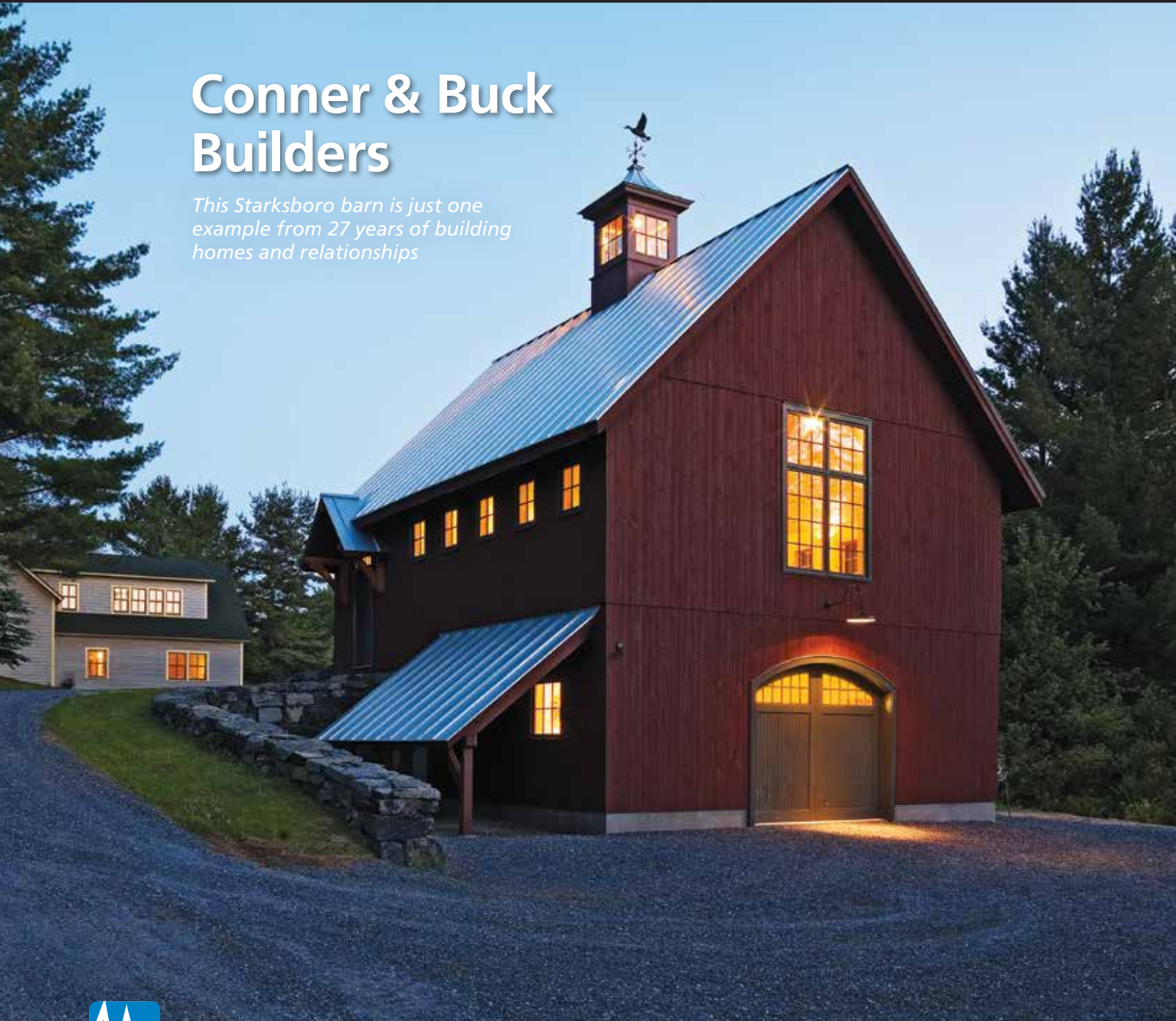


BUSINESS connections

Conner & Buck Builders

This Starksboro barn is just one example from 27 years of building homes and relationships



**OFFICE LOCATIONS:**

Waitsfield Business Office
3898 Main Street, Waitsfield

Hinesburg Branch Office
14 Thornbush Rd, Hinesburg

BUSINESS HOURS:

Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

BUSINESS TEAM:

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802-496-8554, kmerchant@wcvct.com

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BUSINESS connections

What is your business going to build this year? Perhaps it's your list of customers, the variety of your products and services, or the strength of your relationships with colleagues. You may even be laying the groundwork for a new or expanded business space in 2015.

