

Home-Based Businesses

Hinesburg, VT: Perfect for Home-Based Businesses As American towns and cities become more crowded, and life more hectic, many people wonder if there isn't a better way to live and a better place to do it. The tranquil hills and valleys of Vermont are not right for everyone, but for people who operate—or would like to operate—a home-based business and are searching for greater quality of life, Vermont has a great deal to offer. And while different towns in Vermont will appeal to different people, I'd like to take five minutes of your time to tell you why I chose to relocate my family and business here in Hinesburg. My wife and I didn't look at all 251 towns and villages during our Vermont search, but we did look at well over 50. Just prior to our move, our son and daughter were both students at Worcester Academy in Massachusetts, and we wanted to make the school and social transition as easy as possible for them. Champlain Valley Union High School in Hinesburg, with four neighboring towns also feeding in to it, is one of the best high schools in the state academically. The fact that both boys' and girls' soccer teams regularly win the state championship wasn't lost on our goalie daughter. For those with younger children, the elementary (K-8) school is on the cutting edge in terms of technology, yet Hinesburg is the kind of place most Americans dream of having their children grow up in. I operate an adventure travel business, organizing hiking trips in Patagonia and the Himalayas. My need to travel meant proximity to a good airport was important. Even though we live on the side of Hinesburg furthest from Burlington Airport, it takes me all of 26 minutes door-to-door, and that's driving at Vermont speed, not my old Massachusetts speed! jetBlue operates three flights daily to JFK, and a half dozen other carriers offer nonstop service to places as far away as Chicago, Cincinnati, and Washington, DC. I've been in a lot of airports around the country and around the world in the past 30 years, and Burlington is as comfortable as a home airport can be. Despite the remote location of my home, Hinesburg's nearly 100% DSL high-speed Internet connection means that my business is plugged in. Perhaps what I love most about where I now live is the fact that I can be a half mile from my nearest neighbor, on a hilltop looking out over Lake Champlain and New York's Adirondack Mountains, and still be less than a half hour from anything I need for my family or my business. Burlington, a city regularly cited as one of the most livable cities in America, is two towns away. It's home to three colleges, including the highly regarded University of Vermont, and has a vibrant, youthful energy about it. Its renovated Flynn Theater hosts artists of renown from around the world. With a population of only 4,000, Hinesburg has three restaurants, two law firms, a dentist and family health center, hardware store, and numerous dairy farms. In its compact six miles by six miles size it encompasses great topographical variety from the floor of the Champlain Valley (below 400') up to the rugged foothills of the Green Mountains at over 1,700'. It combines the best of rural and small urban lifestyles. Essentially, what Hinesburg has meant to my family and business is a combination of factors that translate into a quality of life I don't think I could equal in very many places. Some of my neighbors are highly educated and worldly, others are savvy in a way that only country farmers can be. All of them seem to treasure the sense of community found here, and understand that community only exists when you participate. While plowing my driveway our first winter here I put my truck in the ditch. My nearest neighbor noticed it and walked through knee-deep snow for a half mile at 9:30pm to knock on my door and ask if I wanted some help in getting it out. The following winter I had to awaken my tow truck driver at 1:30am to get me out of another ditch, and he showed up 15 minutes later with a smile on his face. The bill was \$50. Oh, yes, did I forget to mention the winters. Sure, they can be tough, but if you like winter sports, the pluses far outweigh the negatives. Nearby ski areas include Bolton Valley (20 minutes), Mad River Valley and Sugarbush (35 minutes), Stowe (50 minutes), and Jay Peak (90 minutes). Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are available in several neighboring towns, that is if you can't do it right from your back porch. And I can honestly say that I never really appreciated summers until we moved to Vermont. Like everything else, life in Hinesburg involves trade-offs. But if quality of life for your family and a beautiful setting in which to operate your business are matters of importance for you, I suggest you give Hinesburg a close look. Feel free to contact the Hinesburg Business & Professional Association to learn more, or to get contacts for home-based business owners in town that you can speak with.