

Business CONNECTIONS

In Tune With Wilkesboro

*The Carolina in the Fall festival includes
Uwe Kruger of The Kruger Brothers*



Adjust Your Router for Better Wi-Fi Speed **3**

Carolina in the Fall **4**

The Kruger Brothers Inspire Audiences **5**

Corporate Volunteerism Pays Off **6**

The Buy Local Loop **7**



336-973-3103 • www.wilkes.net

Business Connections is a publication of:
Wilkes Communications, 1400 River Street,
Wilkesboro, NC 28697

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, electronic, photocopying, recording, mechanical, or otherwise without the prior written permission of Wilkes Communications. All rights are reserved.

Editorial and Circulation Contact:
Brett Yates, 1400 River Street,
Wilkesboro, NC 28697

All brand names and product names used in this publication are trade names, service marks, trademarks, or registered trademarks of their respective owners.

Additional issues are available to business customer employees on a limited basis while supplies last. Contact: Brett Yates, 1400 River Street, Wilkesboro, NC 28697

Copyright© 2016 by Wilkes
Communications and Cornerstone
Publishing Group, Inc.

Postmaster send changes to:
Brett Yates
Wilkes Communications
1400 River Street
Wilkesboro, NC 28697



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

BUSINESS connections

It's the little things that make a community. A common culture, celebrations that bring people together, doing business locally, and providing convenience at your place of business can all play a part in bonding with others in your locale. In this issue of *Business Connections*, we explore ways your business can contribute to a sense of local unity.

On page 3, you'll learn how to **Adjust Your Router for Better Wi-Fi Speed**. Having fast Wi-Fi service is important for both employees and visitors to your business. There are many simple things you can do to ensure you're getting the best possible Wi-Fi performance.

The second annual **Carolina in the Fall** music and food festival will take place on September 23-24. On pages 4 and 5, we tell you everything you need to know to enjoy this magical community event. Wilkes Communications is pleased and proud to be the presenting partner once again this year.

Next, on page 6, discover how **Corporate Volunteerism Pays Off**. Volunteering is, of course, great for the community—but did you know it's also great for business? Employees forge stronger bonds and learn new skills, and companies earn the business of customers concerned about corporate responsibility.

Finally, read about **The Buy Local Loop** on page 7. Like volunteerism, buying local can be great for the local community and also for your business. It can help with job creation, economic empowerment, and nonprofit support.

In today's connected world, technology can help you build community, too. Let us know how we can assist you in finding the right solutions.

Sincerely,

Eric Cramer
CEO



Adjust Your Router for Better Wi-Fi Speed



If your Wi-Fi router is out of date or not set up correctly, it could be slowing down your internet speed. Here are some tips to help you maximize router performance:

Buy a new router that supports 802.11ac. One of the best ways to make sure your network is as fast and reliable as possible is to use up-to-date hardware that supports the latest standards. With all the devices in your office, it's more important than ever to have a wireless router that can handle the increased demand for Wi-Fi connectivity.

Move your router to its ideal position. For the best signal and coverage, put your router in an open space near the center of your office space. Keep it away from thick walls made of brick or concrete, and make sure it's not around metal items, which can reflect Wi-Fi signals.

Make sure your router is secured using WPA2 with AES. The latest two standards, 802.11n and 802.11ac, don't operate at the highest possible rates when either the client or router use WPA or TKIP. Putting a password on your router or limiting which devices can access your network will keep others from using your network and slowing it down.

Reduce interference by removing or minimizing the use of interfering devices. These include older cordless phones, microwave ovens, wireless speakers, and some security cameras.

Make sure your router is configured to automatically identify and use the least congested frequency. Or you can manually choose the best non-overlapping channel. Slow Wi-Fi speeds may be the result of interference from nearby businesses' Wi-Fi networks, as all the devices compete to use the same channel. For example, if neighbors are downloading a large file using the same Wi-Fi channel as your company's Wi-Fi router, your router and devices may only get thin slices of "air time" to talk.

Get a wireless signal extender. If your office is larger than about 3,000 square feet, getting good Wi-Fi signal from one corner to another can be a challenge. Multistory offices can also be difficult if the router isn't plugged into the broadband line somewhere on the middle level. These situations may call for a wireless extender to boost your Wi-Fi signal to hard-to-reach places.

For help selecting a new router, call Wilkes Communications at 336-973-3103.

HOW TO CHECK YOUR ROUTER PERFORMANCE

Nothing lasts forever, including that router you have under your desk. Routers have a lifespan—typically three to six years—and become outdated as technology advances. For example, some older routers have a speed cap limiting the maximum internet speed possible.

