

Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee

Regional Commission Newsletter

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A Guide To Putting Your Town On The Web

So you want to build a web site?

With the Internet fast becoming the most popular way to communicate quickly and an even more popular way to provide a wide range of people with data, many towns find themselves considering the creation of a web site. But there are many details to consider. In a series of articles, we'll address how you might go about creating a web site for your town, and what to watch out for when you're doing it.

Who will build it?

The first step to creating your web site is determining who is going to do the work. Some towns are fortunate enough to have a willing volunteer who will dedicate time, free of charge, to building and updating your web site. Other towns have a staff member who is willing to learn how to do it. Most towns, however, don't have such luck.

Creating vs. Managing

While a volunteer might be willing to build a site for your town, you should consider that she might not have time to manage the site for you once it's been built. This means that in addition to having someone build your site, you need to determine who will manage the day to day updates, like posting meeting minutes and meeting times, uploading public documents such as Town Plans or Zoning Regulations.

Generally, it is most convenient to have the individual who built the site be the same person who manages its content. Having a strong familiarity with the structure of the site can make it easier to manage. However, having a professional web designer manage your site can be expensive.

Time

How much time are you willing to let

an individual invest in the building and maintaining of a site? Building a site from scratch is a tedious and time consuming effort, particularly if the builders programming knowledge is limited. Be aware that if you have an office administrator do the work, it could keep him away from his regular day-to-day tasks or it may take an extremely long time to do.

If the investment of Town time on a web site project is limited, consider either having someone else - a volunteer, a vocational center or a web design company, create the site for you. This will cost more money, but it may be more practical.

Another consideration that may help cut down on time investment is using a template based system to program your site. A template based system is exactly what it sounds like - instead of making the pages yourself, you use a system of templates through a company like GovOffice (currently used by both Hartland and West Fairlee) and simply add your own data to their already created page designs. This means that whoever you have putting information on the site spends little time handling the design of the site and more time simply updating the information. This is also a good way to have a less web savvy person do the work that needs to be done.

Cost

Design and Programming - As stated before, if you hire a web design/programming firm to create a web site for you, it will cost you \$4000 or more to build the site from scratch. Packages like GovOffice are much cheaper and do not require the user to be a web programmer. If you have a staff member do the work, it will cost you the amount of time it takes to get the job done.

(continued p. 2)

In this Issue:

TRORC Towns Awarded \$128,447 in MPG's	Page 2
More TRORC Towns Apply for Village Desig.	Page 2
Annual Town Officers Education Conference	Page 3
Phase II Brownfields Assessments Underway	Page 3
Between a Rock and a Hard Place, 2006	Page 4
FEMA Flood Guide	Page 4

More TRORC Towns Apply for Village Designation Program

As has been the case throughout the past year, more towns in the TRORC Region have applied for Village Designation. Under review for the month of March are villages in the towns of Royalton and Woodstock.

As Villages continue to become designated other towns should consider applying for Village Designation in an effort to remain competitive. Villages that have Village Designation are given priority consideration in grant applications involving many State programs such as the Municipal Planning Grant Program, Community Development Block Grants and Transportation Enhancement Grants.

If you are interested in applying for Village Designation, please contact Chris Sargent or Crystal Loffler at the Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission.

