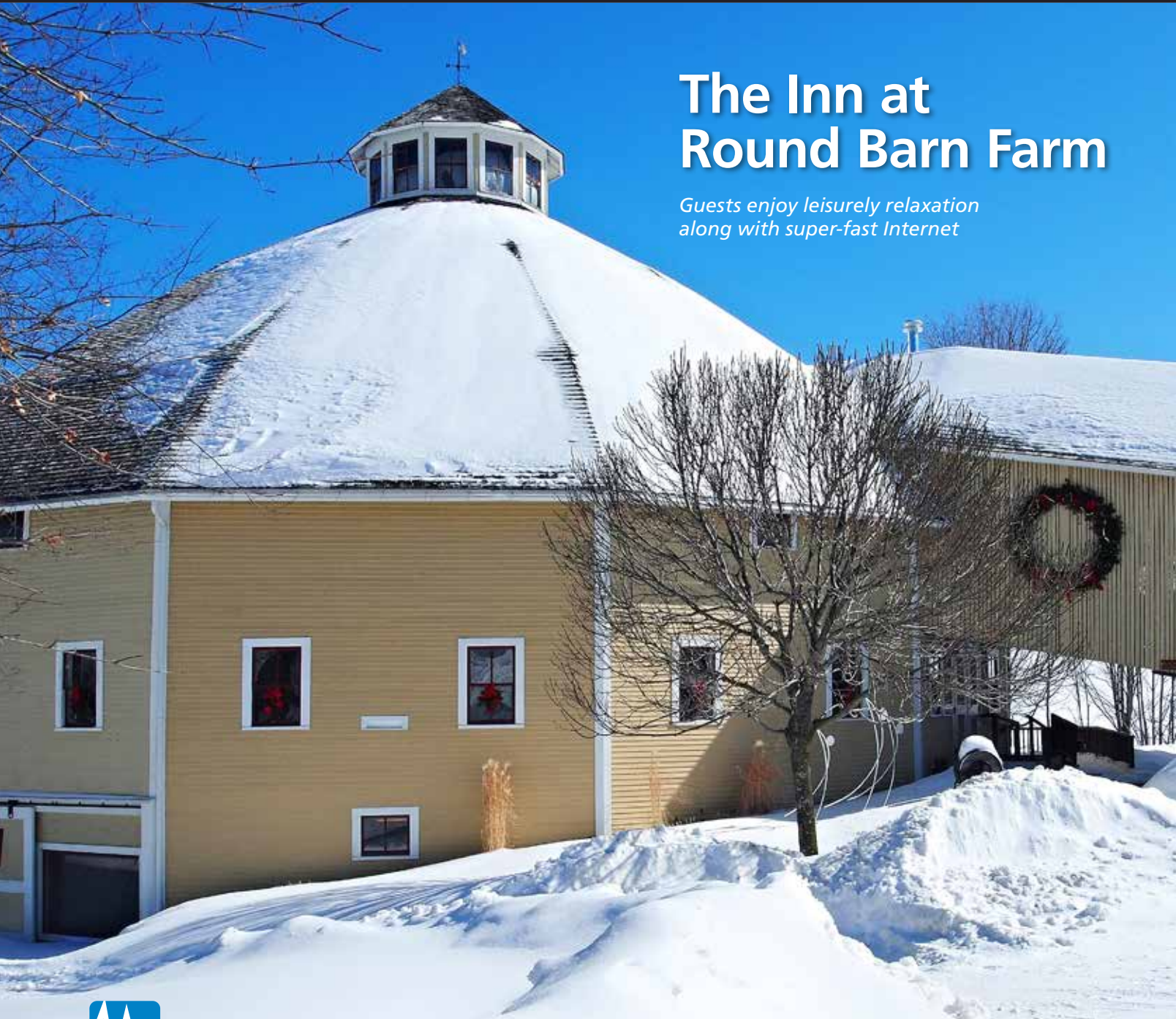


BUSINESS

# connections

## The Inn at Round Barn Farm

*Guests enjoy leisurely relaxation along with super-fast Internet*





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# BUSINESS connections

Technology and business growth go hand in hand. When it's time to improve communications within your company, offer employees greater flexibility, or meet new customer demands, changing your technology situation is often the answer.

In this issue of *Business Connections*, Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT) highlights the many ways in which technology can help a business grow. Turn to page 3 for the story of our Business Spotlight customer, the **Inn at Round Barn Farm**, which recently installed new fiber optic lines to upgrade communication between departments and give guests a superior technology experience.

