

*Spring*

# Home Improvement



A Special Publication of the Addison Independent | March 27, 2025

KITCHEN IN SALISBURY COMPLETED BY BRADFORD KITCHEN & BATH



DESIGN YOUR  
*Dream  
Kitchen*

- KITCHEN & BATH DESIGN
- PLUMBING FIXTURES
- CABINETS & COUNTERTOPS
- HARDWARE & MORE!

**CALL US TODAY!**

  
**BRADFORD KITCHEN & BATH, LLC**

**BradfordKitchenAndBath.com**

MON-FRI 8-5, SAT 8-12 OR BY APPOINTMENT | 18 CREEK RD | MIDDLEBURY, VT | (802) 458-8999



SEAN FLYNN, CHIEF executive at Silver Maple Construction, surveys the back of a Weybridge home that his crew recently completed. Silver Maple, in collaboration with design from Joan Heaton Architects, transformed the profile on the back of the 1984 house in addition to some important structure work. Among the changes is a new wooden stairway in the front foyer.

Independent photos/John S. McCright

## Old Weybridge home transformed for 2025

New tech reduces cost, improves living

By JOHN S. McCRIGHT

WEYBRIDGE — When it comes to the details, Silver Maple Construction has a lot of experience getting them right.

The New Haven company runs its own custom woodshop that creates custom cabinetry and woodworking elements that combines artistry and craftsmanship. The results are reflected in the home building and renovation projects that they undertake.

Co-owner Sean Flynn and his crew are also committed to the newest technologies that result in homes that are not just beautiful but also energy-efficient.

Recently Silver Maple finished a very big renovation of a home in Weybridge that touched on all of its strengths. There were lots

of custom elements that looked beautiful and many green elements that made the place much more energy efficient. The old heating system made way for a by-today's-standards conventional heat pump, plus geothermal and solar power.

*"It was a typical drafty 1980s house, now it costs next to nothing to heat it."*

— Sean Flynn

"We spent a lot of years trying to figure out the perfect insulation," Flynn explained.

What they landed on for the Weybridge house is cork.

Cork is not only a natural, (See Flynn, Page 4C)



EST. 2004

**SPECIALIZING IN**  
Custom Homes,  
Renovations, Additions,  
Decks, and Outbuildings

802-989-1177 | www.salamanderconstruction.com | Middlebury, VT

With over 100 years of collective expertise in awning manufacturing, installation and maintenance. The Paquette family exemplifies a dedication to delivering exceptional results on every project they undertake.



Free consultation  
with Rene  
Beat the spring rush!  
Professionally installed

Custom Awnings  
& Solar Shades,  
Residential & Commercial

802-771-5892  
integrityawnings.com



scan for  
more  
info!

# Flynn

(Continued from Page 3C)

sustainable product, but also an effective insulator. It also resists moisture, rot and pests.

“And cork insulation is carbon negative,” Flynn said.

It’s also what Flynn called “vapor open,” meaning it lets vapor into and out so the house can breathe. This helps prevent moisture build up and the growth of mold.

“We were for a long time making houses tighter and tighter with spray foam,” Flynn said. But they came to realize that “there is not a house that we don’t introduce leaks into.” So it ended up that some parts of the house had vapor coming in, but where the vapor could not leave there was a chance for mold to grow.

And the movement of vapor did not mean that heat could move in and out.

“It’s the same R-value (as fiberglass insulation),” Flynn said. And a good value, he added.

Silver Maple complemented the cork insulation with wood fiber insulation, which comes in rolls like typical fiberglass, and fits tightly between studs in a wall or attic.

To do such extensive insulation installation required a major commitment.

“We gutted it to the studs,” Flynn said.

But starting with such an extreme makeover also gave them a chance to transform the home in other ways.

## NEW ELEMENTS

The design for the rehab was collaboration between Silver Maple and Joan Heaton Architects of Bristol. The transformation was pretty substantial. Standing out front, you can see that they added a two-car garage and increased the floorspace in a big way — it went from 3,000 to 5,500 square feet.

Within that larger footprint many things were moved around or added.

The builders transformed the entry way, changing the orientation of the main stairway and opening up the space through to the kitchen in back. This gave



AN ADDITION ON the west side of the Weybridge house required installation of a new steel-frame staircase, above, lit by a masterfully installed “bent window” that follows the wall up above the roofline. Wood fiber insulation, shown below, along with cork insulation makes the house super energy efficient.

Independent photos/John S. McCright

the Silver Maple woodshop the job of creating a beautiful wooden staircase that includes the beauty of wood but doesn’t look like a

room was given a new fireplace with a glass door on the front that replaced the drafty, inefficient old fireplace.

Wandering around the back of the house, one can see another big change. One large dormer on the roof was traded for three smaller dormers that actually let more light into the house because there was more space for windows.

Off the end of the house it becomes clear where all the new square footage comes in. A two-story addition there provides space

*“We spent a lot of years trying to figure out the perfect insulation.”*

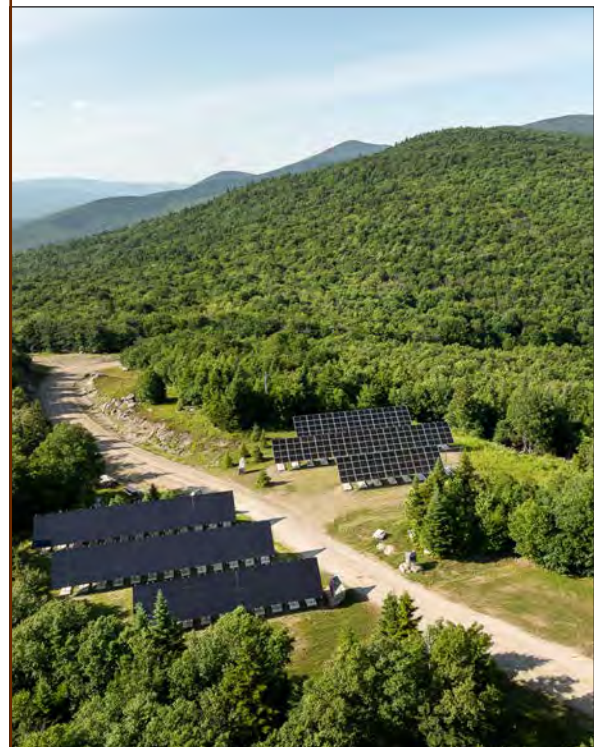
— Sean Flynn



Seamlessly combining the construction of energy-efficient, healthy homes with exquisite craftsmanship since 2006.

Specializing in projects that feature solar, wind, geothermal, and more.

[www.SilverMaple.com](http://www.SilverMaple.com)



## BRING THE OUTDOORS IN.

# MARVIN

The Elevate® Bi-Fold door effortlessly glides and stacks open so you can enjoy your own scenic view and invite maximum airflow into your home.

Visit our showroom to learn more.

SINCE 1940

# rk MILES

BUILDING MATERIALS SUPPLIER

103 Exchange Street • Middlebury, VT  
802 388 2721 • [rkmiles.com](http://rkmiles.com)



**SILVER MAPLE OPERATES** its own woodshop that enables it to create beautiful wooden detail, like this stairway railing, that are custom made for each project.

Independent photo/John S. McCright

## The windows

(Continued from Page 4C)  
hole in the bottom of the wall that gives the homeowner's cats access to a private space for their litterbox. The new garage is under one of the new offices in the addition.

Outside in the back, the addition created a little niche that, when connected to the kitchen, was the perfect spot for a screened in porch.

One good element that came from the partnership with Joan Heaton was three stunning bent windows. Basically, the design calls for tall windows to stretch up a wall and then fold and continue up the metal roof. The result is airy, sun-filled rooms that invite

the outside world inside the house — visually.

A key to the success of the windows is that they are all triple-pane Marvin windows that keep the cold out in the winter and the heat out in the summer. Plus, Silver Maple took care to make sure that the window casing was waterproof, like they would with a skylight.

As with other Silver Maple projects, Flynn and his crew did the plumbing and heating as well as the detailed work on the cabinetry. Some of the things like electrical and driveway construction was performed by subcontractors.

Sounds like a big job, doesn't it.

The work took a little more than a year to complete — demolition work began just after Thanksgiving in 2023, and the family, who rented a home during reconstruction, moved into their "new" dream home shortly before Christmas 2024.

Flynn is happy to display the place and hopes to soon have photographs to show others the incredible design, craftsmanship and attention to detail that the Weybridge home boasts.

"It's going to be a real show piece," he said.

## What would we do with less lawn?

MIDDLEBURY — What if your yard could support more than just grass?

The organization Pollinator Pathways of Addison County next month will host a talk that will help homeowners answer that question.

"Less Lawn, More Life: Reimagining Yards as Wildlife Habitat" featuring Emily May will take place on Tuesday, April 8, at 7 p.m. in Unity Hall at the Congregational Church of Middlebury.

In this talk, May, a pollinator conservation biologist, will explore how to reimagine Addison County's acres of lawns as vibrant, sustainable habitats for pollinators, birds and other wildlife.

Learn practical steps to create wild and wonderful spaces that reduce maintenance and welcome nature home. From selecting native plants to designing for



EMILY MAY

year-round interest, we'll discuss impactful, manageable changes that make a big difference in

conservation — starting right in your own backyard.

Emily May is the agricultural conservation lead with the Xerces Society's pesticide program. While attending Middlebury College, May began a pollinator garden that is still blooming and attracting pollinators today.

She received a Master of Science in entomology from Michigan State University, and has studied pollinator habitat restoration, bee nesting habits, and the effects of pest management practices on wild bee communities. Her work with Xerces since 2015 has focused on supporting crop pollinators through habitat creation and protecting bees and other beneficial insects from pesticides.

