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RURAL WIRELESS: Ridge Communications Links Communities to the World  
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When James Wilson moved to Guntertown in 2008 the need for his business was personal.

“There was no Internet access - we needed it and nobody would provide it,” said Wilson. “It is just a matter of finding a way.”

Today, once referred to as the Johnny Appleseed of Internet, Wilson has been spreading communications where before it was thought to be all but impossible.

Locally owned and operated, Ridge Communications (now RidgeComms) offers wireless Internet services for Madison County and North Buncombe by Connecticut ting through the ridge tops, somewhat like cell phone reception, said Wilson.

A small radio is mounted at. Your home or business and/or computer or WiFi is connected to it, accessing a signal from nearby ridge towers.

“So far people are pretty please,” said Wilson, “I am just hoping to cover Madison so nobody goes with Internet access.”

People like the folks at East Fork Farm.

“Over the years we have done it all,” said East Fork owner, Stephen Robertson, who named a slew of services from satellite to dial-up that, after high hopes, still left them virtually unconnected. “It is something we needed. [Before], most of the time you would wiggle the antenna and just hold your breath.”

Nestled just 25 minutes form downtown Marshall, East Fork Farm offers visitors a chance to spend an evening enjoying all the amenities of the countryside with fresh eggs each morning overlooking the beauty of the farm in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

But while leaving all modern conveniences behind can appeal to the adventurous traveler, sometimes it does not suit everyone in the family.

And what they could not offer was reliable high speed Internet.

But all that changed since connecting with Ridge Communications. Robertson said that what was once one of the biggest hurdles face in running their vacation cottages, is not non-existent - 100% of the time.

“It has been absolutely wonderful,” said Robertson of Ridge Communications’ service. “There have not been any hiccups since day one. It is far superior to any service we have ever had.”

For Wilson, who has been in broadcast engineering for over 30 years, the switch to wireless seemed almost natural after he was ready to trade in the big city living for a taste of country life. "When I decided to move out of the big city, I had to give that up, but it does encompass what I do now," said Wilson. "This is just a small subset."

"Small Subset" none the less, with competitors like Frontier and Charter Communications, Ridge Communications has to be at the top of their game, especially in customer service, something Wilson said is one of their greatest motivators for new customers - the art of answering the phone.

"[Frontier and Charter] don't always provide the services you are paying for," said Wilson. "I'm local. You can call me. You don't have to sit on voicemail or talk to someone in India. It is easy to get in touch with somebody on the line that knows what they are doing."

And the rates, Wilson said compete with any of the larger companies. Plans start at \$35/month for a 1-2 Megabits up and down.

Internet access is not the only service Ridge Communication offers with Internet surveillance cameras, cell phone reception improvement and remote Internet access, our communication with the world is truly at your fingertips.

For more information, or to check if your location is currently covered by Ridge Communications, go to their website at [www.ridgecomms.com](http://www.ridgecomms.com).