Next, on pages 4 and 5, we offer some advice for growing your business by using social media. You can start by using the "stages of social maturity" guide to find out **how social your business is now**. Then, figure out where you want to be and use tools such as Constant Contact's **Social Media Quickstarter** to get there.

On page 6, you'll learn about **Birdseye Building Company**, which outgrew its Internet bandwidth and phone system and turned to WCVT for help. The company worked directly with WCVT employees to design a system that meets its growing needs.

When you're ready to grow your business using technology — whether you need an upgrade or just want to try something new — give us a call!

Sincerely,

Gregg Haskin  
President & CEO  
Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom



 BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

# The Inn at Round Barn Farm

*Historical charm meets modern technology for a unique guest experience*



Jim Donahue was a long-time supporter of the Inn at Round Barn Farm, so when he and his wife, Kim, heard the previous owner was looking for a successor, they saw it as an opportunity to relocate from an urban area and contribute to a great community. Kim says, “We were motivated by allowing the Inn to continue its mission as an integral part of the Mad River Valley community.”

## A Special Place for Special Events

Every day is a new adventure at the Inn, which serves guests from all over the world. Jim says, “It’s always fascinating. We recently had a family from Saudi Arabia stay with us. We also get many guests from nearby towns that are here to celebrate anniversaries or other special occasions.”

With its beautiful surroundings, the Inn is a popular destination for weddings. Kim says, “On just about every weekend from May to October, we get to share in the forming of a new household. Our job is to make them happy and it’s a privilege to give each guest their own perfect day.”

The actual round barn on the property serves the local community as a location for the Green Mountain Cultural Center, which supports art shows, an opera festival, a farmer’s market, and charity events. The round barn is also a venue for many community events such as proms and memorials. Jim says, “It’s such a nice resource to give back to the community.”

## First-rate Communication for Staff and Guests

To stay connected to guests, the Inn uses high-speed fiber optic Internet, hosted IP phone, and cable TV services from WCVT. Kim comments, “Communication is a key factor in our business. Many different departments here need to connect with each other to deliver an excellent finished product to our guests. And the guests themselves expect to be able to use their electronic

devices for personal or business purposes as they would at home or work.”

The Donahues have been pleased with the technology and the customer service from WCVT. Jim says, “WCVT is awesome. They’re like part of the family now and we see them at the gas station and grocery store. When we have an issue, they respond immediately and the service is personal. We recently had wires installed for the fiber optics and new phone system, but you can’t even tell they’ve been here. The work has been seamless.”

**Communication is a key factor in our business. Many different departments here need to connect with each other to deliver an excellent finished product to our guests.”**

— DOUG MCCULLOUGH, IT DIRECTOR, SUGARBUSH

Kris Merchant, Sales Manager at WCVT, adds, “WCVT understands the need to equip this uniquely delightful facility with the same state-of-the-art fiber technology found in large hotel chains in metropolitan areas. We’re proud to deliver services to the Inn at Round Barn Farm that will bring them to the next level of customer experience and facilities automation that they need to compete.”



# How Social is Your Business

*Social media innovation falls into five stages of maturity*

Social media has opened up incredible new opportunities for businesses to communicate with customers, employees, and other businesses. The use of social media, however, varies widely among businesses depending upon their size and the products and services they offer. No matter what type of business you have, there is probably some way you can use social media to your benefit. The first step is to identify how far your company has progressed in its use.

## Tech Adoption Follows Curve

Social media techniques are adopted by individuals and businesses in much the same way as other new technologies. The process, called the Technology Adoption Lifecycle, is illustrated using a “bell curve” divided into five sections. A report by Forrester Research, an independent research company, suggests that you can identify your business’s social media maturity using this scheme. Forrester based its report on a survey of large businesses, which tend to have extensive marketing departments, and were more likely to be using social media. However, every business can benefit from locating itself in the scheme and planning next steps.

## Stages of Social Media Maturity

Forrester identifies these five stages of social media adoption:

### 1. Laggards (The dormant stage)

Forrester estimates that about one in five businesses is currently not using any social media. There can be several reasons for this:

- The business may not sell goods and services that lend themselves easily to social media efforts.
- A business may have an entrenched approach to marketing and see no need for something new.

- The conversational nature of social media may go against a felt need to “control the message.”
- Managers may see social media as just one more thing that will take resources from other work.

