

Business

CONNECTIONS



Unique Amenities
Enhance Senior Living



Wilkes
Communications, Inc.

a subsidiary of Wilkes Telephone Membership Corporation

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Editorial and Circulation Contact:
Amanda Perry, 1400 River Street,
Wilkesboro, NC 28697

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Postmaster send changes to:
Amanda Perry
Wilkes Communications
1400 River Street
Wilkesboro, NC 28697



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BUSINESS connections

Businesses have many opportunities to help people.

Whether it's employees, customers, or the community, companies are in a position to contribute to others' well-being. This issue of *Business Connections* explores examples of them doing just that.

On page 3, you'll read about our Business Sales team and how its members are **Taking Care of Our Business Customers**. This team is the go-to for business customer care. They provide information on new services, ensure that services get up and running quickly after any problems, and look for ways to save businesses money.

Rose Glen Village has been helping seniors in our community for the past 10 years. On pages 4 and 5, read about its unique services including a movie theater, restaurant-style dining, and free Wilkes Communications TV service for every resident.

Next, on page 6, you'll find a few great ways to **Show Customers You Care**. It may sound like a lot of work, but once you get into the habit of offering gifts, special events, and other extras, positive customer response will make you wonder why you didn't start sooner.

Finally, learn how **Facebook Means Business** on page 7. If your business is not yet using this powerful marketing tool, you need to read this! But it's not just for you; you're also making it easy for your customers who already spend time on Facebook to learn about your business.

Helping people is what Wilkes Communications is all about. Please contact us anytime to let us know what we can do to make life better for you and your customers.

Sincerely,

Eric Cramer
CEO





BUSINESS SALES DEPARTMENT Taking Care of Our Business Customers

(L to R) Anessa McKinney, Briana Church, Nikki Harless, and Sherrie Joines

The Wilkes Communications Business Sales team handles all business accounts for telephone, internet, TV, security, and camera services. This team responds to questions from customers, determines how customers can optimize their services, and interfaces with the installation team.

In addition, notes Sherrie Joines, Business Sales and Security Supervisor, "If customers have an issue, all they have to do is call, and we'll immediately send someone who can help them get their business back up and running." In addition, team representatives frequently visit potential customers to explore saving them money and getting them on a fiber network, which is more efficient and reliable.

Joines is proud of her team's work last year in setting up a VoiP system for Wilkes County, bringing all departments together under one phone system. "With most projects of this type there are 40 to 50 phones involved. For this one, there were several hundred," Joines notes. "We were able to save the county money on a fiber network and get them internet service that's efficient enough to handle all calls."

This year the team will open a retail location in Danbury and roll out fiber in that area. Joines says, "We'll be able to offer fiber in places that don't have internet service at all now."

Joines stresses that the team is always happy to help both current and prospective business customers in any way it can. Existing customers can call about adding or enhancing current services, while new customers are welcome to set up a meeting to discuss their needs.

To reach the Business Sales team, call 336-973-3103 and ask for the Business Department, or go to wilkes.net and click on the "Business" link.

WHO'S MINDING YOUR BUSINESS?

SHERRIE JOINES BUSINESS SALES AND SECURITY SUPERVISOR

Sherrie Joines worked outside of the telecommunications industry for 18 years before coming to Wilkes Communications. She started as a Customer Service Representative, then moved through various positions and departments until she became the Business Sales and Security Supervisor in 2016. In this position, she trains and assists Sales Representatives and conducts security and camera sales.

Further explaining her duties, Joines says, "I help business customers with new products. In addition, I assist with Personal Emergency Response Units by helping the hospital program them and making sure they're sent to the monitoring station."

Joines appreciates working for Wilkes Communications because, she notes, "I like meeting people, and I also like a challenge. Wilkes Communications has allowed me to have both. The best part is helping people with their needs and saving them money."

In her spare time, Joines enjoys spending time with her family and singing in the Praise Team at her church.



Rose Glen Village

Offering a fulfilling retirement environment for seniors in Wilkes County



(Front Row, L to R) Teresa Pevette, Activities Director; Lily Alexander, Sales Director; and Matt Reese, Executive Director (Back Row, L to R) James Billings, Maintenance Director; Darlene Eller, Business Office Manager; and Debbie Blevins, Dietary Services Director

Rose Glen Village (RGV), a 100-apartment independent living community managed by Affinity Living Group, has been providing a safe and supportive living environment to seniors of Wilkes County, N.C. for the past 10 years. Two of its managers have been there since the doors first opened, resulting in valuable continuity of care and service.

