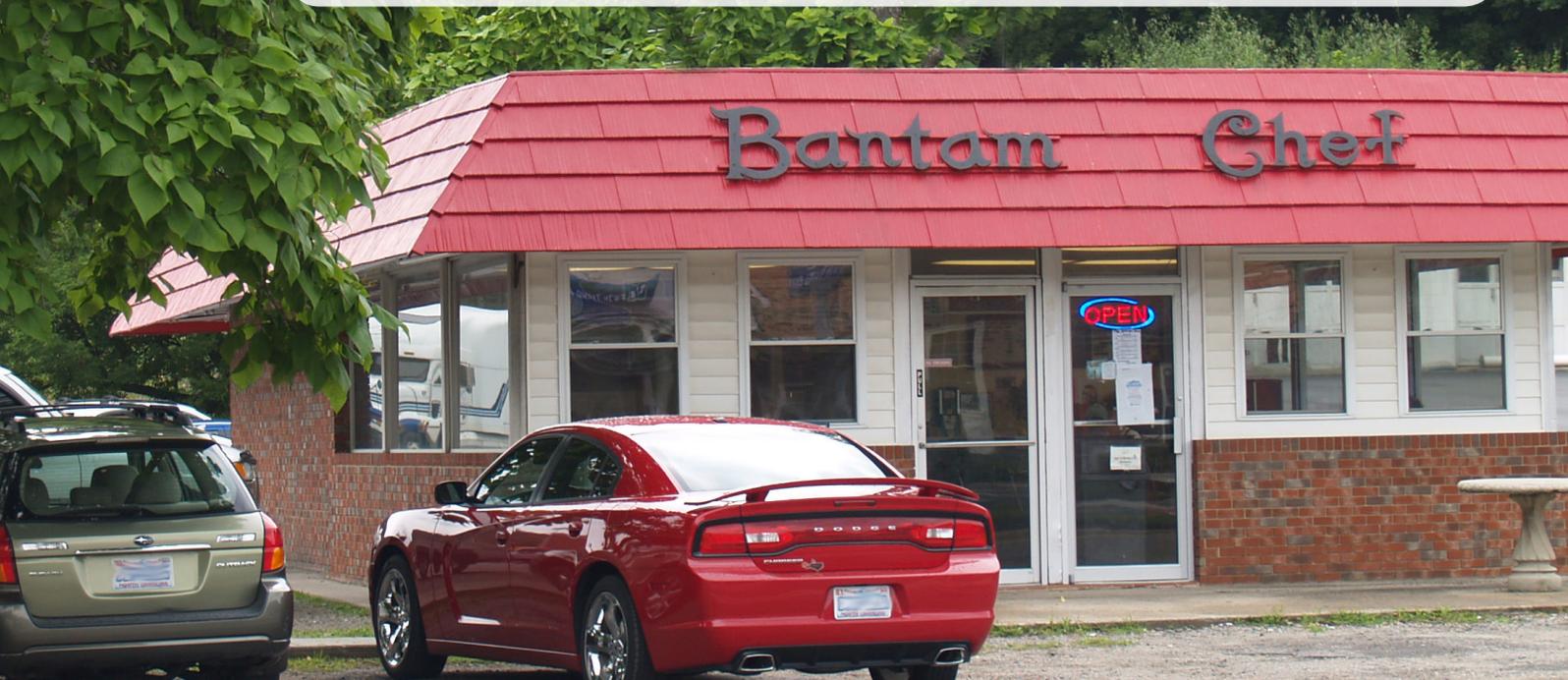
Jason Amodeo
Account Executive

To make sure your business is advertised in the Real Yellow Pages, contact a YP sales representative by calling toll-free at 1-800-532-1060.

Switch to SkyBest and Keep Your Number!

We know your phone number is important. You don't want to lose touch with your long-term customers. Good news! You CAN keep your existing phone number and switch to SkyBest for better service.

The Bantam Chef in West Jefferson recently switched to SkyBest for phone, TV and Internet service. Their number is still 336-246-7888.



Contact an Inside Sales Coordinator for more information.

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