There is a \$5 suggested donation for the talk. For more information, email [pollinatorpathway.addisoncty@gmail.com](mailto:pollinatorpathway.addisoncty@gmail.com).

## How to renovate on a tight budget

Renovations around the house require an investment of time and often considerable amounts of money. Findings from the 2024 U.S. Houzz & Home Study show that home renovations are becoming more expensive. The median renovation spending for homeowners has gone up 60% since 2020. Angi, a home services website, reports the average renovation cost for homes between 1,250 and 1,600 square feet is \$51,772, but the final cost of home renovations depends on the scope of the project.

Homeowners who are conserving funds can rest assured that it is possible to make meaningful changes both inside and outside a home without breaking the bank. Here are some ways to renovate a home on a budget.

- **Create a budget and don't waver.** Figure out exactly what you can afford for a renovation and then make that your maximum dollars spent. Research comparable projects in your area and be honest about whether you can afford the renovation as-is or if you must adapt ideas to fit your price. Make sure to build in a cushion of around 15 to

20% for any unforeseen expenses that may arise once a renovation is underway.

- **Maximize an existing floor plan.** This Old House suggests looking for ways to maximize your current layout before you invest in major renovations like an expansion. Bring in a designer with an eye for utilizing space. For example, see how you might be able to replace shelves with pull-out drawers in the kitchen. Moving furniture around or rethinking floor plans also can help to lower costs.

- **Balance DIY with hiring contractors.** You can save money by tackling some projects yourself, but only if you are confident in your renovation skills. Rather than risk making costly mistakes and having to redo things, hire well-vetted professionals but ask if there's any DIY work you can do to cut costs.

- **Check clearance and resale stores.** Shop discount stores for building materials to save money. For example, if a builder ordered too many cabinets they may offer them to Habitat for Humanity ReStores, which are nonprofit home improvement stores and donation centers. Checking the clearance and

markdown sections of other stores may yield considerable savings on items needed for a renovation. Warehouse retailers like Costco or Sam's Club also can be great places to find certain home improvement materials and furnishings.

- **Take advantage of free services.** Certain stores may offer things like free consultations with designers who can show you what a renovation can look like. This is advantageous to the stores because once you see the potential you're more likely to buy the products, even if it's not mandatory.

- **Resurface instead of redo.** Certain items can be made to look new with minimal effort. Paint is a relatively inexpensive tool that can transform walls and more. A good hardwood flooring company can buff out a floor and put a new coating instead of an entirely new floor. Kitchen cabinets can be resurfaced instead of replaced as well.

Finding ways to perform home renovations on a budget may require some creative thinking, but it's possible to get results at the right price point.

— Metro Creative



The Industry's Most Innovative, Intuitive Exterior Woodcare System.



A GALLON STORM STAIN SYSTEM ONLY!  
Coupon valid until 6/30/25

**\$10 OFF**



1396 Rte 7 South  
Middlebury, VT



802-388-2500  
M-F 7:30 a.m.-5 p.m.,  
Sat. 8 a.m.-1 p.m.



# Navigating energy options at home

## Shoreham woman gets help figuring out green options

By ADAYLIAH LEY

In August 2024 Linda Larrabee, a lifelong Shoreham resident, spoke about feeling stumped about how to address her heating and cooling needs at home.

She found out about the Addison County Energy Navigators, an initiative of the Climate Economy Action Center of Addison County. The program offers free, one-on-one support for local renters and homeowners in identifying ways to reduce their homes' carbon footprint.

Since she tapped into the expertise of an Energy Navigator, Larrabee has seen her home energy project come to fruition.

"I was aware that (solutions and funding for insulation and air sealing work) were out there and the Heat Squad (of NeighborWorks of Western Vermont) was there, but it was a matter of not knowing where to start," Larrabee said. "I wouldn't have a clue of what was reasonable to ask."

"And that not knowing where to start is key," she continued. "You don't want to approach one of these things (a home energy project) with a lack of knowledge."

After she installed heat pumps a few years ago, Larrabee felt her project was incomplete. But she discovered that, without adequate insulation in her basement and attic, Larrabee was heating and cooling the outdoors. Through gaps in her basement rim joists cold air was able to infiltrate her home. And in her attic, warm air was able to leak out causing an increase in spending on her heating efforts to account for that heat loss.

Unsured of who to contact about her home energy questions and

# ADDISON COUNTY ENERGY NAVIGATORS



the long-term goal of reducing the county's residential carbon footprint as stated in CEAC's Greenhouse Gas Inventory, the navigators have completed dozens of consultations and aim to continue providing guidance

personal goals, Larrabee made the timely acquaintance of Jean Terwilliger, a local helper with Energy Navigators, a program offered by the Climate Economy Action Center of Addison County, or CEAC.

Before making this connection, Larrabee had managed to live with what she thought would be her permanent reality. A year later,

Larrabee's situation is wholly different. All winter long, she's noted the changes.

"I have noticed a savings in the fuel consumption just with the insulation of the basement. It's actually usable now in the winter, it's quite warm down there," Larrabee said.

Not only does it mean that her basement is usable, but she is also noticing differences within the main living area. Insulating at the base of her home allows the rest of the home to reap the benefits as well.

Funded by the Municipal Energy Resilience Program and Vermont Low Income Trust for Electricity, Energy Navigators launched in spring of 2024 and

have since worked up and down Addison County conversing with homeowners and renters about how to plug into the program's mission of connecting residents to a clean energy future. By referring clients to state and federal funds for their home energy projects with

for homeowners and renters of all income levels and living situations.

In conversation with Terwilliger, a running list of potential upgrades began to form for Larrabee's home. From improving the home's insulation and air-sealing work (weatherization) to adding a heat pump water heater, the opportunities seemed endless.

Though Larrabee was a little overwhelmed by these options, Terwilliger provided a project plan that allowed the homeowner to pick and choose what would work best for her situation.

"I think that the important part for Energy Navigators is just to reinforce that you're there to help," Larrabee said. "There's not a hard sell... The energy navigation is free. You don't have to do everything, you don't have to do anything. It's just for your information to know what your options are."

While there were some hiccups throughout the project, like a delay in receiving her rebate, Larrabee was able to get it all done in a year. Like anything, it takes time to perform an audit or secure a contractor to do the work. But having the information you need to get the project done is a great first step.

Whether you are planning a small-scale project for home comfort or diving into a whole home retrofit, Energy Navigators can provide the guidance you need to understand your next steps.

Learn more online at [ceacac.org/energy-navigators](http://ceacac.org/energy-navigators).

Adaylah Ley is an ECO AmeriCorps member and the Energy Navigator Program Outreach Partner for CEAC.



### A place for everything

A CREW CAN be so much more efficient if it keeps all of its construction components in one place, like on this staging. It helps that the shelves also have casters for easy moving across the worksite. Independent photo/John S. McCright

## Personalized report helps homeowner save

Since retiring, a certain Addison County homeowner started to notice some pressing issues, including high energy bills, draftiness, and humidity in the bedroom and basement, despite existing weatherization efforts and the installation of a heat pump. They asked a helper from the Addison County Climate Economy Action Center's Energy Navigator program to visit.

The visit revealed some of the key places where more could be done, including a vapor barrier in the basement and improved air sealing and insulation in the basement and around the entirety of the home. There were also some easy behavioral shifts that

would make a difference.

The Energy Navigator identified financial assistance programs that the client was eligible for, based on their income falling under 80% of Vermont median income.

Following the visit, CEAC provided a detailed report of goals and recommendations to help the client move forward in home electrification and improvement projects.

Since the visit, the client has received proposals regarding electric panel upgrades and weatherization work. These come with high price tags. After completing an initial review, the Energy Navigator team recommended approximately

\$49,500 worth of work to be done in the client's home. With help from Efficiency Vermont, Green Mountain Power, and Inflation Reduction Act rebates and incentives and tax credits, the client's out-of-pocket cost could amount to as little as \$4,500!

Navigating these programs can still pose challenges even when money is available, so the Energy Navigators will continue to stay in touch with the client to help them access these funds while addressing their home energy upgrades.

*Editor's note: This story was provided by the Addison County Climate Economy Action Center.*

## The Ultimate Wood Heat.

Set the thermostat where you want for a more comfortable home.

- **Highest Efficiency Certified by EPA.**
- **Peace of Mind** - Keep the fire outside and eliminate the dangers associated with indoor wood heating.
- **Save Money** - Wood is renewable, inexpensive and often free energy source.
- **Durability** - Long-lasting, stainless steel firebox.

### RIVERSIDE SERVICES

Rochester, Vermont  
802-565-0322  
[riversideservicesvt.com](http://riversideservicesvt.com)



Classic Edge HDX models are U.S. EPA Certified



Outdoor Wood Furnace  
CentralBoiler.com  
23-0301

# J.D. FULLER



## PLUMBING & HEATING INC

- Repairs, renovations and new construction
- Heating systems installed, cleaned and serviced
- Water heaters and filtration systems sold, installed, and repaired
- Kitchen, bath fixtures, and faucets sold and installed

John D. Fuller  
Master Plumber

802-388-2019

Serving Addison County since 1989



MAKE YOUR HOME **NET-ZERO** WITH SOLAR ENERGY AND COLD CLIMATE HEAT PUMPS



Providing Vermonters with clean, local solar power while reducing their carbon footprint.

We serve both residential and commercial customers.

