

BUSINESS

connections



The A. Johnson Co., LLC puts hard work into hardwood (and softwood)

Aaron Manley, Head Retail Salesman, unloads white pine board



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Wood is beautiful, renewable, and versatile. It's also a big part of this *Business Connections* issue. What's more, you might be reading my letter while sitting at a wood desk or working in a space with hardwood floors.

The wood theme begins on page 3 with a **Case Study on American Flatbread**. This restaurant bakes its pizzas in a wood-fired earthen oven using time-honored artisanal techniques. While guests love the tastes of simpler times, they also wanted a sophisticated Wi-Fi network, which Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT) now provides with fiber-optics and Business-Class Wi-Fi.

On pages 4 and 5, you'll read about wood again in the **Business Spotlight on The A. Johnson Co., LLC**, a lumber business in Bristol focused on Vermont's hard maple timberland. Since a fast and reliable internet connection is required for some of the company's computer-controlled equipment, WCVT ran fiber-optics across their entire campus to connect their buildings.

We take a break from wood-related topics on page 6, where we share **6 Tips for Increasing Facebook Engagement**. But then you'll find a mention of our Annual Giving Tree on page 7 as part of **WCVT in the Community** and see a coffee shop interior filled with wood in our back cover ad.

Have a business communications challenge you need to solve? WCVT "wood" love the opportunity to help.



Sincerely,

Eric Haskin

Eric Haskin
President & CEO
Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom



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CASE STUDY: **American Flatbread**

Business-Class Wi-Fi expands coverage for guests and enhances security and convenience

American Flatbread celebrates a time-honored tradition of bringing people together through nourishment, warmth, and a common experience. This pizza restaurant began on the property of Lareau Farm in Waitsfield and also has locations in Burlington and Middlebury—all featuring a wood-fired earthen oven.

The menu features an array of signature flatbreads, the popular evolution salad with seasonal greens, and an array of homemade desserts. Each restaurant offers flatbread unique to its region, accentuating the specialties of local farmers, cheesemakers, and other food producers.

The Challenge

American Flatbread learned customers at their Waitsfield location expected Wi-Fi to work across the Lareau Farm campus. The previous Wi-Fi coverage was not sufficient for their dining guests or the guests attending weddings at the beautiful venue. People wanted the ability to share real-time pictures and videos via social media, and this was becoming harder to do with the older Wi-Fi system.

Clay Westbrook, President of American Flatbread, says, “We were experiencing spotty, inconsistent Wi-Fi coverage and slow internet speeds when a lot of guests were on the network.”

The management of American Flatbread was looking for a Wi-Fi solution that would handle their business needs as well as provide a Wi-Fi network for their guests. It was also important that any deployed Wi-Fi network was secure for all users.

The Solution

Westbrook worked with WCVT Sales Manager Kris Merchant to find the solution, which was Business-Class Wi-Fi. This service

uses commercial-grade access points specifically designed for the business environment and provides strong, reliable, and secure signals throughout the designated coverage area.

Merchant notes, “American Flatbread’s previous Wi-Fi network did not have enough coverage. With Business-Class Wi-Fi, their network provides much more coverage and can accommodate more users without compromising speed. The other feature that made Business-Class Managed Wi-Fi beneficial for American Flatbread was that WCVT can remotely support this network through software and monitoring. This means firmware updates and changes to the network can be done without a site visit.”

The Impact

According to Westbrook, switching to Business-Class Wi-Fi has positively impacted American Flatbread. He notes, “We now have a separate and secure network for our business transactions and presentations. In addition, we’re able to attract business meetings in our newly renovated dairy barn because it offers Wi-Fi for the first time. Our guests at Lareau Farm love our current Wi-Fi service since they have the ability to easily share experiences and moments online while visiting.”

Find out how Business-Class Wi-Fi could benefit your business. Arrange a free on-site assessment by contacting Kris Merchant at 802-496-8554 or kmerchant@wcv.com.



The A. Johnson Co., LLC

This deeply rooted family lumber business focuses on Vermont's hard maple timberland

Andrew Johnson and his sons Fred, David, and Frank started this forest products company in 1906 with a small, portable mill. The A. Johnson Co., LLC remains family owned and operated today, producing high-quality hardwood lumber for wholesale customers around the globe and retail customers within a 50-mile radius of Bristol.