Unique Amenities

RGV is unique in the wide range of amenities offered to residents, from a 36-seat movie theater to restaurant-style dining with flexible serving hours to an in-house health and wellness rehab therapy program. Additional standard services include weekly housekeeping, flexible transportation schedules, and exercise and game areas. Pets are welcomed in the community, as RGV values the rewarding association between residents and their animals. “People choose us because of the services and features we offer that set us apart from the other facilities in the area,” says Matt Reese, Executive Director of RGV.

An independent living community like RGV gives retired people the choice to receive the assistance they need—with things like housekeeping, cooking, and transportation—without the feel of a nursing-home facility. The 47-employee team at RGV finds it rewarding to care for and help enhance the lives of residents. In the process, the staff finds their own

lives enriched through exposure to the residents’ diverse histories and life experiences. “Everyone has a story, and we need to stop and take the time to listen to them,” observes Reese.

All of the 99 Affinity Living Group communities, including RGV, follow five important principles:

- **Caring** (providing a safe and comfortable environment)
- **Quality** (through service delivery and professional practice)
- **Teamwork** (working together to achieve more than can be done individually)
- **Innovation** (in services offered and consistent improvement)
- **Financial Balance** (to ensure organizational longevity)

Affinity Living Group, currently operating in eight states, will reach a milestone this year when it opens its 100th community.

Local Involvement

"We at RGV envision ourselves as a resource for the community at large," notes Reese. "People in the area with questions about health care can reach out to us for answers." To this end, RGV founded the Senior Resource Panel, which consists of local representatives from all levels of health care including assisted living, home health, hospice, rehab and therapy, personal home care, skilled nursing, and RN patient advocacy. Open to the local public, the panel's monthly meetings present seminars by guest speakers on senior health care industry topics such as healthy medication management. Attendees can speak personally with the various health care representatives to get answers to their specific questions.

RGV raises money through fundraisers for organizations such as the High Country Caregivers Association, Alzheimer's Association, and Samaritan's Kitchen food bank. They are also an active member in the Wilkes County Chamber of Commerce.

Vital Communications

Reliable communication is vitally important in an independent living community. Wilkes Communications has provided RGV with phone, internet, and TV service since the community opened in 2007. Each of the 100 apartments in the community receives services. Wi-Fi throughout the building helps residents and visitors stay up to date on their mobile devices without using up data plans. The front desk staff can be reached 24 hours a day by phone, while night shift workers have a cordless handset to take with them on rounds to check on resident safety. High-speed internet helps RGV's managers access the database and servers of the home office, so they can efficiently complete their daily activities.

Wilkes Communications and RGV have worked together to create a smooth move-in process for residents when it comes to setting up phone, internet, and TV. Sherrie Joines, Business Sales and Security Supervisor at Wilkes Communications, reports, "We try to make it a simple process for residents, and we connect their services quickly so they have a pleasant transition." In addition, Wilkes Communications has developed special pricing to help RGV residents save money.

If residents or administrators have service issues, Wilkes Communications technicians are always friendly and helpful in responding. "Wilkes Communications truly tries their best to meet the needs of our residents and accommodate them as much as possible," explains Reese.



“Wilkes Communications truly tries their best to meet the needs of our residents and accommodate them as much as possible.”

— **MATT REESE**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
ROSE GLEN VILLAGE

FREE TV SERVICE FOR RESIDENTS OF ROSE GLEN VILLAGE

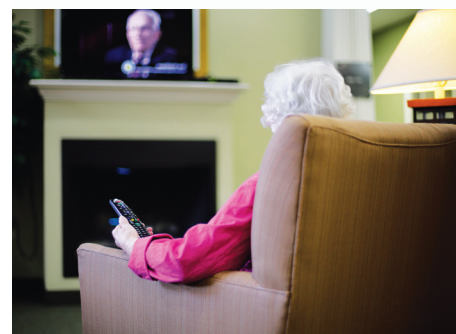
Residents of Rose Glen Village move there for a variety of reasons, according to Business Sales and Security Supervisor Sherrie Joines. "Sometimes it's because family members think they would be safer in a more controlled environment, and sometimes it's because the person has lost their spouse and doesn't want to live alone."

Wilkes Communications has worked with Rose Glen Village to provide each resident with a free basic TV plan. "This helps them to not feel alone, gives them something to do, and makes them feel more at home, so there is a smoother transition to their new living situation."

