

BUSINESS connections



Equipped With Hometown Service

Martin's Hardware is the place to go for practically everything, including friendly advice



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Some values never go out of style. Technology may advance and times may change, but you can't go wrong in business with starting a new venture, giving back to the community, or providing great customer service.

In this issue of *Business Connections*, Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT) takes a look at how we and other local companies are expressing these tried-and-true values. On page 3, our Business Spotlight features **Martin's Hardware**, a company that grew out of Martin Clark's love for hardware and remains successful by focusing on customer satisfaction.

We turn the spotlight on ourselves on pages 4 and 5 to show you **all the ways WCVT gives back to the community**. From volunteerism to community events to spreading the "local" message to chamber of commerce participation, we honor the mission that's been part of our business since it began 110 years ago.

On page 6, you'll read about a local entrepreneur, Dave Livingston, who started a new business based on a lifelong passion. **Livingston Farm Landscape Products** uses Hosted IP phone service from WCVT to meet its expanding communications needs.

Finally, we come back to **our community contributions** on page 7, with specific descriptions of what we've been doing lately to care for kids, aid young adults in their education, support the Special Olympics, and celebrate our time at WCVT.

We're always here to support you in expressing your company's values. Just let us know how we can help!

Sincerely,

Gregg Haskin
President & CEO
Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom



 BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Martin's Hardware

Combining great service and dependable technology for business success



Martin and Kathleen Clark have owned Martin's Hardware in Bristol since 1995, but Martin's love for the hardware business goes back to the 1980s when he started working at the store for the previous owner. He says, "I found a passion for the business and have kept going with it."

Customers Appreciate Hometown Service

One thing Clark particularly enjoys is feeling like part of the community. He says, "We see community members every day, and we have loyal customers who range from 10-year-old kids buying candy, toys, or electronics to 85-year-olds buying standard household products, home security items, or phones with a louder volume." Though strong competition exists in the area, Clark believes customers choose Martin's Hardware for the good service.

The store has gone through many changes over the years. Clark says, "When we took it over, it was small — just 5,000 square feet, with 10 employees. Back then, the revenue was about a third of what it is now. We've made a lot of additions and now our space is about 7,500 square feet. We've added new product lines that help the business stay successful, including a RadioShack franchise. We've also opened a new store in Middlebury and recently had a grand reopening of the original store in Bristol."

A total of 32 employees work in the two stores, not including the owners. Clark notes, "We work as a team. A few people stay stationed at the registers to ring people out, but everyone else goes between the different departments such as lumber or paint, depending on where they're needed." Two of the employees, Mary Kate and Andy, are the Clarks' children. Clark says, "I'm pleased to have the opportunity to spend time with them and have them as part of the business."