This March issue of *Business Connections* celebrates the power of building in all its forms. At Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT), we're committed to building partnerships with our business customers in order to help you succeed. In **Who's Minding Your Business?** on page 3, you'll get to know Kris Merchant, Sales Manager, who is a great example of this commitment.

The theme of this issue really takes shape in the **Business Spotlight on Conner & Buck Builders** on pages 4 and 5. This Bristol business has built many stunning homes in Vermont since 1988 yet it's the relationships they've built with their clients, colleagues, and crew that are perhaps most valuable. WCVT is honored to be the provider that's built phone and Internet solutions for Conner & Buck for 20 years.

On page 6, **Brush Up on Your Email Vocabulary** and build your knowledge of this tried-and-true marketing method. Then see how WCVT builds community connections on page 7.

From initial plans to final details, building anything—including communications solutions—is a process. Give us a call to get started.

Sincerely,

Gregg Haskin
President & CEO
Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom



Who's Minding Your Business?

Kris Merchant, Sales Manager



Kris Merchant joined the Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom team in April 1997. In his current role as Sales Manager, Merchant's responsibilities include business sales, account management, public relations, tech support, and new business opportunities.

"In my position, I think it's important to be approachable and available," says Merchant. "With that in mind, my goal is to meet with our top 100 business customers. I use this time to review the customer's services and look for more efficient ways to use the technology we provide. Many times, I find ways to actually reduce their bill because something has changed in the way they do business."

He adds, "I work with our small business entrepreneurs as well. I love these folks and approach them knowing ahead of time that they are extremely busy. They have multiple roles so sometimes it's hard to get a face-to-face meeting. My solution is to try to reach out to them at least once per year using email, a phone call, or a personal note. I want to give them the same opportunity for a discussion that we give to our larger customers."

"The idea is that I don't want to take any of our customers for granted. I don't want to contact them just when I want to sell them something or if there is a problem. These are my friends and I want to make sure they are happy with the service we provide."

Merchant is sometimes also referred to as Business Solutions Engineer, a title he explains this way: "As a telecom geek, my focus in the past was always on the technology and how cool it is. But as I started dealing closer with customers, I finally realized cool technology is OK but it's really the solution that people are looking for. In other words, I don't buy a powerful cordless drill because it is cool; I buy it because I want a new hole in my wall. It's the solution that's most important."

GET HELP EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

Today's myriad of options in telecommunications services, combined with rapidly changing technology, can make it challenging to find the right solutions. Fortunately, knowledgeable and professional assistance is close at hand.

Kris Merchant
Sales Manager
802-496-8554
kmerchant@wcvt.com

WELCOME NEW BUSINESSES

When you buy local, everyone benefits. Please support the community by doing business with these new neighbors.

- **Element Nail Salon**
Hinesburg – 482-7334
- **Nostalgia**
Waitsfield – 583-3181
- **Parkside Kitchen**
Richmond – 434-8777
- **Phantom Restaurant**
Waitsfield – 496-6068
- **Pleasant Hills Apartments**
Bristol – 453-6877
- **Rise 'N Shine Milkman**
Charlotte – 425-6842
- **Studley Printing & Publishing**
Waitsfield – 496-7290
- **Vitality Therapeutic Massage**
Hinesburg – 482-5226
- **Whippletree Designs**
Waitsfield – 496-9694
- **2 Percent**
Waitsfield – 496-7744

Conner & Buck Builders

Incredible people form the foundation for incredible homes

Guided by the enduring principles of quality craftsmanship and personal integrity, Chris Conner and Larry Buck formed Conner & Buck Builders in 1988. Since then, the small business in Bristol has achieved big things—designing, building, and renovating a wide variety of distinctive Vermont homes and commercial buildings. Conner & Buck has been building homes and relationships in their community for 27 years.

Clients, Colleagues, and Crew

Owner Chris Conner says, “What makes Conner & Buck special is really the people we work with. We have the best crew, very dedicated subcontractors, and always seem to get great clients! It’s hard to believe we’ve been at this for 27 years.”