If your internet connection from Wilkes Communications doesn't seem as fast as you expected, the router you purchased several years ago could be to blame. You can find out if this is the case by following these steps:

1. Go to **www.speedtest.net** and do a speed test. In seconds, your download and upload speeds will be displayed.
2. Next, unplug the internet cable from the back of your router and plug it directly into a laptop or desktop PC.
3. Run the speed test again to see what your speeds are without the router. (Be sure to plug the internet cable back into the router after testing to continue using your wireless devices.)





Carolina in the Fall

*Music and Food Festival,
September 23-24*



*Jens Kruger of
The Kruger Brothers*

The second annual Carolina in the Fall festival will take place on September 23-24, celebrating the heritage of western North Carolina through music, food, beverages, and crafts from around 120 musicians, chefs, vintners, craft brewers, and artisans. The event will take place on Main Street in Wilkesboro, NC, and is expected to draw visitors from all over the country and the world.

So Many Reasons to Attend

Event organizer Dale Isom, President of Spectrum Hospitality Management, LLC, hopes to see 4,000 people in attendance over the two days. He says, "There are so many reasons to come. Festival attendees will experience two wonderful days of excellent music, the very best in food, and an opportunity to experience the wines of our region as well. We're really hoping people will get a taste of the beauty and culture of our region, and fall in love with this place that so many come back to year after year."

The food and beverages this year are expected to celebrate the region's reputation for great home cooking with traditional barbeque and burgers, in addition to more exotic dishes like Haitian Chicken and Rice, and Kangaroo Reuben Sandwiches. Food vendors will compete for the Carolina in the Fall Food Truck Championship Award. In addition, the wine selection will celebrate the 60-plus vineyards now in place throughout the Yadkin Valley American Viticulture Area.

The festival will use several venues to spotlight the region's best musical talent, including Presley Barker, Jonah Horton, and the Snyder Family Band. Other acts include the Kruger Brothers, the Infamous Stringdusters, the Steel Wheels, Symphony of the Mountains, Humming House, Sarah Siskind (with Travis Book), the Contenders, Molly Tuttle Band, Slocan Ramblers, Locust Honey, and many other performers of roots, Americana, and bluegrass music. Stages include the Carolina Stage in downtown Wilkesboro and indoor stages at the Blue Ridge Music Hall of Fame at the Heritage Museum, the Great Stage Auction House, and the Yadkin Valley Event Center at the Holiday Inn Express.

Each evening, the Kruger Brothers will host the Carolina Jam™ at the Yadkin Valley Event Center at the Wilkesboro Holiday Inn Express. Artists from each day will come together to present once-in-a-lifetime, unforgettable jam sessions. Anyone who purchases a VIP ticket may attend these sessions.

In addition, Carolina in the Fall will be hosting the 2016 North Carolina Banjo Championships, with prizes for the top three players. Respected local and national banjo artists and instructors will serve as judges, and top banjo player Jens Kruger, of The Kruger Brothers, will serve as the host. The North Carolina Banjo Championship is sponsored by Deering Banjos, makers of the world's finest instruments.

Honoring Two Great Causes

In addition to providing great entertainment, the festival will include an auction to raise funds for the Wilkes County after-school music program. The program, through which local musicians will teach students to play Appalachian mountain music, will begin this year. Funds from last year's festival were used to establish the program and purchase instruments, while funds from this year's auction will be used to provide scholarships for students and purchase additional instruments.

In conjunction with the festival, the Carolina in the Fall Fun Run, scheduled for Saturday, September 24, will benefit the American Cancer Society. The organization will also have a merchandise booth at the festival to honor the cause and give people an opportunity to donate. The 5K run will take place on

seven miles of new mountain bike trails recently installed in downtown Wilkesboro.

This year, Carolina in the Fall will be hosted by the Kruger Brothers, and sponsored by Wilkes Communications, Holiday Inn Express, Hampton Inn, Heart of Folk, River Street Networks, and the City of Wilkesboro.



A Technology Partnership

As with last year's event, Wilkes Communications will provide video and audio services, as well as Wi-Fi for the downtown area. Isom says, "Because of all their assistance, Wilkes Communications is a great presenting partner for the festival. Plus, they provide phone and internet services to both of Spectrum Hospitality Management's hotel properties. We look forward to continuing a productive relationship with them for years to come."



THE KRUGER BROTHERS INSPIRE AUDIENCES WORLDWIDE

Originally from Switzerland, brothers Uwe and Jens Kruger began playing North American folk music at an early age and were particularly inspired by recordings of Doc Watson, Flatt and Scruggs, Bill Monroe, and other progenitors of country, bluegrass, and folk music. Their first public performances were as a duo, busking on the streets of cities throughout Europe.

