

HughesNet for Business Powers All-natural Products Business on the Tennessee Wine Trail

■ Six Forty Homestead LLC sits on 18 acres of farmland in rural Hampshire, Tennessee. Outwardly, the farm is a model of small-scale agriculture. Owners Charles and Stephanie Haseltine grow a variety of vegetables, berries, and herbs, keeping 60 hens for fresh eggs and 10 hives with more than 100,000 European honey bees.

Look closer though, and there are plenty of clues that Six Forty Homestead is about more than weekend farming: the extent of the beehive honey production, a horse trailer converted into a mobile chicken coop, and a workshop dedicated to their skin care product manufacturing.

The honey and wax produced by the industrious insects are important ingredients in the all-natural soaps, salves, and balms that the Haseltine's make in the workshop. They sell their carefully crafted products at farmer's markets, fairs and festivals, and through an online catalog of more than 50 products on their Web site, sixfortyhomestead.com.

HughesNet for Business enables Charles to maintain their Web site and Stephanie to conduct an ambitious marketing campaign through Facebook, Instagram, and direct online marketing. The farm isn't located on the terrestrial Internet infrastructure, so their HughesNet for Business plan is key to the Haseltine's maintaining their online presence and growing their pipeline of Web-based sales.

"We use HughesNet to process transactions, upload photos and new product descriptions, and my wife uses



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it to update our Facebook and Instagram feeds. We also take orders through the Web site," Charles said. "Initially our web sales were slow, but once our products started to develop a brand and gain recognition, we noticed they started to pick up. We typically fill 200–300 orders in a month, and currently sales on the Web site are about 25 percent of our gross sales."

Charles spent 24 years in the U.S. Army, retiring as a chief warrant officer. Stephanie is a registered aromatherapist (ARC), a holistic health practitioner, and a licensed esthetician. They had long planned to "escape the rat race" by moving to a rural area and turning Stephanie's decades of knowledge about all-natural products into a business. They wanted to be far enough out in the country for the peace and beauty, but also close enough to cities and tourist areas to build their business.

They bought Six Forty Homestead—the company is named after the property—in 2008. Hampshire, a town of fewer than 2,000 people, is located about an hour from the cities of Nashville, Franklin, and Columbia, just 5 miles from the historic Natchez Trace Parkway. It is also a stop on Tennessee's "Wine Trail," with three local wineries that attract a steady stream of tourist traffic.

While Hampshire has everything the Haseltines needed in terms of location and natural resources, their choices of cost-effective, high-performance Internet connectivity were limited.

"We were using another provider and it was very fast but very expensive. We also kept exceeding our data cap, even though we weren't watching movies or videos," Charles said. "We looked into HughesNet initially because they had residential service. Their data caps were also a challenge for us at first, so we called HughesNet customer service and asked if there were a way around them. They told us about HughesNet for Business plans, so we switched over in January 2016. HughesNet for Business provides us with good connectivity and the cost-per-bandwidth is better."

Charles has found HughesNet for Business to be particularly helpful because they have great tools like the Status Meter that allows customers to track their data usage in real time. Unlike competing vendors, HughesNet also offers customers the option to purchase tokens to restore their speed by providing additional bandwidth.

"I like that it asks us what we want to do. Other services automatically added a token, even if we didn't want it," Charles said. "HughesNet gives us the option. It's a great benefit."



HughesNet has helped the Haseltines market their products through stores throughout Tennessee. It also supports a healthy online sales business that stretches across the country.

"Currently, sales through the Web site are about 35 percent of our total," Charles said. "We ship as many as 70 to 100 orders a month throughout the United States, as far as California."

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