Conner & Buck uses the design-build approach, working together with Vermont architects and performing in-house design. This unifies the flow of work from initial concept through building completion. “Our role is to support the client and architect by listening and paying close attention to the ideas and concerns presented,” Chris says. Conner & Buck is known for building strong relationships with suppliers, subcontractors, designers, and clients.



Take a tour through www.connerandbuck.com and you’ll see the beautiful results of this teamwork, inside and out. There are custom dream homes, cozy cottages, barn renovations, small town cafes, a library, and more. Check out the “Where We’ve Been” tab for some fun photos spanning back to the beginning of Conner & Buck.

Chris credits the craftsmanship and creativity of the Conner & Buck crew for the company’s success. This crew of 10 includes skilled carpenters, job foremen, project managers, a field supervisor, and an office manager—the majority of whom have been with Conner & Buck for many years.

“We set very high standards for our crew and subs and they are awesome. They are the key to building the highest quality homes in Vermont. We always receive compliments on both the skill and personalities of our guys. I’m proud of that,” says Chris.

Communication is Key

To keep connected to its community of clients, colleagues, and crew, Conner & Buck has used the communications services of Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom for 20 years. Currently, these services include a Hosted IP Phone System and Business Class High-Speed Internet with wireless access.

Barbara Conner, Office Manager, is pleased with the phone and Internet. She says, “The customer service we get from Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom is fantastic. Kris and Nick are always available if we call with a question. They also just stop in to see us on a regular basis to see how things are going.”

We set very high standards for our crew and subs and they are awesome.”

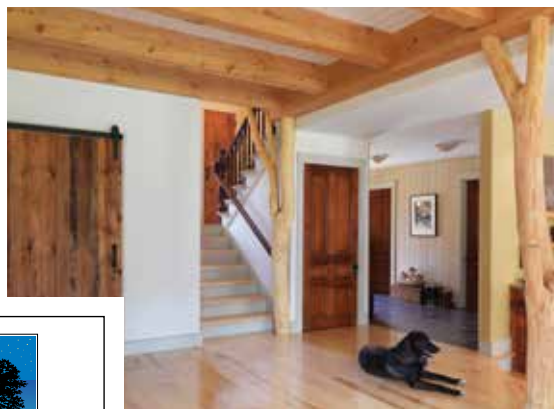
— CHRIS CONNER, OWNER, CONNER & BUCK BUILDERS

Barbara adds, "Our new Hosted IP Phone System was installed recently. We're still in the training process and Kris and Nick are helping with that. So far, we're mostly using the Parking function when we transfer calls."

Kris Merchant, Sales Manager at Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom, finds Conner & Buck to be an inspiring company with which to do business. "It's been said that the heartbeat of America's economy is the small business. When I think of Conner & Buck, they exemplify all the good things that a small business brings to the table including a commitment to family and the community. I love working with them because they understand quality and professionalism. The homes they build are gorgeous, designed with an eye for natural beauty and the environment," he says.

Sustainable Design

Speaking of the environment, a new home in Bristol is a current project that Chris Conner cites as particularly noteworthy. Chris explains, "The home was designed by Cushman Design Group out of Stowe and our goal is to achieve a silver tier, high-performance certification from Efficiency Vermont. Our building method provides for an excellent thermal and air barrier. And along with considerably higher insulation values and tri-pane windows, we should get to our goal. Energy for heating and cooling will be supplied by 8KW of solar driving air-to-air heat pumps. The house siting provides good solar orientation for passive solar gain as well. This should be a lovely home for a great couple."



Accession Communicator Mobile



INTEGRATE YOUR MOBILE DEVICE WITH YOUR OFFICE PHONE

Accession Communicator Mobile, available as an app for Android and Apple iOS platforms, turns your smartphone or tablet into a portable extension of your office's Hosted IP Phones Service from Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom. This enables you to leverage all of the business class phone features you have at the office, even when you're not at the office.

When you use Accession Communicator Mobile, you gain tremendous flexibility and productivity-boosting features:

- Whether you're working from home or on the road, you can make and receive calls over WiFi or 3G/4G using your landline number.
- All the rich functionality of your desk phone is available to you anywhere, anytime.
- You control incoming calls. Accession allows you to determine how you can be, or want to be, reached.

To find out what Accession can do for your business, contact Kris Merchant, Sales Manager, at 802-496-8554 or kmerchant@wcvt.com.