Variety of Lumber, Services, and Buildings

Its location in the western-central part of Vermont in the foothills of the Green Mountains and at the edge of the Champlain Valley provides access to some of the world's finest hard maple timberland. Hard maple is slightly more than half of production followed by red oak, soft maple, ash, yellow birch, and various other species. The A. Johnson Co., LLC also produces white pine lumber for its retail sales operation. About 8,500,000 board feet of timber are brought into the Bristol mill location yearly to feed the mills.

Four foresters on staff serve both the needs of the company's own woodlands and the lands of a diverse group of timberland management clients in accordance with the guidelines of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative and of the American Tree Farm System. The A. Johnson Co., LLC offers consulting services to private landowners in Vermont and New York, and its foresters

undergo regular training to continue their education and maintain their awareness of the many issues involved in the management of forestland.

About 20 buildings are on the company's campus. Roughly half of them are used for storage—mostly for dry lumber, with a few for machinery parts. Other buildings include:

- Main office
- Fleet shop for repairs of rolling stock
- Planing building
- Lumber mill

WCVT Fiber Helps Increase Production

The A. Johnson Co., LLC uses a variety of specialized computer-controlled equipment to go from logs to lumber products, and

some of it requires an internet connection. To facilitate this, WCVT ran fiber across their campus to replace the previously used DSL service.

General Manager Kenneth Johnson notes, “We recently installed a new machine center in the mill called a PHL/Comact 3D scanning transverse edger. This machine makes a 3D scan of the boards and then cuts the sides off them. It’s increased the amount of lumber we get from each log and made the operators job easier. To run the PHL/Comact 3D scanning transverse edger, we need dependable, high-speed internet so that PHL/Comact technicians can connect to the system securely from remote locations to modify machine parameters and monitor live video of the system. That would not have been possible with our old DSL service, which struggled to provide sufficient internet speed since the mill was so far away from the central office. Getting fiber installed from WCVT was essential to a successful installation.”

To run the PHL/Comact 3D scanning transverse edger, we need dependable, high-speed internet so our technicians can connect to the system securely from remote locations... Getting fiber installed from WCVT was essential to a successful installation.”

— KENNETH JOHNSON, GENERAL MANAGER, THE A. JOHNSON CO., LLC

Convenient Communication and Responsive Customer Service

In addition to fiber internet, WCVT also provides Hosted IP Phone Service to this business. According to Johnson, this phone system has been a game changer.

“Hosted IP Phone Service brought us out of a technological tight spot. We had hardware here on site that hosted the previous system. This hardware was obsolete, and when it started to fail, we felt the choices were limited. By switching to Hosted IP Phone Service, we offload much of the hardware concern onto WCVT and gain greater flexibility and reliability. It’s very handy to have ready access to other people just by using an extension, and making communication simpler means it’s more likely to happen. We have voice mailboxes that email messages to multiple recipients, which is convenient for employee lateness/absentee notifications. The power of the Hosted IP system is its choice of many call management features, of which I’m sure we’re now using only a small portion,” he explains.

What does Johnson appreciate most about working with the WCVT staff? He replies, “In particular, when we were considering the major mill upgrade, WCVT was able to step up to the plate and offer the fiber connection. More and more, when making a significant machinery and technology investment, good internet connectivity has to be part of the package. Making the decision to install the machinery upgrade would have been more difficult with poor internet access. The people at WCVT are very professional, easy to deal with, and always responsive to our needs. We have a contractor who maintains our network and computers, and he also has a good working relationship with the support staff at WCVT.”



EMPLOYEE PROFILE: KRIS MERCHANT, SALES MANAGER

Kris Merchant joined Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT) in 1997 as Help Desk Coordinator. Twenty years later, he’s still helping customers with technology challenges, albeit in an expanded way as Sales Manager.

Notes Merchant, “Because of my technology background, my Sales Manager position can sometimes morph into Sales Engineer. I’m always on the lookout for ways our services can be used to create the solution the customer is seeking. I have face-to-face meetings with many of our customers and see how they’re using tech to their advantage. I will often share that information with other customers looking for similar results. I’ve seen what works and what doesn’t, and can help the customer avoid any possible pitfalls.”

Despite his extensive experience at WCVT, Merchant continues to learn and reach out to others for help. “I may not personally have all the technical answers that a business is looking for to meet a particular challenge, but I guarantee I know someone who does. I love connecting customers with those people and hearing how much they appreciate it.”