THERE'S NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO GO SOLAR  
Enjoy years of renewable energy

Free On-Site Visit

802-247-1200  
[WWW.GREENEARTHENERGYVT.COM](http://WWW.GREENEARTHENERGYVT.COM)  
381 NEW ROAD, BRANDON, VT 05733

Green Earth Energy is a division of McKernon Group.  
MCKERNON DESIGN • BUILD U-FIXO

# Philo. Surveying LLC



Jason Burt  
22 Years Experience

Serving all of Vermont!

- ALTA Surveys • Full Boundary Surveys and Plat Commercial and Residential Subdivisions
- Light Boundary Work and Boundary Line Staking
- Easement Surveys • Elevation Certificates
- LOMA Surveys • Topographic Surveys

(802) 782-9273

Philo Surveying LLC • Charlotte, VT  
[Philosurveying.com](http://Philosurveying.com) • References available

# CEAC energy guide to financing

The Addison County Climate Economy Action Center's Energy Navigators program has lots of useful energy-saving information on its website. One important tool is a "Guide to Financing."

Here is the important information it contains.

Paying for weatherization, electrification, and new appliances is an obstacle for many. While energy savings over time can cover a significant portion of the upfront costs, what are the options for paying for these projects? Luckily, there are federal and state incentives available to all income levels including tax credits, rebates, on-bill financing, and low interest loans. If you find this all overwhelming and bewildering, you aren't alone. Everyone agrees it is too complicated — we're here to help!

## Big Ideas:

- Start with an energy audit and use the audit to create a plan to reduce your energy costs.

- See what rebates, tax credits and/or free programs are available for your income.

- Refine plan to take advantage of available resources. This could mean grouping work to take advantage of loan programs, or spreading work out over a number of years to maximize tax credits.

- Decide how much work to do and arrange financing if needed.

- Arrange work with Efficiency Vermont's Efficiency Excellence Network (EEN) contractors if you plan to take advantage of rebate and/or loan programs.

## A few Addison County energy cost facts:

- The median annual spending on energy costs across the county is about \$7,400 (about 9.8% of a median household's budget), including \$1,583 for electricity, \$2,415 for home fuels, and \$3,400 for transportation fuels. Annual energy spending is pretty consistent across Addison County towns, despite a variety of median incomes. Percent of income spent on energy varies town to town from 6.7% to 14.3%.

- While electricity costs through Green Mountain Power are pretty stable and rising only slowly, delivered fuel and gas costs have jumped around wildly in the

## Other useful explainers and tools:

### LOAN INFO ONLINE:

- [efficiencyvermont.com/services/financing/homes/home-energy-loan](http://efficiencyvermont.com/services/financing/homes/home-energy-loan)

- Efficiency Vermont Guide to Financing Clean Energy Projects at [tinyurl.com/EfficiencyVtCleanFinancing](http://tinyurl.com/EfficiencyVtCleanFinancing)

### GENERAL INFO:

- Efficiency Vermont Clean Energy Incentives Calculator at [tinyurl.com/EnergyIncentivesCalculator](http://tinyurl.com/EnergyIncentivesCalculator)

- One Page Summary at [tinyurl.com/EnergyFinanceOnePager](http://tinyurl.com/EnergyFinanceOnePager)

- Available through community service agencies like the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO).

### Federal 25C Tax Credits (smaller tax credits for equipment):

- Up to \$2,000 available each year.

- May make sense to phase projects to take advantage of this over a number of years.

### Federal 25D Tax Credits (for renewable energy projects):

- Tax credit of 30% of project cost, no limit.

- Covers solar and battery systems, and ground source heat pump systems.

- Credit can be carried over to reduce taxes in future years.

### Federal Rebates from Inflation Reduction Act: (these are not yet available — expected by early 2025)

- Income qualified, supports equipment electrification and some weatherization.

- Up to \$14,000 per household, covers up to 50% or 100% of cost depending on income.

### Weatherization Repayment Assistance Program (WRAP): on bill financing (through GMP or VGS):

- Can cover remaining costs of weatherization and electrification after rebates and tax credits.

- 2% loan rate, up to 15-year term, carries with home if sold.

- Limited contractors for this program — Efficiency Excellence Network contractors required.

### Home Energy Loans (\$20,000 max.):

- 0%-7% loan rates available depending on income and term length (between 5 and 15 yrs).

- Efficiency Excellence Network contractors required.

- See CEAC's guide to options, organized by household income and home type, in the deep dive section. Head online to [energynavigators.org/actions/3481](http://energynavigators.org/actions/3481).

### Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP):

- Free weatherization available if income qualified.

### Efficiency Vermont and power company (GMP, VGS) rebates:

- For weatherization and efficient electric equipment and appliances.

- Bonuses are available for low/moderate income (under 120% of median income).

- Efficiency Excellence Network contractors required.

### Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP):

- Free weatherization available if income qualified.

- Available through community service agencies like the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO).

- May make sense to phase projects to take advantage of this over a number of years.

- Covers solar and battery systems, and ground source heat pump systems.

- Credit can be carried over to reduce taxes in future years.

- Income qualified, supports equipment electrification and some weatherization.

- Up to \$14,000 per household, covers up to 50% or 100% of cost depending on income.

- Weatherization Repayment Assistance Program (WRAP): on bill financing (through GMP or VGS):

- Can cover remaining costs of weatherization and electrification after rebates and tax credits.

- 2% loan rate, up to 15-year term, carries with home if sold.

- Limited contractors for this program — Efficiency Excellence Network contractors required.

- See CEAC's guide to options, organized by household income and home type, in the deep dive section. Head online to [energynavigators.org/actions/3481](http://energynavigators.org/actions/3481).

- Efficiency Vermont and power company (GMP, VGS) rebates:

- For weatherization and efficient electric equipment and appliances.

- Bonuses are available for low/moderate income (under 120% of median income).

- Efficiency Excellence Network contractors required.

- Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP):

- Free weatherization available if income qualified.

- Available through community service agencies like the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO).

- May make sense to phase projects to take advantage of this over a number of years.

- Covers solar and battery systems, and ground source heat pump systems.

- Credit can be carried over to reduce taxes in future years.

- Income qualified, supports equipment electrification and some weatherization.

- Up to \$14,000 per household, covers up to 50% or 100% of cost depending on income.

- Weatherization Repayment Assistance Program (WRAP): on bill financing (through GMP or VGS):

- Can cover remaining costs of weatherization and electrification after rebates and tax credits.

- 2% loan rate, up to 15-year term, carries with home if sold.

- Limited contractors for this program — Efficiency Excellence Network contractors required.

- See CEAC's guide to options, organized by household income and home type, in the deep dive section. Head online to [energynavigators.org/actions/3481](http://energynavigators.org/actions/3481).

- Efficiency Vermont and power company (GMP, VGS) rebates:

- For weatherization and efficient electric equipment and appliances.

- Bonuses are available for low/moderate income (under 120% of median income).

- Efficiency Excellence Network contractors required.

- Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP):

- Free weatherization available if income qualified.

- Available through community service agencies like the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO).

- May make sense to phase projects to take advantage of this over a number of years.

- Covers solar and battery systems, and ground source heat pump systems.

- Credit can be carried over to reduce taxes in future years.

- Income qualified, supports equipment electrification and some weatherization.

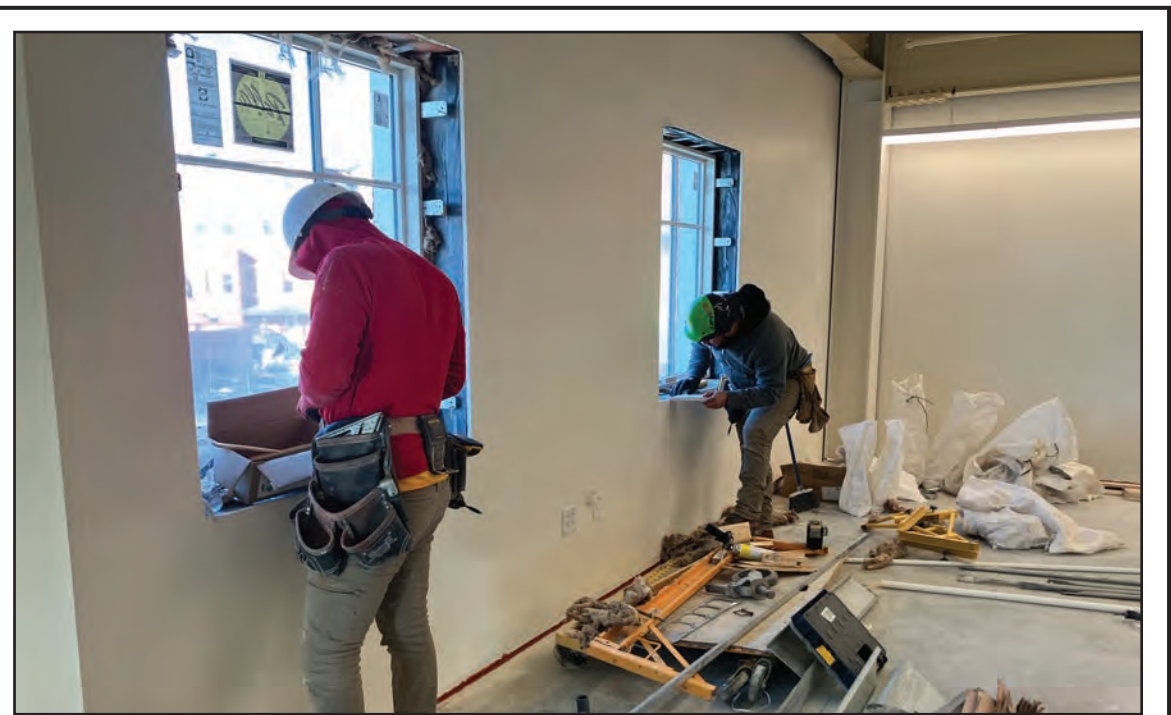
past 10 years, creating budget uncertainty. The cost of piped gas (only available in Middlebury and Vergennes) is more consistent, but still has significant greenhouse gas emissions.