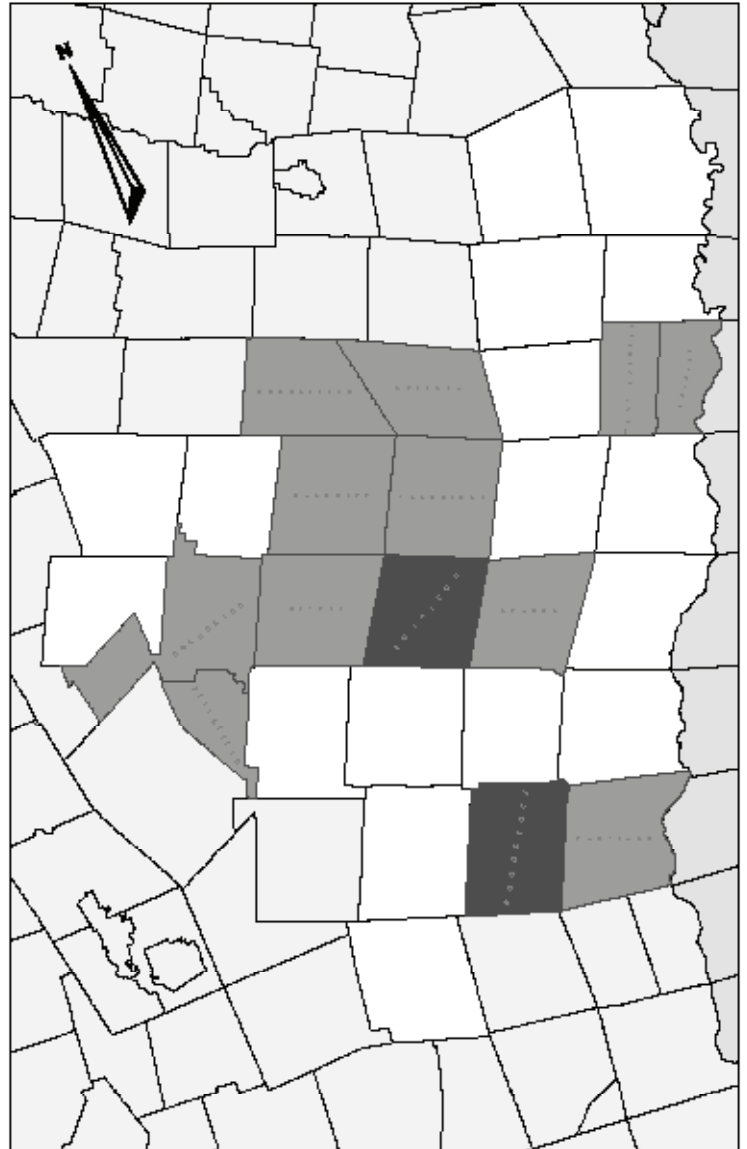
The Town of Bradford recently received Downtown Designation for their downtown.

Current Village Designations

- Bethel
- Brookfield - Pond Village
- Chelsea
- Fairlee
- Hartland - Hartland 3 Corners, Hartland 4 Corners & North Hartland
- Pittsfield
- Randolph - East Randolph Village
- Rochester
- Sharon
- Tunbridge - North Tunbridge, Tunbridge Village
- West Fairlee

Current Downtown Designations

- Randolph
- Bradford



The TRORC Region currently has eleven Towns with a total of fourteen designated Villages. The nine towns in our region that currently have designated villages are indicated in gray. The two towns currently applying are indicated in dark grey.

A Guide To Putting Your Town On The Web (Continued)

(continued from page 1)

Hosting - Someone will need to host your web site (more details on web hosts to follow), this can cost as much as \$500 a year, although most hosts offer a range of hosting packages. You will need to register your domain name.

Naming - Every web site has some sort of "domain name", ours for example is www.trorc.org. In order to reserve a domain name for your site, you need to register it. There are a number of companies who register domain names. Network Solutions is the granddaddy of them all and they are currently renting domains for \$75 for three years.

Next

In our next newsletter, we will take an in-depth look at the issues surrounding the following:

- Design - The Pros and Cons of professional design, web software, template style sites.
- Hosting - Who can host your web site? Using a local vs. national host.
- Naming your web site - making your domain name easy to remember, picking the right extension.

For questions or comments, please email Chris Sargent at csargent@trorc.org.

Town Officers Education Conf.

One of 5, annual all-day, regional events with workshops for various municipal officials. Land use topics include natural resources, public involvement, community data, and a planning and zoning roundtable.

Date: Tuesday, April 18th, 2006

Location: Lake Morey Inn, Fairlee, VT

Time: 8:00AM-3:30PM

Cost: \$45 - \$55

Contact for More Information:

Mary Peabody at UVM Extension

Phone: 1-866-860-1382 x13

Email: Mary.Peabody@uvm.edu

Website for information and/or registration:

<http://www.regonline.com/toec06>

The Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission will **reimburse towns** for the cost of sending officials to this event. Contact Chris Sargent at 802-457-3188 for details.