Brush Up on Your Email Vocabulary

10 Terms Every Marketer Should Know



Email marketing can be used to encourage customer loyalty and repeat business as well as to acquire new customers. If your small business is stepping up its email activity, it's important to understand these terms:

- 1. Blacklist/Whitelist** - Blacklists are composed of Web addresses that are blocked by recipients. Internet service providers (ISPs) keep such lists to block the addresses of known spammers. Whitelists are composed of addresses that are approved for receipt of email.
- 2. Bounce** - An email bounces when it is rejected for some reason. A "hard" bounce happens when the email is rejected due to a permanent factor such as an invalid email address. A soft bounce happens due to a temporary issue, like an offline server or full mailbox.
- 3. CAN-SPAM Act** - This U.S. law sets legal requirements for businesses that send email for advertising or other commercial purposes. For details, go to <http://business.ftc.gov/documents/bus61-can-spam-act-compliance-guide-business>.
- 4. Email service provider (ESP)** - An ESP provides businesses with tools and services for sending mass emails to clients, customers, and potential customers. An ESP may also help you devise a strategy for your email campaign as well as evaluate the response.
- 5. Cost per thousand (CPM)** - Most ESPs will charge you based on a minimum of 1,000 emails. Make sure you have a

good idea of how many emails you need to send before approaching an ESP. CPM rates vary greatly, based on volume.

- 6. HTML/Plaintext** - HTML enables the use of fonts, graphics, and background colors. Plaintext is text-only. Unless there is some special reason to use plaintext, HTML email is preferable in generating increased interest among customers.
- 7. House list** - A house list, also known as a retention list, is one that your company compiles. Use the list to continue relationships with customers over time. A house list is very valuable to your company because it's much cheaper to market to existing customers than potential ones.
- 8. Open rate/click-through rate** - These are methods for determining the success of your email campaign. The open rate is simply the ratio of successfully delivered emails to the number of emails sent. The click-through rate is the ratio of the number of links clicked in an email to the total number of emails delivered.
- 9. Opt-in/Opt-out** - When customers opt-in (or subscribe) to an email list, they choose to receive email from that company. You should also supply a link so that the customer can opt-out, or unsubscribe, from the email list.
- 10. Viral Marketing** - This type of marketing is the Web version of "word-of-mouth" advertising. Asking a customer to forward an email to a friend who also might be interested is one way of doing this.

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 2014 activities and upcoming events:

Mad River Valley Easter Egg Hunt on March 28

Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 28. Regardless of weather, it's the day of the annual Mad River Valley Easter Egg Hunt. This free event begins at 10:00 a.m. at the WCVT business office on Route 100 and is open to children of all ages. For details, contact Lorraine Keener at lkeener@wcv.com or 802-496-3391.



WCVT at the Vermont Business and Industry EXPO in May

The Vermont Business EXPO is scheduled for Thursday May 21st at the Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center in Burlington, Vt. The EXPO is northern New England's largest business-to-business trade show, attracting over 3,000 business leaders and hosting nearly 200 exhibitors. WCVT will be sponsoring the free networking reception on May 20 at 5:00 p.m. Entrance into the tradeshow is free if you preregister on or before May 15. Visit www.vtexpo.com for more information or to register.

A Look Back at How WCVT Gave Back in 2014

Giving back to the communities we serve has always been an important part of who we are at Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom. After all, our customers are also our friends and neighbors. We were honored to support, through volunteer hours and financial donations, these community service activities and organizations last year:

Vermont Foodbank	Mad River Path Association
Our Community Cares Camp in Richmond	Mad River Valley Community Easter Egg Hunt
Bristol Playground Build	Mad River Valley Little League
Bristol 4th of July Parade	Red Cross Blood Drives
Bristol Pocock Rocks Festival	Relay for Life
Children's Bristol Halloween Party	Richmond Area Little League
Eunice B. Farr Incentive Award Scholarships	Vermont Festival of the Arts
Fill a Back Pack Program	Vermont Food Bank and 14 Food Shelves in Service Area
Giving Tree	Vermont Odyssey of the Mind
Hunter Safety Courses	VT Special Olympics
Local Schools, Chambers, and Civic Organizations	... and many more!



Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom provides each employee with sixteen 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 to discuss the possibility of WCVT participation.

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