- Electrifying heating systems with heat pumps typically saves money on heating costs compared to oil and propane. Winter electricity bills will increase, while oil or propane bills will decrease.
- Weatherization/energy retrofit work (particularly air-sealing and providing consistent insulation) can save 10% to 50% of heating/cooling costs, depending on the extent of the work.
- Heat pump water heaters have one of the best returns on investment, and are currently eligible for large Efficiency Vermont rebates (income dependent), and save an average of 1 ton of carbon per year.

*Electrifying heating systems with heat pumps typically saves money on heating costs compared to oil and propane. Winter electricity bills will increase, while oil or propane bills will decrease.*

**Financial resources available:**

- **Efficiency Vermont and power company (GMP, VGS) rebates:**
  - For weatherization and efficient electric equipment and appliances.
  - Bonuses are available for low/moderate income (under 120% of median income).
  - Efficiency Excellence Network contractors required.
- **Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP):**
  - Free weatherization available if income qualified.
- Available through community service agencies like the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO).
- May make sense to phase projects to take advantage of this over a number of years.
- Covers solar and battery systems, and ground source heat pump systems.
- Credit can be carried over to reduce taxes in future years.
- Income qualified, supports equipment electrification and some weatherization.
- Up to \$14,000 per household, covers up to 50% or 100% of cost depending on income.
- **Weatherization Repayment Assistance Program (WRAP):** on bill financing (through GMP or VGS):
  - Can cover remaining costs of weatherization and electrification after rebates and tax credits.
  - 2% loan rate, up to 15-year term, carries with home if sold.
  - Limited contractors for this program — Efficiency Excellence Network contractors required.
- See CEAC's guide to options, organized by household income and home type, in the deep dive section. Head online to [energynavigators.org/actions/3481](http://energynavigators.org/actions/3481).



## Attention to detail

WORKS ORGANIZE AND measure the space around some windows being installed in the new Town Hall Theater addition this winter before installing the jambs and casing.

Independent photo/John S. McCright

# Keep kids safe during a home renovation

Home renovation projects are significant undertakings. Some projects are simple and do not require residents to adjust much, if at all. But larger projects can take several weeks or even months, and such renovations pose a unique challenge, particularly for homeowners who have young children.

Children are curious by nature, and that curiosity can be dangerous during home renovations. Homeowners preparing to renovate their homes can keep these safety strategies in mind to protect their children during the project.

- Let contractors know there are children in the house. Keeping kids safe can be a collective effort that involves homeowners and the contractors working in their homes. On the day contractors arrive, remind the project leader there are kids in the house and request that he or she let staff know there will be curious youngsters around. Contractors can seal off rooms being worked on at the start of each day, and then do so again before leaving for the night. Many contractors have children of their

own at home, so if they know youngsters are in the house they might be especially mindful of safety and less likely to leave tools or potentially harmful debris out overnight.

- Inform children certain areas are now off limits. Parents can inform and routinely remind children that spaces being renovated are off limits until the project is complete. Explain why it's important that everyone in the house, including adults, must respect this rule. Of course, kids don't always listen to Mom and Dad, so this step likely won't guarantee kids will steer clear of sealed off areas. But explaining to kids why they need to avoid the areas can be more effective than just telling them to avoid project spaces.
- Set a good example. It can be tempting to peak in on spaces being renovated when contractors go home for the day, but parents should know children may be watching them. If you're curious about the progress, ask the project manager to see a space during the day while children are at school. If it's summertime and kids are

home, you can still ask, but do so with your children so they won't think you're being sneaky, which will only add to their curiosity.

- Turn off electricity in rooms being renovated when contractors go home. Speak with your contractor and ask if it's alright to turn off the power to rooms being worked on at the end of each day. If so, this can remove the risk of kids sneaking into spaces and turning on power tools at night or getting hurt while poking around exposed electrical wires.
- Hire a cleaning service once the project is complete. Once the job is finished, hire a professional cleaning service to clean all areas that were worked on. This increases the chances that small but potentially harmful remnants, such as nails or staples, are gone before kids start using the renovated spaces.

Renovation projects can last for weeks. Parents of small children must take steps to keep curious kids safe while a home is being renovated.

— Metro Creative

# Buying, building, renovating we have you covered

Whether you are looking for a mortgage, funds for a remodel or a home equity line of credit, we have products to fit your needs. We're here to help online and in person with an amazing team of lenders, making decisions locally and servicing your loans right here in our community.

Learn more online at [nbmvt.com](http://nbmvt.com), stop by one of our branches, or call to speak with a lender at 802-388-4982.

Scan to learn more:

NMLS# 403372 • [nbmvt.com](http://nbmvt.com) • 802-388-4982

Vermont Window Treatments LLC  
Over 20 years experience!

Free in-home consultations!

**Your local source for window treatments from popular brands like Graber, Alta, Rowley, Norman, RM COCO, and Carole Fabrics. Retractable screens from Mirage Screens and Draper FlexShade Zip. Window film by Johnson Window Films.**

Owner, Bob LaRose, has been selling and installing window treatments since 2002. We provide custom window treatments including shades, blinds, shutters, natural woven, Roman shades, and drapery. We install window film for UV protection and privacy. Window film is a great solution for hard-to-reach and specialty-shaped windows. We also provide awnings and retractable screens for your outdoor shade and mosquito needs.

802-989-1531 | 3333 Case Street, Middlebury  
[vermontwindowtreatments.com](http://vermontwindowtreatments.com)



### Getting 'er done

AN INSTALLER TAPS the wooden floorboards into place in the Town Hall Theater addition, above, as crews neared the completion of several beautiful new performance and rehearsal spaces in the Middlebury institution. At left, the work required many, many feet of corrugated tubing like this through which electrical wires were threaded.

Independent photos/John S. McCright

## Efficiency incentives offered to Vermonters

WINOOSKI — Income-eligible Vermont households can embrace efficiency in 2025 and get more than \$30,000 cash back through a combination of rebates and incentives for multiple home energy projects.

The savings come from bundling rebates for weatherization, heating systems, and other efficient appliances from Efficiency Vermont and your electric utility. These rebates can be combined with limited-time funding for weatherization and electrification initiatives from the Vermont Department of Public Service for programs expected to last into 2026.

Qualified contractors in Efficiency Vermont's Efficiency Excellence Network can help homeowners get started on projects that save more than \$30,000 by combining some of the following offers:

**Up to \$24,500 back for weatherization** (and for repairs needed to weatherize): Save on your energy bills with air sealing and insulation that will help your home use less energy to stay warm in winter or cool in summer. Income-eligible households can get up to \$9,500 for comprehensive weatherization. Need to make repairs before you can weatherize? Get up to \$15,000 through our Home Repair Program. (Home Repair is not available in areas served by Burlington Electric or Vermont Gas.)

**Up to \$5,000 cash back for**

**buying and installing a heat pump water heater:** Income-eligible households can get up to \$5,000 back for water heaters that use heat pumps to make the hot water used in your kitchen, bathroom, and laundry room. Heat pump technology operates more efficiently than fossil fuel equipment and can save money on your monthly energy bills.

**From \$350 to \$2,000 back for a heat pump:** Transition from fossil fuels to heating with efficient all-electric heat pumps — which double as air conditioners. Get up to \$450 for a ductless "mini split" heat pump that can heat and cool a whole floor or an entire home. Homes with ductwork can get up to \$2,000 back on a ducted heat pump system.

**Stay warm with wood heat rebates.** Get \$6,000 back for a central wood pellet furnace or boiler. Or consider adding heat to an area of your home with a wood or pellet stove and save \$400.

**Get hundreds of dollars off Energy Star appliances:** Get up to \$400 off a heat pump clothes dryer, \$400 off a washer/heat pump dryer combo unit, \$25 off a dehumidifier, or \$100 off a "Most Efficient" window AC unit. Energy Star certified appliances can save money on your power bill by using less electricity. That can also benefit the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**Get \$100 back on a smart thermostat:** Control your home's (See Vt. households, Page 9C)


### March Madness is for energy, too!

Efficiency Vermont has a message for Addison County residents: This March, the only madness more exciting than basketball is getting up to \$24,500 to weatherize and repair your home. This is the largest incentive Efficiency Vermont has ever offered.

Get your head in the (weatherization) game to make your home cozier and start spending less on energy bills.


Eligible households can get up to \$15,000 cash back for home repair projects that are necessary before weatherizing your home. Then you can get up to \$9,500 off the cost of insulating and air sealing your home. Efficiency Vermont also offers low- or no-interest payment options to help break down the project costs into monthly payments.



Find out how to win at [www.encyvermont.com/wx](http://www.encyvermont.com/wx).



## Heat Pump Trio

We Offer Lease & Purchase Options to Suite Your Needs!