Vermont GIS Expo

The Vermont GIS Expo 2006 will provide exhibitors and attendees the opportunity to network and learn about activity throughout the GIS community in Vermont. This year's expo will feature Keynote Speaker Don Cooke, founder of Geographic Data Technologies, in Lebanon, NH, and author of "Fun with GPS".

Contact for More Information:

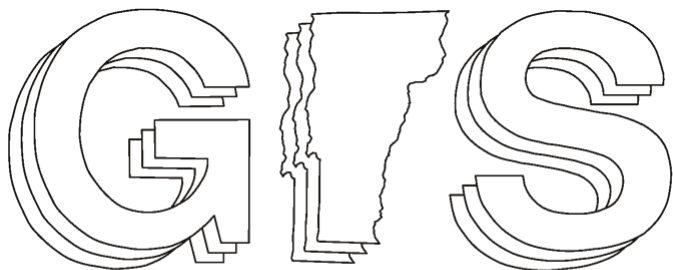
Leslie Pelch at Vermont Center for Geographic Information

Phone: 802-882-3002

Email: info@vcgi.org

Website for information and/or registration:

<http://www.vcgi.org/expo>



VERMONT GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM
Helping Vermonters Visualize Choice

Phase II Assessments Underway

TRORC's Brownfield Reuse Program is currently performing tests on a 4.5 acre parcel in Randolph that Randolph Area Community Development Corporation is acquiring from Ethan Allen, Inc. This testing is clearing the way for redevelopment by removing concerns about potential contamination and delineating any that are found. Soil tests to date have found no contamination. Groundwater testing is in progress. The redevelopment got a boost recently when EPA's Regional Administrator, Bob Varney, and Governor Douglas toured the site with representatives from TRORC, Ethan Allen and RACDC. Redevelopment plans for the parcel include housing.

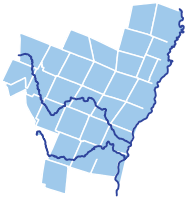
Drilling has also begun at the Tip Top Tire site on Route 5 in Wilder. The site's new owner is planning to redevelop the land as housing this year. The assessment work will include drilling, soil and water sampling, and testing. The site has been used historically for vehicle and equipment storage, an automotive service station, gasoline sales, and livery stables. The results of the upcoming testing will be used to determine if soils are contaminated; to examine the groundwater quality and flow direction; and to verify that there is no risk to people, structures, or air quality, drinking water or surface water quality from past activities at the site.

TRORC is funding this work through Brownfields grants received from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. TRORC grant funds allow us to help public or private property owners who suspect their property may be contaminated by hazardous waste or petroleum products. The grant funds will be used to gauge whether contamination exists on a property and, if so, to determine what can be done to return the property to active use. TRORC staff can also help property owners seek funds to undertake the cleanup.

The TRORC Brownfields programs aim to stimulate economic development by returning Brownfield properties to active reuse for public benefit.

For information on assessments at petroleum sites, contact Sally Mansur at 457-3188 x 17 or smansur@trorc.org.

For information on potential hazardous waste site assessments, contact Kevin Geiger at 457-3188 x 24 or kgeiger@trorc.org.



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FEMA Flood Guide

Between a Rock and a Hard Place, 2006

The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), has just published "Reducing Damage from Localized Flooding: A Guide for Communities".

This book is an excellent guide for communities that are struggling with how to handle flood hazards areas. It looks closely at tools and techniques for reducing damage from flooding at the community, neighborhood and site level.

Of interest also, is the specific ways that towns can save money in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by making minor changes to their Flood Hazard Ordinances.

The Vermont Housing Awareness Campaign has just released the fifth edition of their report "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Housing and Wages in Vermont".

From the report: "Although Vermont has enjoyed a strong economy for the last ten years, four out of five Vermont households actually lost buying power as their earnings did not keep pace with the rate of inflation. At the same time, the cost of housing in Vermont has soared. As a result, working families are finding it harder and harder to keep a roof over their heads without paying a disproportionate amount of their earnings for housing. These Vermonters are finding themselves

Between a Rock and a Hard Place."

The report, and other valuable information on housing can be downloaded in .pdf format from:

<http://www.housingawareness.org/>

For information about housing in the TRORC Region, please contact Kathleen Kanz at 802-457-3188 or kkanz@trorc.org.

visit us on the web!! www.trorc.org