After gaining a recording contract as well as a radio show on SRG SSR, the Swiss public broadcaster, they teamed up with New York-based bass player Joel Landsberg, starting a trio that has been playing professionally together since 1995.

**From the hills of Carolina
Folks have opened up the door
For the first time in my life
I'm not a stranger anymore**

LYRICS FROM THE KRUGER BROTHERS'
SONG "CAROLINA IN THE FALL"

The Kruger Brothers moved to the United States in 2002, and are based in Wilkesboro, NC. Through their numerous CD releases, radio and television performances, lectures, and collaborative efforts, The Kruger Brothers' powerful artistic statement continues to inspire and enlighten audiences and musicians around the world.

Corporate Volunteerism Pays Off

Lend a hand to help your community and your business



Recent studies have shown that individuals enjoy improved physical and mental health when they volunteer time for a good cause, most likely as a result of a sense of purpose and accomplishment. But can corporate volunteerism have a positive impact on the health of your business as well?

According to volunteermatch.org, a website that helps match volunteers with needs in their communities, companies of all sizes may enjoy key advantages including:

- **Improved morale and team-building.** When company teams work together on a volunteer project outside the office, they forge stronger relationships with each other and feel good about doing something meaningful.
- **Ongoing learning.** Many volunteers pick up new skills they might not have learned in their normal work environment.
- **A broader customer base.** Studies have shown that the majority of young Americans aged 13 to 25 trust a company more if it is socially and/or environmentally responsible. Likewise, they will pay more attention to a company's message if they find that the company is committed to a cause.

If you've considered giving your employees time to do volunteer work, here are suggestions for getting started:

- **Assess employee interests, business objectives, and community needs.** Visit volunteermatch.org or allforgood.org to find local opportunities for volunteers. Then look for opportunities that align with your business

goals—whether that includes increasing employee morale and retention or enhancing your reputation in the local marketplace.

- **Pick a project.** Most likely, you'll find it best to focus on a project that will take advantage of the very services and products you provide for your customers. For instance, a landscaper may choose to create a garden area at a local school. Or, a construction team could offer time and supplies to renovate a local shelter.
- **Set a schedule.** How much time you commit is up to you. You may want to offer each employee one or two hours a week to work on the project, or allocate one full week a year on a large group commitment. Choose a schedule that is practical for you and helps you achieve your goals.
- **Track your progress.** Just like a sales goal, it's important to make sure that your volunteer efforts are paying off. Your own success could be measured by anything from improved employee attitudes to increased publicity for your team and those you're helping. Remember to let others know about ways you're making a difference. You could find yourself with a growing pool of potential workers, not to mention a happier, healthier workplace.

The Buy Local Loop

Why it pays to think twice before shopping online

The phrase “what goes around comes around” applies to many things, including your local economy. When your company and other businesses keep your dollars local, you benefit the community, local nonprofit agencies, friends and neighbors, and—ultimately—your own business. Here’s how it works:



- 1. You buy local.** Sure, the convenience of online shopping is compelling, and sometimes it even costs less. But consider seeking out the same products and services close to home. You get to bring needed items back to the office the same day, skip the shipping costs, and get an opportunity to know other business owners and employees in your community who often provide better personal service and advice.
 - 2. More business creates more jobs.** When you support those local businesses, you’re also supporting neighbors, friends, and relatives who can find jobs within them. Small businesses provide over half of all jobs in the U.S., but they can only do it if they keep their doors open. By spending locally, your business does its part to make sure that happens.
 - 3. More jobs create more spending power.** With more jobs come more residents who can stay in the local area, ensuring vitality and diversity. These citizens can also afford to spend money locally, supporting the economy, enlarging the tax base, and creating a better community with enhanced schools, roads, and parks.
 - 4. Successful businesses mean support for non-profits.** Nonprofit organizations receive twice as much support from small businesses as from larger ones. So, when you support the local economy, you’re also supporting needed services for groups like children, veterans, and the elderly.
 - 5. Local individuals and businesses support you back.** With a “buy local” mentality in your community, you’ll get the benefit, too. If your business provides products or services to consumers, more of them will have the spending power to purchase them. If your company is business-to-business, other companies that need your products or services will seek them out.
 - 6. You see the benefit and continue to buy local.** As your business benefits from the positive “buy local loop,” you have all the more reason to start the cycle again.
- In addition to these benefits, shopping locally reduces environmental impact, ensures a wider variety of shops and products, and contributes to community health and diversity. If you’re not already in the buy local habit, consider making your next purchase from a vendor close to home.

Keep old friends but
**REPLACE
OLD PHONE
SYSTEMS**



Old phone systems lack the efficiency-boosting features of today's models. If it's been many years since your phone system was installed, it's time for an upgrade. We offer a range of affordable solutions for businesses of any size.