Vgsvt.com/HeatPumps



FRAMING • PAINTING • SIDING • WINDOWS  
 FINISHING • SHEETROCKING  
 BUILT-INS • CUSTOM SHOWERS  
 CUSTOM MILLWORK



FULLY INSURED

Mark Raymond | [raymondrenovationvt.com](http://raymondrenovationvt.com) | Middlebury, VT | 802-388-0742

MCKERNON

DESIGN • BUILD

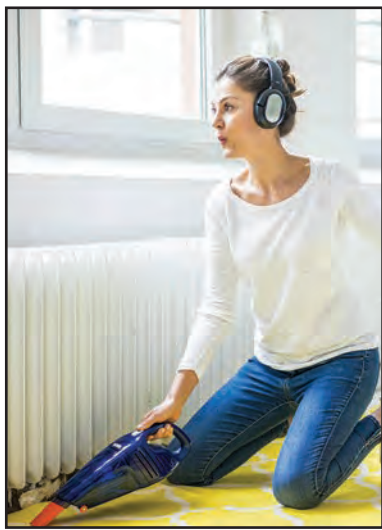


Quality Construction, Lasting Value

[mckernongroup.com](http://mckernongroup.com) • 802-247-8500

## Keep indoor air clean in allergy season

Seasonal allergies can turn a warm and welcoming spring or summer day into something else entirely. Congestion, runny nose, sneezing, and itchy eyes are just some of the unpleasant symptoms of seasonal allergies, which are most often triggered by high pollen counts during spring and summer.



Metro Creative photo

The Mayo Clinic advises seasonal allergy sufferers to stay indoors when pollen counts are high. But what about indoor air quality? The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) reports that eight out of 10 people are exposed to dust mites and six out of 10 are exposed to cat or dog dander. Dust mites and pet dander can each trigger allergic reactions. Pair those two triggers with higher pollen counts common in spring and summer and it's no wonder that many seasonal allergy sufferers are ambivalent about the warm weather seasons. Fortunately, steps can be taken to keep indoor air clean during allergy season.

• Close windows and doors. Many people embrace opportunities to open their windows and doors on warm days, but doing so allows outdoor allergens like pollen to

get inside. Pollen can attach to furniture and clothing, and that can make time indoors unpleasant for allergy sufferers. Maintain indoor air quality by closing windows and doors on windy days and/or days when pollen counts are high.

• Employ air cleaning devices. The AAFA notes that certified air cleaners can filter nearly 98% of allergen particles in the air.

• Keep a clean home. The Mayo Clinic notes that, in most homes, items such as bedding, upholstered

furniture and carpeting provide an ideal environment for dust mites, which are microscopic bugs that trigger allergic reactions in many people. The AAFA recommends keeping surfaces in a home clean and uncluttered to control dust mites. Washing bedding and uncovered pillows in hot water each week also can help to corral dust mites and improve indoor air quality.

• Vacuum frequently. Frequent vacuuming is another way to improve indoor air quality.

• Prevent mold and treat areas where infestations have occurred. Mold also contributes to poor indoor air quality. Dehumidifiers can be used to reduce mold and dust mites, making these beneficial additions to allergy sufferers' homes. Minimizing house plants around the house and addressing leaky fixtures immediately are some additional measures to prevent mold infestations.

It may not be enough to simply stay indoors to avoid allergic reactions on spring and summer days. Embracing measures to improve indoor air quality can be vital for allergy sufferers as well.

— Metro Creative

## Vt. households

(Continued from Page 8C)

heating and cooling with a thermostat that adjusts to your schedule and your home's unique needs — and enjoy savings on your monthly energy bills.

Low-income households may qualify for an appliance voucher for up to \$1,200 to replace one qualifying appliance. Additional support for low-income households is also available, including free weatherization through the state's Weatherization Assistance Programs, and free and low-cost efficient products like LED light bulbs.

There's no wrong way to bundle these efficiency upgrades. A whole-home approach could combine weatherization and home repair offers (up to \$24,500), and

switch to a ducted heat pump for home heating (up to \$2,000). Combined with a heat pump water heater (up to \$5,000), a new smart thermostat, and some appliance upgrades (about \$600), that home could bundle more than \$33,000 in savings. Another household may find a smaller bundle more suitable, like weatherizing (up to \$9,500) but not needing any home repair fixes, adding a ductless heat pump for heating and cooling (up to \$450), and installing a heat pump water heater (up to \$5,000) for nearly \$16,000 in savings.

Whatever projects you decide to bundle, completing several at once can be more affordable with 0% interest on up to \$25,000 through a home energy loan. No-interest loans are available to help pay for

home energy upgrades over time, and low- and moderate-income customers can get 0% interest on loans of five years or less. Longer terms are available with low interest rates for all income levels. Customers of participating utilities may also be eligible for the Weatherization Repayment Assistance Program to pay off their home energy project on their monthly utility bill.

Additional rebates may also be available from your electric or gas utility. Income-based bonus offers and other rebates from your electric or gas utility can offer hundreds — even thousands — of dollars off heat pumps, weatherization projects, and more.

Learn more online at [www.encyclopedia.com](http://www.encyclopedia.com).

## Year-Round Hazardous Waste Collection

The HazWaste Center at the District Transfer Station in Middlebury is open to residents from any of the District's member towns.

Most items are accepted from residents free of charge.

Businesses must pay for disposal and must call 388-2333 for an appointment.

Common items include:

Acetone	Drainer opener/cleaner	Mercury thermometers	Primers or shellacs
Acids	Driveway sealer	Mercury thermostats	Rechargeable batteries
Adhesives	Dry cleaning solvents	Mineral spirits	Roach traps/poison
Algaecides	Flea & tick killer	Mothballs	Rug/upholstery cleaner
Aerosols	Fluorescent bulbs*	Motor oil	Solvent-based Glues
Antifreeze	Fly killer	Mouse/rat poison	Stains
Ant killer	Formaldehyde	Nail polish	Stump remover
Ammonia	Fuel additives	Nail polish remover	Tars or resins
Auto body filler	Fungicides	Naphtha	Transmission fluid
Automotive fluids	Furniture polish	Oil-based paint	Tub & tile cleaner
Chlorine bleach	Gasoline	Oily waste	Varnish
Brake fluid	Hair dyes	Oven cleaner	Weed killer/fertilizer
Bug spray	Kerosene	Paint thinner/turpentine	Wood preservative
Button cell batteries	Latex paint	Parts cleaner	
Contact cement	Lead paint chips	Pesticides/herbicides	
Deck sealer	Lead-acid batteries	Photographic chemicals	
Diesel fuel	Lime/rust remover	Pool chemicals	



Household hazardous waste includes any unused product that is poisonous, reactive, corrosive, or flammable.

You can easily identify hazardous products by reading packaging labels. Look for key words such as **Warning! Danger! Poison! Caution!**

Improper disposal of these products poses a risk to human health and the environment.

\*All compact fluorescents (CFLs) are accepted at no cost; other types of general purpose fluorescent bulbs are free to recycle in quantities of 10 or fewer per day. A per-bulb nominal fee applies for more than 10.



**Not accepted:** laboratory chemicals, pharmaceuticals, fireworks, flares, explosives, smoke detectors, ammunition, and radioactive waste.

**HazWaste Center Hours of Operation:**  
Mon-Fri, 8am to 2pm, and Sat, 8am to 1pm



**Addison County**  
Solid Waste Management District

[www.AddisonCountyRecycles.org](http://www.AddisonCountyRecycles.org) 802-388-2333

# SMALL TOWN SERVICE BIG TIME KNOW-HOW



Kitchen & Bath Design • Custom Millwork • Windows & Doors  
Free Delivery • Jobsite Support • Expert Advice

**Lumber Yard**  
388 East Main Street  
E. Middlebury, VT 05740  
388-4915



**Kitchen & Bath**  
3255 Route 7 South  
Middlebury, VT 05753  
388-0209



**Lighting the way**

THE 40-YEAR-OLD HOME in Weybridge redesigned by Silver Maple and Joan Heaton Architects features sightlines punctuated by light coming in from windows on the sides.

Independent photo/John S. McCright



Metro Creative photo

**Be on the look-out for electrical hazards**

Homeowners know that the work of maintaining a home is never done. Cleaning is a daily task associated with homeownership, and such sessions can reveal more than dust buildup or dirty walls and surfaces.

When cleaning a home, homeowners can pull double duty and look for potentially hazardous situations. For example, vacuuming and dusting sessions can present a great opportunity to spot electrical hazards that might otherwise go unseen. With that in mind, homeowners can keep an eye out for these four signs of potential electrical hazards when working around the house.

1. Tingling when touching an electrical appliance: The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) advises homeowners to call a qualified electrician immediately if they experience a tingling feeling when touching an electrical appliance. The Electrical Safety Office notes experiencing a tingle or the feeling of being shocked is not normal. Homeowners who experience such a feeling should avoid the location and warn others in the home to do the same.

2. Wall outlets that look or feel unusual: Wall outlets do not garner much attention, as many are low enough to be out of sight or even behind furniture. So a cleaning session might be the only time homeowners will notice issues with wall outlets. The NFPA notes discolored outlets or outlets that feel warm to the touch is a sign of an electrical problem. Various issues can cause outlets to look or feel unusual. An outlet could be short-circuiting or wires could be damaged, and each issue merits the attention of a qualified electrician.

3. Foul odors: An odor that calls to mind burning rubber is another indicator of an electrical problem. Various electrical experts indicate such odors can be indicative of damaged wiring, an overloaded circuit or loose connections, each of which poses a significant safety hazard. The NFPA urges homeowners to contact a qualified electrician immediately if they sense a smell of burning rubber in their homes.

4. Flickering lights: Homeowners won't need to wait until cleaning sessions to notice flickering lights.

Such flickering is hard to miss regardless of what residents are doing inside a home. Sometimes lights flicker because of a loose bulb, so homeowners who notice flickering should first turn off the light, let the bulb cool down if need be and then check to make sure it isn't loose. If the bulb isn't loose, then lights could be flickering for a multitude of reasons. A loose connection can cause flickering, as can an overloaded circuit. Homeowners also may not realize that not all bulbs and dimmer switches are designed to work together. For example, modern LED light bulbs often require the installation of specific dimmer switches or the lights won't operate properly. Flickering can result if these products are not compatible. If a home is old, then flickering lights could be due to old wiring that needs to be replaced.