Joines notes that Wilkes Communications offers many features and benefits for anyone in need of high-quality TV service:

- High-definition TV
- Whole-home DVR
- Local programming
- On-screen caller ID
- No unsightly dish on the roof
- Great value
- Entertainment apps (including WatchTVEverywhere)
- Exclusive content

For more information about Wilkes Communications' TV service, call 877-973-3104.



Show Customers You Care

Customer appreciation builds loyalty and grows businesses



You probably know that retaining existing customers is less costly than attracting new ones. But what are you doing to encourage them to stick around? Excellent customer service is a good start, but you can gain even greater loyalty by adding tangible expressions of customer appreciation. Here are a few ideas to consider:

Offer your expertise. Be helpful by sharing your knowledge in regular newsletters, on your website, or through social media. Address customers' changing needs in the information you provide. For example, a landscaping company might provide tips for planting bulbs in the fall and how to nurture the flowers they become in the spring.

Hold a customer appreciation event. Whether it's a party, a presale, or an educational seminar, customers will feel valued when you invite them to a special gathering.

Create customer categories. Categorize customers who spend a certain dollar amount, visit a certain number of times, or refer your business to others. Then give these customers category-specific rewards.

Give a true gift. Honor long-time customers with a free gift every year or so. Select items that convey thoughtfulness and personal attention (such as unique, locally made items or a gift card to your store) rather than items that seem more like marketing ploys (such as mass-produced pens with your logo or a gift card that only works if the customer refers a friend).

Offer discounts. Reward customers who sign up for your email list with frequent discount codes that can be redeemed at your store or website.

Partner with other businesses. If you're a dry cleaner, partner with a tailor; if you're a bookstore, partner with a card store. Ask your partner business to give you coupons, discounts, or freebies to include with your own.

Create a "wall of fame." Either at your physical location or on your website, recognize and feature your best customers with a photo and a brief description. If your customers are other businesses, this is a welcome promotional benefit.

Send a card. There are many opportunities to recognize customers by sending cards—including birthdays and holidays or following a major purchase. The best cards include a handwritten note about your specific experience with each customer.

Pick up the phone. Take the time to check in with customers and ask if there's anything additional you can do to improve your products or services.

Remember, customer loyalty is good for business; when you show customers you appreciate them, they're more likely to refer you to others. And with so many social media sites available to share information, spreading the word is easier, and more impactful, than ever.

Facebook Means Business

A Facebook Page can be a new chapter in your marketing



If you've used Facebook to connect with old friends, share news, or post photos of your kids, you already have some idea of how it can be used to promote your business. The functions that you use within your Facebook Profile can also be used within a Facebook Page, the "home base" from which many companies build relationships with customers and promote products and services.

Using Facebook for business can be a smart move for several reasons: (1) it includes powerful tools to spread your brand and expand your online presence, (2) it's widely used and viral by nature, (3) your target market is easy to find, and (4) it's free.

Here's how Facebook Profile functions translate to Facebook Pages:

Home Page and Feed. When you create a Facebook Page for your business, you will be the administrator of that Page, but the home page and feed that you normally see will still be visible when you log in.

Posting on the Timeline. Just like each Facebook Profile, each Page has a Timeline. You can post updates to the Timeline, and anyone who expresses an interest in your Page (by clicking "Like") can also contribute. When an update is posted, anyone can "Like," "Comment," or "Share."

Advertising. Ever notice how the ads you see on Facebook match the interests you've mentioned on your Profile? Facebook ads are designed to reach users who have listed keywords specified by the companies that place the ads. You can use this feature to your advantage when your business is the one placing the ad.

Applications. A wide variety of Facebook business apps make it possible to add custom tabs, capture contact information, conduct ecommerce, start polls, stream live video, collect testimonials, and more.

Getting started takes only minutes. Access the "Facebook Pages" section of the help function, and follow the directions from there.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR FACEBOOK PAGE

Just having a business presence on Facebook isn't enough. You need to know how to make the most of it. Here are some tips for doing so:

- Facebook isn't a shopping site; it's a promotional site. While you can point viewers to your products, it's not really the place for a hard sell. Instead, use it to build community, and let people get to know you.
- As with all social media sites, your promotional success will depend on your content. Be sure to provide content that is valuable to your online community.
- Make it worthwhile to be part of your Facebook community by posting items and special offers not found on your blog, website, or Instagram or Twitter accounts.
- Find a good pace that allows you to update your Page consistently without overwhelming your viewers' feeds.
- When someone comments, comment back, especially if it's a complaint.



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.



For more information or a quote,
call our Business Development Team
at 336-973-3103.