WCVT Provides Reliable Communications

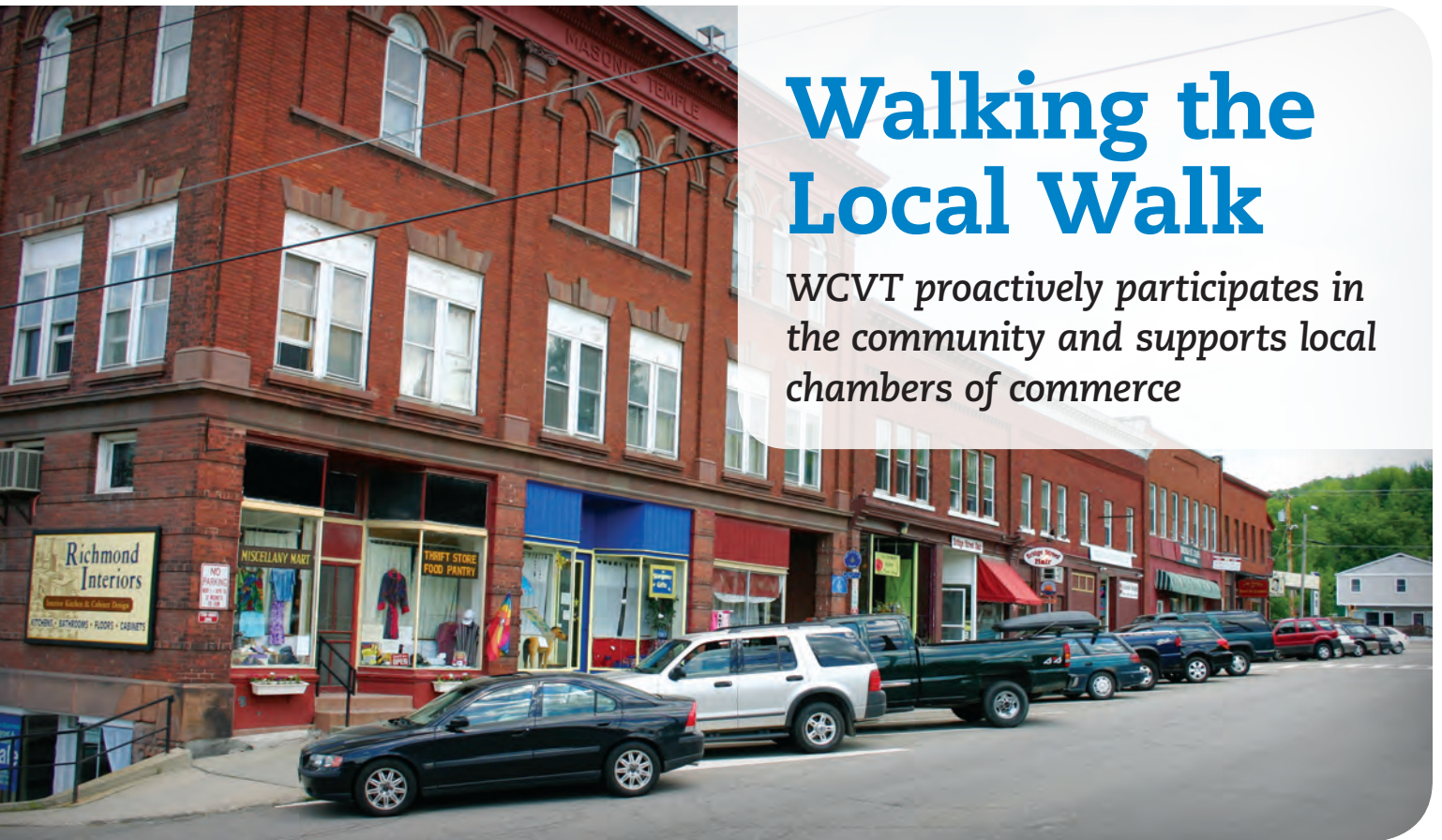
To keep things running smoothly, Martin's Hardware uses phone, Internet service, and fiber optic cable from WCVT. Clark comments, "The new Internet-based phone system has been a nice addition. It's helped us make sure all calls get routed efficiently."

The Hosted phone system from WCVT has been a nice addition. It's helped us make sure all calls get routed efficiently."

—MARTIN CLARK, OWNER, MARTIN'S HARDWARE

Internet service is critical as well. Clark says, "We do a lot over the Internet in our business — such as ordering, credit card processing, and research — so it's important that the service be reliable and speedy." The Internet connection facilitates communication between the two stores. It also enables a camera system in the Middlebury store, which allows the Clarks to view what's happening in that store online.

Clark notes, "The service from WCVT has been excellent. Every time we call, they're more than willing to help. They've done a great job of keeping us connected and upgraded so we don't have mishaps or slowdowns in our service."



Walking the Local Walk

WCVT proactively participates in the community and supports local chambers of commerce

For WCVT, contributing to the quality of life in the communities where we live and work reflects a tradition of giving back that's been part of our mission since we started. While the industry has changed considerably over the last century, our commitment to our customers and the local community has stayed the same. Read on to learn more about our local involvement.

Volunteerism/Sponsorship of Community Events and Education

WCVT hosts numerous education programs in the community and supports local events with donations and employee volunteers. Each employee gets 16 hours of community service per year and many of our employees volunteer outside of work hours. Here are just a few examples of the programs we have supported:

- Vermont Festival of the Arts
- Bristol Movies in the Park
- Little League Teams
- Mad River Valley Easter Egg Hunt

- Meals on Wheels
- Educational Seminars
- Hinesburg Artist Series
- Special Olympics
- Vermont Foodbank

Lorraine Keener, Marketing Administrator at WCVT, says, "Some of these activities are very popular. The egg hunt gets bigger every year; we had more than 200 kids attend this year."

Philanthropy

WCVT maintains a contributions committee that donates monetary and in-kind gifts to various recipients, with a focus on health, education, and community service. The committee reviews and assesses requests from the community for financial support throughout the year. Keener notes, "Recipients have included health-related charities such as the American Cancer Society and March of Dimes; local food banks and educational programs; and volunteer fire, ambulance, and rescue."

Every year, WCVT also gives a Eunice B. Farr Incentive Award (scholarship) to a student at each public high school in our service area: CVU High School, Harwood Union High School, Mount Abraham Union High School, and Mount Mansfield Union High School.

Support of Local Businesses

WCVT continually shares the message about the importance of buying local and does business with local companies, such as those listed below, whenever possible:

- Printing services from printers in Hinesberg and Waitsfield
- Trade show supplies from local vendors
- Food from local restaurants for chamber events
- Certificates or prizes for raffles from local business

Keener notes, “We also spotlight local businesses and welcome new businesses in this *Business Connections* magazine and our quarterly residential newsletter.”