Daily and weekly cleaning sessions can be a good time for homeowners to perform a quick audit of electrical outlets and lights to ensure everything is safe and working properly.

— Metro Creative

**Be a MEMBER,  
not just a NUMBER.**



At Co-op, we're member owned and member committed. Since 1915, we've been providing protection for individuals, farms, and businesses with a large network of local agents, fast and fair claims service, loss control expertise, and affordable rates. At the Co-op you're a **member**, not just a **number**.

**HOME • BUSINESS • AUTO • FARM**  
Middlebury, Vermont • 802-388-7917 • co-opinsurance.com



**MEMBER OWNED. MEMBER COMMITTED.**



**0% for 60 months on  
Bobcat Compact  
Trackloaders and  
Mini Excavators**

Disclaimer: This offer is valid on all Bobcat compact track loaders and mini excavators. Financing at 0% APR for 60 months is subject to credit approval through participating lenders. Additional terms and conditions may apply. The offer is subject to change or termination without notice. See sales rep for complete details.

**CHAMPLAIN VALLEY EQUIPMENT**  
Middlebury | St. Albans | Colchester  
Derby | Berlin

(802) 388-4967

CHAMPLAINVALLEYEQUIPMENT.COM



# WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to working from home.

**F E C O I F**

--	--	--	--	--	--

Answer: Office

# WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to building safety.

**P E R R I A**

--	--	--	--	--	--

Answer: Repair

## Think about a basement conversion

Space is a sought-after commodity in real estate. Buyers prioritize numerous variables when searching for a new home, and square footage is often near the top of their lists.

The real estate market has been highly competitive in recent years, and home prices have remained high as a result. That reality has prompted some current homeowners who feel they have outgrown their homes to look for ways to increase the usable space in their existing properties. Basement conversions are one way to add more space. Homeowners mulling a basement conversion project can learn the basics of the project as they try to determine if such renovations are right for them.

Basement conversion projects can be costly. Though the final cost of a conversion project can vary widely depending on the condition and accessibility of the existing space, estimates range from around \$45,000 to as much as \$150,000. The home renovation experts at

Angi.com note that the average price for excavation is \$37,000. Of course, homeowners who are simply hoping to repurpose an existing basement likely won't need to pay for excavation. Accessibility is another notable variable that can affect the final cost. If the current space is a crawl space, potentially costly structural changes may be necessary to ensure contractors and eventually residents can access the area. Basements that are already easily accessible won't require such expenditures.

Ventilation is a must. Finished basements must be adequately ventilated so moisture can be controlled. Without sufficient ventilation, the damp conditions common in many basements can foster the growth of mold. The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America notes that inhaled mold spores can trigger allergic reactions in some people, potentially leading to runny nose, postnasal drip, red and watery eyes, and itchy eyes, nose, ears, and mouth, among

other symptoms. Waterproofing systems and adequate ventilation can prevent mold growth in a basement, and these should be integral components of the design.

Permits are part of the process. Basement conversions are considered major projects, and thus typically require homeowners and contractors to secure permits before any work is done. Permits may be necessary at various stages of the project. Homeowners who ignore laws regarding permits will have trouble selling their homes down the road, as it can be difficult if not impossible to secure a certificate of occupancy if renovations were made without securing the proper permits. In addition, securing necessary permits for each phase of the project can ensure final approval of the project. If permits are not secured along the way, local officials may insist work be redone to adhere to local laws, which can make the project even more costly.

Basement conversions take time. The time a project takes



Metro Creative photo

will depend on the condition of the space at the start of the project and various details unique to each conversion. However, various contractors indicate projects take about two to three months once they begin. That timeline does not

include the pre-project process of finding a contractor, soliciting design plans or preparing the rest of the home for such a significant and lengthy undertaking.

Basement conversion projects can add significant square footage

to a home. Recognition of what such projects entail can help homeowners decide if this is the best way for them to increase livable space in their homes.

— Metro Creative

Retain your home's original architectural details



VERMONT CUSTOM MOLDINGS  
www.vermontcustommoldings.com



We reproduce historic trim and molding profiles that are no longer commercially available.

Mark Raymond | 802-388-0742 | mark@vermontcustommoldings.com

Thoughtful Designs & Furnishings for Your Home



Keeping Good Company  
Interior Design Services  
kgcvt.com-design@kgcvt.com  
802-877-3004



INTERIOR HOME SOLUTIONS  
802-352-6650

Stop in today to check out our great selection



ROWE Furniture

BARCALOUNGER®  
— enjoy life's moments



Locally-made custom furniture

MONDAY - SATURDAY 10AM - 5PM

1193 Route 7, Salisbury, VT | interiorhomesolutions7@gmail.com



**Inside and out**

**BUILDER SEAN FLYNN**, above, points out the many south-facing windows on the Weybridge house that opened up the interior to wonderful views of the Vermont landscape. Turns out the resident cats also enjoy the views.

Independent photos/  
John S. McCright

**Boost value of your home before selling**

People considering buying or selling a home are facing a unique market. The real estate market has been in flux for several years, and high interest rates have made it more expensive to borrow.

The Mortgage Bankers Association is projecting that 30-year mortgage rates will level out to 6.5% for the foreseeable future, although it's hard to say for sure. That means that people who have been waiting for changes in the real estate market could be disappointed, and hesitant buyers may finally just bite the bullet and buy even if mortgage rates are not where they hoped they'd be in 2025. Homeowners with properties they are considering listing for sale would be wise to make certain changes that will help garner the best prices from buyers.

**Make kitchen and bath improvements**

The kitchen is the heart of many homes. Real estate agents may recommend that homeowners make minor to moderate kitchen upgrades like resurfacing cabinets, upgrading countertops and changing fixtures or hardware to give the room an overhaul.

Homeowners also should look to bathroom updates as smart investments that can improve home value. Katie Severance, author of *The Brilliant Home Buyer*, characterizes kitchens and baths as "money rooms" that add the most value to a home.

**Declutter the home**  
Homeowners should clean out items they no longer need.

Decluttering can make a space feel bigger, which is beneficial in a market where open concept floor plans remain popular among home buyers.

When buyers walk through a prospective home, they want to envision themselves living there, something that is more easily done if the home isn't overrun with the current homeowner's belongings.

**Get to painting**

Painting a home is a cost-effective renovation with a lot of oomph. Freshly painted rooms appear clean and updated, says HGTV, and that can appeal to buyers. Homeowners should choose neutral colors to accommodate the widest array of potential buyers.

**Improve the landscaping**

The exterior of a home is the first thing potential buyers will see as they roll up to view a property or look at a listing online. Homeowners should start by evaluating and enhancing the landscaping. Ensure the lawn is well-maintained and add plants that provide color without a lot of maintenance.

**Expand usable space**

Homeowners can think about adding to the usable space in a home. This translates into finishing basements or attics or even converting garages to rooms. Or it may involve adding a three-season room.

Homeowners can consider a number of improvements to increase the resale value of their properties.

— Metro Creative



Metro Creative photo



**Vantage Point Homes**  
All aspects of home renovations

Kitchen • Bath • Flooring • Roofing • Decks • Additions

**Vantage Point Homes**

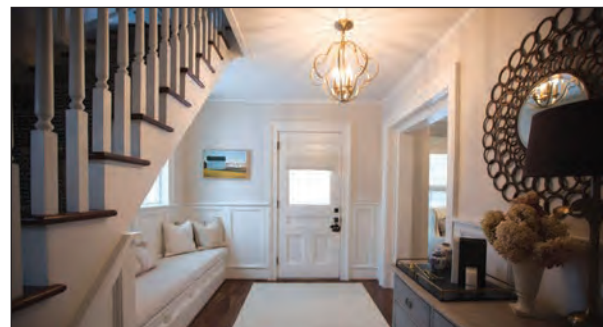


New construction featuring Design/Build Services

Salisbury, VT | 802-989-3974



**SOME BELIEVE IN MAGIC, OTHERS LIVE IN IT**



**Others Live in It**

New Home Construction, Additions, Renovations, General Contracting, & More



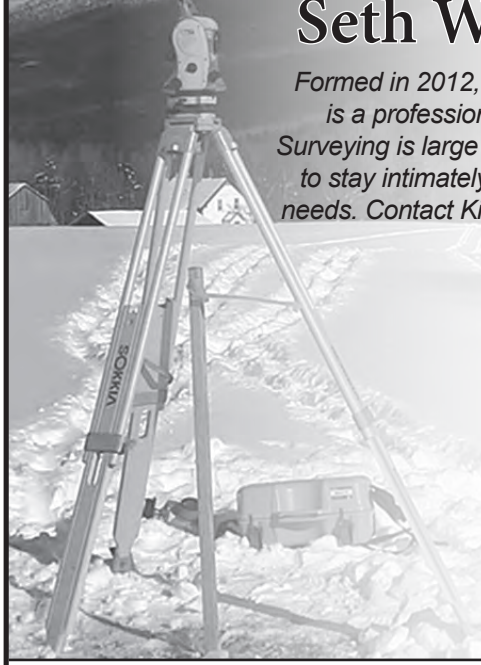
**HJL inc.**  
H.J. LeBoeuf & Son, Inc.