**Contact Kris Merchant
at 802-496-8554 or
kmerchant@wcv.com.**

6 Tips for Building Facebook Engagement

Smart strategies to encourage likes, comments, and shares



Your Facebook business Page is a powerful way to enhance your brand presence, inform people of news related to your products and services, grow your user community, and help convert those users into customers.

If you're not satisfied with the current size of your audience and activity level on your Page, here are some pain-free strategies suggested by Facebook to help boost engagement:

1. Share meaningful updates.

Whether it's content related to your industry or updates on what your business is doing, stay in touch with your audience with Facebook posts. Use short, fun-to-read copy and eye-catching images to get attention. You can even schedule your posts to save time.

2. Get more attention for a special post.

When your post is published, you can bring more attention to it by pinning it to your Page or embedding it to your website. When you pin a post, it will remain at the top of your Page so it's the first thing people will see. Embedding a post means it will appear on your website.

3. Entice customers with news or special discounts.

Use posts to make special offers to your customers, invite them to events, or share the moment with a live video.

4. Create posts on the go.

Download the Facebook Pages Manager app to your mobile device to create posts for your business from anywhere. It's a great way to share up-to-the-minute updates and photos with your audience.

5. Reach more people with boosted posts.

If you want your post to reach an extended audience beyond people who like your Page, you can boost a post. When you boost a post, you select the audience you want to see it. Choose people who like your Page, extend it to their friends, or select a new audience you tailor by age, location, interests, and more.

6. Get a pulse on your audience.

Click on your Page Insights tab to get reporting on data including how many people your posts reached, how many people engaged with your posts, and the number of check-ins people made to your business with their posts. With Page Insights, you can learn what posts people are engaging with — or not engaging with — so you can make informed decisions about what content resonates best on your Page. These results will help you build your audience and get more people interacting with your business through your Facebook Page.

Facebook offers many resources to help businesses use the platform more successfully. To learn more, visit www.facebook.com/business/resource.

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 our recent activities.



Employees Volunteer for Special Olympics Vermont Fall Games

A group of dedicated WCVT employees assisted with the setup for the Special Olympics Vermont 2018 Fall Games. The games were held October 20-21 at Champlain Valley Union High School. This has become an annual tradition for WCVT, with several employees volunteering each year to help with the Summer Games and Fall Games. For more information on Special Olympics Vermont, visit www.specialolympicsvermont.org. Great job, Team WCVT!

Halloween Party a Spooktacular Success!

WCVT hosted our annual children's Halloween Party on October 26 at Holley Hall in conjunction with the Bristol Recreation Department. Attendees enjoyed face painting, entertainment by Dux the Balloon Guy, and frightfully delicious local eats. Many thanks to the WCVT employees who volunteered their time to assist with this event.



Annual Giving Tree Helps Hundreds of Children

Each year, WCVT spreads holiday cheer across our service area through our Annual Giving Tree. Tammy Field, WCVT Administrative Supervisor, works directly with schools and other community organizations to fulfill the wishes and needs of 400-500 children. Gifts for the Annual Giving Tree are donated by employees, customers, and the WCVT Contribution Committee. Our thanks to Tammy and to everyone who is participating this year.



If your organization has a project in the making and is looking for help, contact Lorraine Keener at 496-8379 or lkeener@corp.wcvt.com to discuss the possibility of WCVT participation.



WELCOME NEW BUSINESSES

When you buy local (and dine local, play local, and give local), everyone benefits. It improves our local economy, creates more local jobs and opportunities, and retains the unique character of our local communities.

Please support these new businesses by welcoming them to your community and doing business with them whenever possible.

B Fit VT

Bristol - 453-5205

Companion Pharmaceuticals

Charlotte - 425-5753

Hart & Mead Energy, LLC

Hinesburg - 482-6666

Phoenix Rising

Yoga Therapy

Bristol - 453-6444

Worthy Burger Waitsfield

Waitsfield - 496-2575



BUSINESSES RUN ON STRONG COFFEE AND STRONG WI-FI

Whether you just need a strong and secure Wi-Fi network for employees or a reliable hot spot for customers and guests, our Business-Class Wi-Fi solution makes it easy. We take care of everything for you, from the selection and installation of the right Wi-Fi equipment for your space to ongoing maintenance, upgrades, and technical support. If do-it-yourself Wi-Fi management isn't your cup of tea (or coffee), contact us to discuss the perks of Business-Class Wi-Fi.

Call 1-888-321-0815 to arrange a FREE on-site assessment.



www.greenmountainaccess.net