Chamber and Civic Organization Participation

WCVT shows our commitment to the communities we serve through the various community relations programs we maintain. Our employees are active in many civic organizations including Fivetown Business Association, Hinesburg Business and Professional Association, Richmond Area Business Association, Special Olympics Vermont, Stowe Area Association Valley Rotary Club, Vermont Business Roundtable, Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility, and Western Slopes Business Association.

Listed below are the chamber of commerce chapters in which we participate:

- **The Addison County Chamber of Commerce** unites 600 members and promotes individual businesses and the region as a whole to residents, business owners, tourists, and the rest of the U.S.
- **The Brandon Chamber of Commerce** is dedicated to a positive and dynamic economic, industrial, professional, and business climate and community enhancement in the Brandon area. It currently has more than 150 business and more than 30 individual members.
- **The Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce** is committed to serving its 2,500 member businesses by

growing the economy. This chamber advocates pro-business public policies and provides member-exclusive programs and services.

- **The Lamoille Region Chamber of Commerce** actively promotes economic development, tourism, and regional growth by highlighting the natural resources of Lamoille County and helping businesses prosper through events and opportunities.
- **The Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce** is dedicated to improving the economic health of all Valley businesses through efforts that benefit members and the greater business community.
- **The Vermont Chamber of Commerce** represents 1,500 businesses and strives to create an economic climate conducive to business growth and the preservation of the Vermont quality of life through networking, advocacy, marketing, and education.

WCVT sponsors trade shows, networking events, and mixers for these chambers and also provides financial contributions and volunteer hours. Keener says, “Several of our employees serve on chamber boards of directors and committees.”

Keener highlights the many benefits of WCVT’s community involvement: “Customers know their money is helping the local community, local businesses, and the local economy. A strong community spirit contributes to a strong company spirit. Our efforts make our local area a better place to live.”

WELCOME NEW BUSINESSES

It’s now more important than ever to support our local businesses. When you buy local, everyone benefits. Please support the community by doing business with these new neighbors.

- **Agricola Farm**, Panton – 475-3409
- **Hatch Farm Inc.**, Panton – 475-3412
- **Kathy Nolan & Associates**, Hinesburg – 482-3505
- **Peanut & Mouse**, Waitsfield – 583-3669
- **Tad Coffin Performance Saddles**, Charlotte – 425-4111
- **Yarn & Yoga LLP**, Bristol – 453-7799

Livingston Farm Landscape Products Deploys WCVT's Hosted IP Phone Service



About Livingston Farm

Livingston Farm Landscape Products is located on the corner of Routes 17 and 116 in the heart of the Green Mountains in Bristol, Vt. Owner Dave Livingston was a dairy farmer for most of his life but he also enjoyed landscaping. In 1998, he sold his herd and opened a landscaping business, which offers a complete selection of quality outdoor and landscaping products.

Says Livingston, "We started out selling just top soil and mulch, and then added stone and compost. I've tried to develop a wide range of products for Livingston Farm to meet the needs of both landscapers and homeowners." By having so many products at a single location, Livingston Farm offers convenience—and landscaping inspiration—to its customers. The selection includes one of Vermont's largest collections of natural stone and concrete items for walls, garden paths, edging and borders, steps, patios, and walkways.

It's been a great relationship with WCVT over the years, and I look forward to it continuing."

—DAVE LIVINGSTON, OWNER, LIVINGSTON FARM

The Challenge

Livingston was looking for a cost-effective solution from a local provider to meet the growing telecommunication needs of his business.

The Solution

Livingston Farm worked with WCVT employees Kris Merchant, Business Solutions Specialist, and Brian Gorton, Central Office Technician, to design a phone system that would be cost-effective and address critical requirements.

- **Low Upfront Costs and Scalability**

Livingston Farm made the switch to a hosted solution with a very small upfront investment.

- **Future Proofing**

A Hosted IP system from WCVT provides increased flexibility and can easily grow and adapt as the needs of the business change.

- **A Local Company**

Dave Livingston has been a longtime customer of WCVT, first for his home and later for his business. "I've been getting service from WCVT for about 30 years, ever since I was 18 years old," he says. "They always do what they say they're going to do and they take care of issues quickly. It's been a great relationship with WCVT over the years and I look forward to it continuing."

Want To Learn More?

If you are a WCVT business customer and want to learn more about how Hosted IP phone service can help your business, please contact Kris Merchant. He will gladly visit your business and discuss your telecommunications needs and the role a hosted solution from WCVT can play.