Established in 1888, HJ LeBoeuf & Son, Inc. specializes in building and renovating fine homes. We are a general contractor who also does light commercial work and historic restorations and cater to clients in Central and Northern Vermont.

hjlboeuf.com | P.O. Box 351 Vergennes, VT 05491 | (802) 877-3098

**Kittredge Land Surveying, PLLC**  
Seth W. Kittredge, L.S.

Formed in 2012, by Seth W. Kittredge, L.S., Kittredge Land Surveying, PLLC is a professional land-surveying firm located in Vergennes. Kittredge Land Surveying is large enough to accommodate any size project, yet small enough to stay intimately involved and focused on each project to meet your specific needs. Contact Kittredge Land Surveying for a consultation and free estimate.



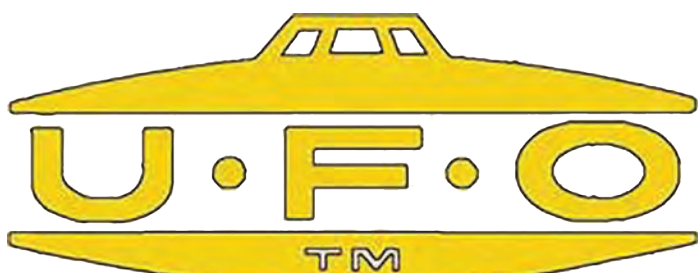
- Boundary Retracement
- Subdivisions
- Boundary Line Adjustments
- FEMA Flood Certifications
- Replacement of Missing Corner Monuments
- Vermont Land Records Research
- Topographic/Site Surveys

28 Thomas Circle, Vergennes, VT 05491

802-870-7028 • 802-989-1625 (cell) • info@kittredgelandsurveying.com

**KITTREDGELANDSURVEYING.COM**

Saves on energy costs all seasons



Create a draft free environment

**URETHANE FOAM OPERATIONS**

Cellulose and Spray Insulation



- Stops drafts
- Saves energy
- Seals out moisture
- Blocks air pollutants



Certified Installers

Brandon, Vermont  
(802) 247-5050  
info@mckernongroup.com



Metro Creative photo

## How do we choose a contractor?

Home renovations are significant undertakings. Though some projects require more sizable investments of time and money than others, all merit homeowners' attention and inspire some excitement when pondering the finished product.

A finished product tends to offer more appeal when the project is overseen and undertaken by a professional contractor. Small projects may be in the wheelhouse of skilled do-it-yourselfers, but most homeowners are best served leaving home renovations to the professionals. Finding the right contractor for a given job is of the utmost importance, and the following are some tips to help homeowners do just that.

• Seek word-of-mouth recommendations. Word-of-mouth advertising has long been recognized as an invaluable tool to attract customers, and for good reason. A 2025 report on the state of the roofing industry provided by Roofing Contractor, the official publication for the

*Secure multiple estimates even if the first one provided to you is below budget.*

International Roofing Expo, found that 79% of homeowners identify word-of-mouth as the top way to find a roofing professional. Word-of-mouth is so valued because homeowners can ask friends or neighbors about their experiences with a given professional in a pressure-free setting. Word-of-mouth also can help homeowners cut down on the pool of potential contractor candidates, which is no small benefit in markets flooded with renovation professionals.

• Secure multiple written estimates. It can be time-consuming to speak to multiple contractors and secure written estimates from each one, but such legwork is well worth the effort if the end result is finding the right contractor. Secure multiple estimates even if the first one provided to you is below budget. Multiple estimates allow homeowners to compare what's included, and not included, in each one. Some contractors offering low estimates may not include materials costs or additional factors that will increase the price.

Others may seem more expensive initially but may prove more affordable than competitors if their estimates include all of the costs associated with the project. Only a direct comparison of multiple estimates, which should include details specific to the project and an itemized list of what will be provided and performed by the contractor, can give homeowners an idea of what they're paying for.

• Stay local. Hiring local contractors is beneficial for a number of reasons. Hiring locals keeps money in the community and thus supports the local economy. And working with local contractors can make it easier for homeowners to keep lines of communication open. Many projects also require a little post-completion upkeep or even some tweaks, which is more easily accomplished when working with contractors based nearby. And finally, local contractors will be familiar with building codes and other details specific to a given town. That familiarity can ensure a project is done in adherence to codes and not stalled by permit- or inspection-related delays.

• Confirm their insurance. Travelers Insurance urges



### Craftsman

IT'S NOT AS easy as it looks to apply the finishing coat of spackle to hide the seams in a drywall veneer, but this guy in the grand stairway at the Town Hall Theater addition does the job with aplomb.

Independent photos/John S. McCright

homeowners to confirm a contractor is properly insured and bonded prior to signing a contract. Contractors should be willing to provide a certificate of insurance (COI) that indicates their provider, policy number and coverage limits.

Travelers also notes homeowners can contact insurers directly to verify coverage and ensure the policy is current. Never hire a contractor who is uninsured or unwilling to provide proof of insurance.

Hiring a contractor to perform a home renovation may be a leap of faith, but homeowners can take steps to ensure they find the right professional for the job.

— Metro Creative



*A locally owned company working for the community for 95 years*

***We are committed to providing high quality service and high quality products to suit your needs.***

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>24 Hour Service</li> <li>Propane Fill Station</li> <li>Plumbing</li> <li>Full HVAC Work</li> <li>Heating</li> <li>BBQ Tank Exchange</li> <li>Oil Burner Service</li> <li>Propane Service</li> <li>Wood Pellets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mitsubishi Heat Pump Diamond Dealer</li> <li>A/C Install &amp; Service</li> <li>Generac Generator Dealer, Installation, &amp; Service</li> <li>On-Road &amp; Off-Road Diesel Pumps</li> <li>Kerosene Pumps</li> <li>Natural Gas Certified Installation &amp; Service</li> <li>Pellet Stove Installation &amp; Service</li> <li>Residential &amp; Commercial Propane Delivery</li> <li>Samsung Preferred Heat Pump Dealer</li> </ul>
--	--

## 802-453-2381

**We're proud of the peace of mind we can offer as a local company offering an 802 rather than an 800 number to call in times of emergency.**





64 Jackman Drive • Bristol, VT 05443  
 mary@jackmansinc.com • melanie@jackmansinc.com • tim@jackmansinc.com  
**802-453-2381 or www.JackmansInc.com**

Serving Addison County for over 20 years.  
Come build with us!








smithmclain.com



Metro Creative photo

## See the trends in home interiors

Trends that seem ubiquitous one day can seemingly vanish before the sun rises again just 24 hours later. That's especially true in the digital age, when overnight celebrities and viral videos can be on the tips of everyone's tongue before being forgotten entirely when the next online sensation emerges in an increasingly rapid news cycle.

Home trends typically benefit from a longer shelf life than viral videos and other fads that originate on the internet, and that's something renovation-minded homeowners should consider when improving their homes. Homeowners preparing to do just that can consider these notable trends, which the online renovation experts at Houzz suggest will be particularly popular in the year

**H**ome trends typically benefit from a longer shelf life than viral videos and other fads that originate on the internet, and that's something renovation-minded homeowners should consider when improving their homes.

consider years. Better Homes & Gardens suggests that part of the appeal of arched doorways could be their deviation from a more traditional door shape. That uniqueness draws the attention of residents and visitors alike, and Houzz notes that

ahead. • **Rounded furnishings:** Houzz noted that gentle curves and rounded edges embody the organic modern styles that many current homeowners love. Rounded dining tables and similarly circular coffee tables may merit consideration among homeowners who want to embrace popular trends.

• **Arches:** Houzz cites arches among the more popular modern trends, and the experts at Better Homes & Gardens note this unique, eye-catching style has been gaining popularity for several years. Better Homes & Gardens

arched windows, cabinets and even millwork details are part of the pivot toward arches.

• **Stove alcoves:** If it's a touch of history homeowners want, kitchen range alcoves might be just the project for them. Range alcoves call an earlier time to mind when wood burning stoves were commonplace. The report from Houzz notes range alcoves immediately draw attention, which undoubtedly adds to their appeal.

• **Wood for warmth:** Homeowners who hear "wood and warmth" might think fireplaces, but Houzz reports that wood elements are being incorporated into interior designs as a means to giving homes a more cozy vibe. Ceiling beams, trim, wall paneling, and cabinetry are utilizing wood to add warmth to a home.

Trends come and go, but home trends typically have more staying power than styles that emerge in other arenas. Homeowners who want to upgrade their home interiors can consider the latest trends and choose those that align with their own personal tastes.

— Metro Creative

## Lighting helps set the mood

Many components come together to create a home interior that is welcoming and comfortable. Lighting is an important part of any design and plays a key role in home decor. Lighting can change the atmosphere of a room with the flip of a switch. Through lighting, one can make a space seem more cozy, or even make small spaces seem more expansive.

Homeowners should not underestimate the power of lighting in their homes. In addition to making spaces functional and more attractive, lighting can affect personal well-being, as a well-lit room can benefit mental health. The following are various types of lighting and how they can work best in a home.

### Ambient

Ambient lighting is blanket lighting that is used to evenly illuminate a room. Some home improvement pros say this is the general lighting that every home needs. Fixtures like overhead lights, floor lamps and more provide enough light for people to function safely indoors. Ambient lighting is the foundation for every interior lighting scenario, and ambient lighting fixtures should be featured toward the center of the room and closer to the ceiling to disperse light more efficiently.

### Task lighting

The home improvement firm Hiller describes task lighting as lighting directed toward a specific area to give more detail to objects. Close-range work such as crafting,



Metro Creative photo

reading, cooking, and desk work requires task lighting so projects are effectively illuminated. Task lighting can be installed anywhere a person requires direct, intense light to see details. This means lights can be under cabinetry or on a desk for reading mail or homework.