Forrester suggests such a business start with an easily implemented social media strategy that leads to “small victories.”

### 2. Late Majority (The testing stage)

Businesses in this group have started social media efforts but there is a lack of coordination. These efforts often arise spontaneously in small groups. Forrester suggests in such cases that a “senior interactive marketer” take over organization of the efforts. Small businesses without such resources can instead use a consultant or identify a knowledgeable employee who can bring the efforts together.

### 3. Early Majority (The coordinating stage)

At this stage, businesses have begun to see the risks and rewards of a coordinated social media effort. To take the next step, businesses need to begin thinking in the long term in terms of policy, process, and budget.

# ess?



## 4. Early adopters (The scaling and optimizing stage)

Businesses in this group have organized their social media efforts and are now optimizing it. They do so by using advanced metrics beyond simple page-visit counts and Facebook “Likes.” Businesses in this group can progress by using social media to directly address customer problems and requests.

## 5. Innovators (Empowering of employees stage)

At this stage, all relevant employees in the business can use social media. The social media strategy is put to work with less reliance on a few experts and more on the majority of employees. Few businesses have reached this stage.

### Measuring Social Media Impact

The purpose of engaging with customers and prospects online isn’t necessarily to win more business, but to expand exposure and build your brand. Admittedly, progress toward these goals can be difficult to measure. A recent survey from Duke University found that even Chief Marketing Officers are often unsure of the impact of social media efforts. Nearly half indicated they can’t quantify whether social media has made a difference for their companies. However, there are some concrete numbers that can be measured, such as additional website traffic, more returning customers, or market research dollars saved by querying social media fans instead.

Though the impact of social media may not be measurable in traditional ways, it can still be a valuable tool to help you grow your business.



### SOCIAL MEDIA QUICKSTARTER OFFERS TIPS

If you’re new to social media, Constant Contact can help you get started. The provider of email marketing and other services for small businesses has created a Social Media Quickstarter of information and tips. Located at [www.socialquickstarter.com](http://www.socialquickstarter.com), the site contains a collection of simple guides including an introduction to social media and overviews of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

#### The site also covers:

- The importance of ratings-and-reviews sites like Angie’s List, Yelp, and TripAdvisor, as well as how to claim and manage a presence on them
- How to use location-based services like foursquare, Gowalla, Where, and Facebook Places
- How to use QR (Quick Response) codes for marketing purposes and where to place them

Take a few minutes to check out this resource, which could help your business become more successful at building social media connections.

### 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.

- **Balance Yoga**,  
Richmond – 434-8401
- **Charlotte Solar**,  
Charlotte – 425-7399
- **Citizen Reports**,  
Waitsfield – 496-5998
- **Clark Keefe Recruiters, Inc.**,  
Richmond – 434-5903
- **Foodagtech**,  
Waitsfield – 583-3663
- **Forgues Dairy**,  
Addison – 759-3089
- **Green Mountain Valuations**,  
Richmond – 434-4500
- **Rack & Reel Sporting Goods**,  
New Haven – 453-2000
- **TSR, Inc.**,  
Charlotte – 425-3948

# Birdseye Building Company Gets an Upgrade with WCVT Fiber Optics and Hosted IP Phone Service



**BIRDSEYE**

## About Birdseye Building Company

Birdseye Building Company, located in Richmond, is a full-service custom home design-build company specializing in the creation of artfully crafted houses. The company has won several awards and has been featured in numerous publications. Founders Jim Converse and John Seibert, along with principal architect Brian Mac, have assembled a broad range of artisans who focus on balancing detail, communication, creativity, and individuality. This balance and the attention to quality that the artisans provide—from design development through completion—make each home unique and beautiful. Each Birdseye home reflects the landscape and communities in which it is built.

## The Challenge

Seibert explains the company's recent technology challenges: "We are a long-time customer of WCVT. We were starting to experience bandwidth constraints and also wanted to replace an aging, hardware-based phone system with limited functionality. The phone solution had to be flexible and scalable enough to fulfill our future requirements and be competitively priced. We were very committed to doing business locally, and wanted to continue our great working relationship with WCVT if they could meet our growing needs."