Kris Merchant, 802-496-8554, kmerchant@wcv.com

WCVT in the Community

Being a local business means that our customers are also our neighbors and friends. Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom feels strongly that community involvement isn't just a nice thing to do; it's the right thing to do. Here are some highlights of recent activities:

Richmond Community Receives Grant from WCVT

Our Community Cares Camp (OCCC) in Richmond was awarded a \$1,200 matching grant from WCVT and the Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED). OCCC is a free, four-week summer camp and food service program for more than 100 children from Bolton, Huntington, and Richmond.



According to Marie Thomas, President of OCCC, "The camp serves children who would not otherwise have the opportunity for an enriching summer program. Day campers enjoy a safe and caring environment, two healthy meals a day, and stimulating activities to keep them engaged and healthy."

For more information about OCCC, visit www.ourcommunitycarescamp.org. For information on FRED grants, please contact Lorraine Keener at 802-496-8379 or lkeener@wcvt.com.

WCVT Announces Scholarship Recipients

WCVT is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2014 Eunice B. Farr Incentive Award scholarships. The scholarships are donated in memory of the late Eunice B. Farr, former owner and operator of the Waitsfield-Fayston Telephone Company and the grandmother of Gregg Haskin, current President/CEO. The award benefits hardworking graduates who demonstrate a sincere effort to improve grades and plan on continuing their education. A total of six scholarships were granted to high schools attended by students in our service area. This year's recipients were:



- Champlain Valley Union High School – Steve Robert, Williston
- Harwood Union High School – Siena Damon, Waterbury
- Mount Abraham Union High School – Louissa Rosendall, Starksboro
- Mount Mansfield Union High School – Kohlton Butler, Underhill
- Middlebury Union High School – Seth Wright, Middlebury
- Vergennes High School – Mary Flood, Vergennes



Employees Volunteer for Special Olympics

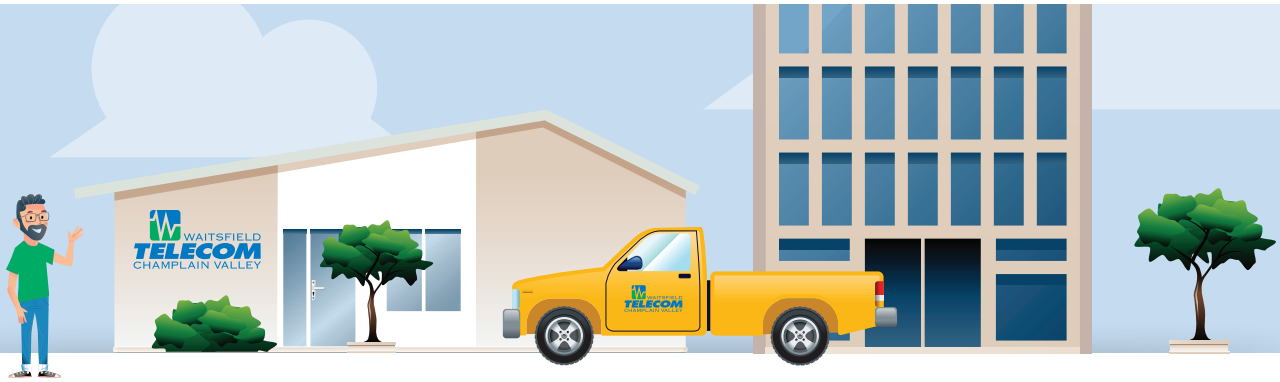
A crew of WCVT employees volunteered to set up the Special Olympics Vermont 2014 Summer Games that took place at the University of Vermont in June. This volunteer opportunity has become an annual event for these employees and we're proud of their dedication and enthusiasm. Great job, Team WCVT!



Happy Anniversary to WCVT Employees

A group of WCVT employees celebrated employment anniversaries ranging from 5 to 55 years with the company in June. Twenty-one employees with a combined 455 years of service were recognized at a service awards luncheon. Congratulations to everyone and thank you for all your hard work over the years!

WCVT provides each employee with 16 hours of community service time yearly to be used on local community service projects. If your organization has a project in the making and is looking for help, contact Alan Jones at 496-8328 or ajones@wcvt.com to discuss the possibility of WCVT participation.



BIGGER ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER

Ask Goliath. Or the Titanic. Or the Roman Empire.

Sometimes bigger isn't always better. When you're the biggest, it's hard to keep an eye on the little things. That's true for companies, too—when you're a big, national company, it's easy to forget about the people in the communities you serve.

Sometimes, smaller is better. Waitfield and Champlain Valley Telecom is directly involved with the community—from volunteering, supporting local events, serving our neighbors, and great customer service from people you know. All that, and we still provide the world-class technology you expect from the big guys. WCVT has been committed to the people of Vermont since 1904.

Give us a call or stop by today to start the conversation.

800.496.3391



www.wcvt.com