### Accent lighting

Lowes indicates that accent

lighting balances lighting and spotlights certain points in a space. For example, accent lighting can be utilized to highlight collectibles or artwork. Accent lighting may call attention to entryways, plants, fireplaces, or other points. Accent lighting typically adds character to a room and is not necessarily bright enough to sufficiently

(See Lighting, Page 15C)

## What sells houses? Apparently 'cozy' does

Wood could be having a moment among modern home buyers. According to the real estate experts at Zillow, the term "cozy" appeared in 35% more real estate listings in 2024 than in 2023.

Though various components can help to create a cozy vibe inside a home, wood has long

been a go-to material when interior designers attempt to add warmth to a property. The home renovation experts at Houzz also cite wood-infused architectural warmth among its 10 most popular home trends in the coming year.

Homeowners who want to capitalize on this trend before

putting their homes on the market or those who simply love the idea of adding more wood-based warmth in their homes can consider installing ceiling beams, wood wall paneling or even wood trim throughout their homes.

— Metro Creative

## Stay Cool!

Schedule your heat pump install before summer!

# YOUR HOME

## Vintage & Secondhand Home Furnishings

9 Main St., Bristol • (802) 349-2123 • yourhomevt@gmail.com

## Schedule your Spring Clean and Tune-Up Today!

Schedule your spring cleaning and tuneups and receive \$25 off!  
(offer good March 11 through June 30, 2025)

**COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL**  
**PLOUFFE'S**  
BOILER & MECHANICAL SERVICE

Heating • Plumbing • Air Conditioning  
Heat Pump Installation  
RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL

1786 Route 7 South • Middlebury, VT • 802- 388-2296

24/7 Pager Service  
M-F 7am - 3pm

24 Hour Emergency Repair Service

Find us on Facebook

## JACKMAN FUELS, INC.

Family-owned Local Business

### Spring has sprung!

It's time to schedule a spring cleaning and oil tank inspection!

Offering our customers:

- LP Gas, Diesel, Ultra-Low Sulfur Heating Oil & Kerosene
- Sales, Service & Installation of Heat Pumps, Home heating equipment & Water heaters
- Oil tank inspections and upgrades • 24 Hour emergency service available
- Pre-buy and budget programs

Serving Addison and Chittenden Counties since 1945

FOR MORE INFORMATION: (802) 877-2661  
205 Main Street, Vergennes • www.jackmanfuels.com



Metro Creative photo

## Experience the benefits of neutral colors

Homeowners make many notable decisions when designing their home interiors, with some choices proving more bold than others. The decision to decorate with neutral colors might not be the boldest move homeowners can make, but there are numerous reasons to stay neutral with a color scheme.

- **Versatility:** Neutral colors afford homeowners endless opportunities to play around with textures, patterns, furnishings, and more. For example, a neutral color on a living room wall can ensure a boldly colored couch or chair won't contrast with its surroundings. In fact, there's no end to the options homeowners have to customize the look of a room with bold features or furnishings when neutral colors feature prominently in the space.
- **Flexibility:** Neutral colors

are more flexible than bolder alternatives because they likely won't require a complete overhaul of a room when homeowners want to spice things up with new features and furnishings. That flexibility will be appreciated by homeowners who every so often like to experiment with a new vibe or look in their homes.

- **Trendy:** Neutral colors are not as vulnerable to trends as other design choices. In fact, neutral colors are effectively their own trend and won't get in the way of homeowners who want to change things up. But unlike other trends that must be replaced when homeowners grow tired of them, neutral colors can remain thanks to their compatibility with so many styles.
- **Tranquility:** Homes are often characterized as their owners'

private sanctuaries from the hustle and bustle that goes on outside those walls, and neutral colors are often lauded for the tranquil vibe they help to create in a space. Neutral colors are soft, and that can lend a serene and calming atmosphere to the interior spaces of a home.

- **Brightness:** Neutral colors are lighter in tone and thus pair well with natural light. That mixture can amplify brightness within a home and give it an uplifting vibe that residents and guests alike will appreciate.

Neutral colors are not bold, but the benefits they provide open doors to an array of design styles and decor choices that enable homeowners to go in various directions with the interior spaces in their homes.

— Metro Creative

## Lighting

(Continued from Page 14C) illuminate a space.

**Decorative lighting** is used exclusively for aesthetic purposes. It adds style and drama to spaces. Decorative lighting fixtures include

pendants, sconces, chandeliers, and more. Decorative lighting also may be whimsical, such as fairy lights strung in a child's bedroom or neon lights in a home bar or sports room.

Separately, these lighting options may not be enough to suit your

needs. But when combined, these types of lighting help to establish an interesting and functional home interior design that fits with a person's lifestyle and needs.

— Metro Creative

**AGWAY** ENJOY THE OUTDOORS!

Choose from Botanical Interests, Cornucopia, High Mowing, Livingston, Renee's Garden, and Seedway.

### Seeds

**Seed Starter Products**

Cow Pots, Jiffy Greenhouses, Jiffy Pots, Jiffy Pellet refills, grow plugs, grow lights, heat mats and a wide variety of seed-starting soils.



### Soils

**Bulk/Bagged Mulches, Compost, and Top Soil**

- Miracle-Gro & Scott's Top Soil
- Coast of Maine, Fox Farm, and Espoma Seed Starter
- Pine, Natural Cedar & Hemlock Mulch in Bulk
- Top Soil and Compost in Bulk



### Clothing

**Your year-round carhartt headquarters**

Outfitting active families for all seasons.

**We have: Carhartt Footwear!**

Women's carhartt is back in stock!



### Pet Services

**Self-service dog wash... OPEN EVERYDAY!**

Washing your pet has never been easier!

All the supplies you need and 30+ Premium Food Brands.

We also make Pet I.D. Tags – custom engraved while you wait!



### Grills

**Your Weber Grilling Headquarters!**

Gas, charcoal, and gas/charcoal combinations

**FREE ASSEMBLY & PROPANE FILL-UP with any Weber gas grill purchase!**

Propane tanks filled 7 days a week!



### Patios, Edging, Stone Walls

- Concrete Pavers
- Wall Stones
- Edging
- Stepping Stones



**AGWAY** **MIDDLEBURY AGWAY FARM & GARDEN**

338 Exchange St., Middlebury, VT • 802-388-4937

Monday - Friday 8-6, Sat. 8-5, Sun. 9-4

YOUR YARD, GARDEN and PET PLACE™ [www.MiddleburyAgway.com](http://www.MiddleburyAgway.com)

Open 7 days a week





**ELECTRICAL REFRIGERATION AIR CONDITIONING INC**

dennis@newtonerac.com • 802-388-1431

[www.newtonerac.com](http://www.newtonerac.com)

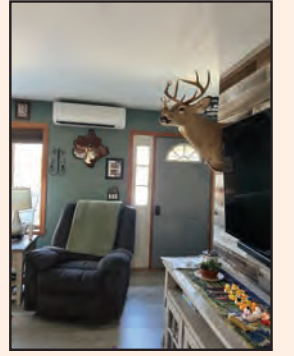


**A purchase made with us for a Mitsubishi Electric Cold Climate Heat Pump from April 1st to May 15th will qualify you to receive a Visa gift card!\***

\*amounts range from \$250-\$500 depending on model purchased.





**FREE ON-SITE EVALUATIONS**

**BRISTOL ELECTRONICS**

802 . 453 . 2500 • [BristolElectronicsVT.com](http://BristolElectronicsVT.com)

If you have been considering solar, heat pumps, or whole house batteries, please give us a call to discuss your options.

**Homeowners Recommendations**

We received quotes from Bristol Electronics and another well-known Vermont solar company, and were pleasantly surprised that Bristol had the better price, and we preferred Bristol's microinverter approach. Additionally, we were very pleased to learn that the panels and racking system were made in the USA with some components manufactured by a Vermont company. On top of this, the folks at Bristol were such a pleasure to work with. We can't remember a more pleasant experience when making a major investment.

We had a variety of questions which they happily addressed. Their knowledgeable staff was well versed with applicable regulations and requirements, building codes and even wind loading concerns. They truly went out of their way to make sure we were educated on the system and pleased with the installation.

This was a very rewarding experience which began with a goal of wanting to make our home fully renewably powered by working with a local team and culminated with meeting great members of our community, keeping our dollars local while also supporting other American renewable technology manufacturers. We found kindred spirits at BE and we can't recommend them highly enough!

*Megan Nedzinski and Joshua Faulkner – South Starksboro, VT*

We had Bristol Electronics install three heat pump systems for us in November of 2023. One system covers our bedroom. The other two systems cover the front side of our home.

We have saved money and we feel more comfortable. During our first winter, our heating bill went down by \$200 - \$300 per month while our electricity costs only went up by \$100 per month, saving us \$100 - \$200 per month.

During our first summer, we sold the three window air conditioners we had been using. We can see out the windows and won't have to put the a/c units in and out when the seasons change. The heat pumps have only needed to be on "low" to keep the temperatures comfortable. We notice we can hear each other better and we don't have to turn the television up to get over the loud air conditioners like we did before. These systems are so quiet.

The heat pumps have provided more consistent heating and cooling than our old heating and cooling equipment. We are saving money, are more comfortable, can hear each other and can see out of our windows.

*Wayne & Diane Smith, Salisbury, VT*

"It's not just that we are using our heat pumps and solar system, it's the fact that we are not contributing to the world's craziness. If everybody does this in their own back yard, we can all make a huge impact."

*John & Mary Howard, Monkton, VT*