## The Solution

Birdseye worked directly with WCVT employees Kris Merchant, Nick Sterner, and Brian Gorton to design a system that could satisfy its requests. Seibert says, "WCVT was able to expand their fiber optic network to serve us; that, combined

with the local service and support, is something Comcast can't compete with." Additionally, Birdseye switched to a hosted IP phone solution with very little upfront investment. In addition to cost-effectiveness, the new phone system offers the following features and benefits:

- **A secure and reliable solution** that automatically handles calls and messages during power outages
- **Increased flexibility**, to easily grow as needed
- **Easy self-management** through an intuitive web portal
- **Mobility options** for remote workers
- **Maintenance provided by WCVT**, meaning no surprise maintenance, upgrade, or replacement costs

## 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 directly at the number below. He will gladly visit your business and discuss your current and future telecommunications needs and the role a hosted solution from WCVT can play.

*Kris Merchant, 802-496-8554, [kmerchant@wcvt.com](mailto:kmerchant@wcvt.com)*

**Birdseye Building**  
Richmond, Vermont  
802-434-2112  
[www.birdseyebuilding.com](http://www.birdseyebuilding.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 and current activities:

## WCVT Wins National Award

Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT), is one of 13 communities nationwide to be honored with the title Smart Rural Community by NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association. NTCA cited WCVT's advanced fiber communications services and collaboration with local leaders in education, manufacturing and health care as keys to its success. WCVT achieved this recognition in a competitive process conducted by NTCA this past summer. Applications from communities across the country were reviewed by a panel of experts from a variety of fields. WCVT was honored with an award for deploying advanced technologies and leveraging those technologies to enable innovation in the areas of economic development and commerce, education, enhanced health care, government services, security and energy use.



WCVT employees Kurt Gruending, V.P. Marketing and Roger Nishi, V.P. Industry Relations accept NTCA Smart Rural Community award.

The NTCA Smart Rural Community initiative recognizes and celebrates the efforts of rural telecommunications providers and their communities to deliver technologies that make rural communities vibrant places in which to live and do business. The goal of the initiative is to foster the development of Smart Rural Communities throughout rural America by recognizing trailblazers and providing resources to assist broadband providers and connected industries.

## WCVT Employees Volunteer Time to Build Playground in Bristol

This past September, WCVT employees provided more than 100 hours of community service time to build a playground in Bristol. The playground project has been a year in the works with the Bristol Downtown Community Partnership and the Bristol Recreation Department spearheading the effort. WCVT was proud to donate people power and monetary assistance to the worthy project. Enjoy your new playground kids and great job, Team WCVT!

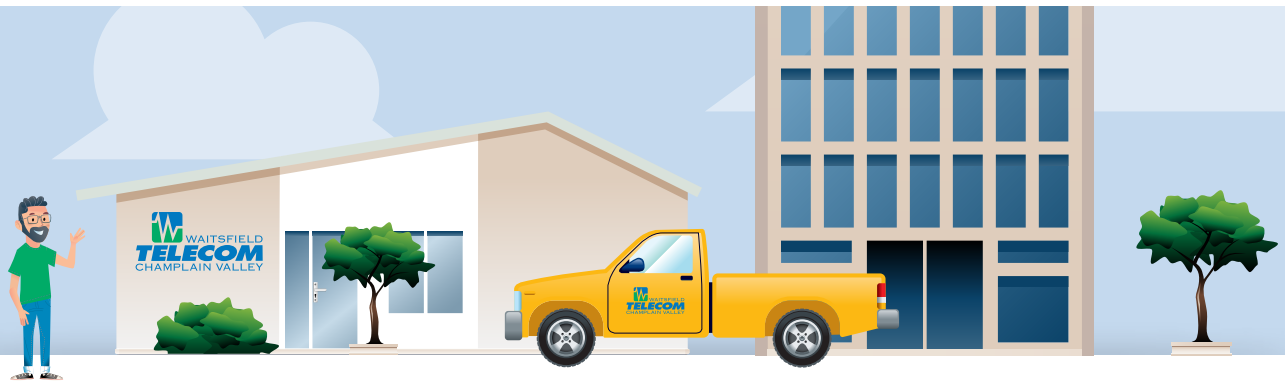


## Annual Giving Tree Helps Hundreds of Children

Each year, WCVT spreads holiday cheer through the company's Annual Giving Tree. Tammy Field, Administrative Supervisor, single-handedly coordinates this program. Tammy works directly with schools and organizations in WCVT's service area to fulfill the wishes and needs of 400-500 children each holiday season. Gifts are donated by employees, customers, and the company's Contribution Committee. Our thanks to Tammy and to everyone who is participating this year!



Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom provides each employee with eight 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@wcv.com](mailto:ajones@wcv.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](http://www.wcvt.com)