

TWO RIVERS-OTTAUQUECHEE REGIONAL COMMISSION



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Regional Plan for Sustainable Development

TRORC is working with
the East Central Vermont
partnership to develop a
vision and plan for a
sustainable future.

We want to hear
from you!

Share your vision of the
future by visiting the
website:
www.ecvermont.org

News

Congratulations to the VECAN Energy Award Winners in the Two Rivers Region!



A heartfelt congratulations goes out to the Bradford Conservation Commission's Energy Committee (BEC) for winning the 2012 Best Overall Energy Committee Award. The Vermont Energy & Climate Action Network (VECAN) picked BEC because of their hard work:

"...organizing the annual Local Energy and Agriculture Festival, (where one year over 1,000 people attended), sponsoring a successful Solar Hot Water Challenge, municipal energy efficiency efforts and other creative public engagement strategies. BEC is currently looking into oil pre-heaters and insulating boiler heaters at the Bradford Academy to further reduce oil usage, hopefully by 10 percent or more."

Over the last couple of years, Two Rivers' staff have assisted the BEC and Town of Bradford with energy efficiency and conservation projects. For instance, Two Rivers' staff conducted a streetlight inventory of Bradford in 2011, which led to the town's transition to more efficient, LED lighting. Additionally, TRORC funded energy audits of municipal buildings (including the Bradford Academy, Public Library, and Town Garage), and provided energy efficient appliances/supplies for public buildings. This work was funded through an Energy Efficiency Community Block Grant (EECBG) that TRORC received from the U.S. Department of Energy.

Staff

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Senior Planner

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Planner

The individual energy leadership award also went to residents of the Two Rivers' region: Hunter Rieseberg (the Hartford Town Manager) and Martha McDaniel (member of the Hartford Energy Commission). VECAN's staff explain why:

"A recent success story is the completion of a town-wide streetlight inventory, which resulted in a reduction and refixturing project that lowered the town's street lighting bill by more than 60 percent."

As was the case in Bradford, the Two Rivers' staff also assisted the Town of Hartford with the streetlight inventory which led to these incredible savings in energy use and cost. Although TRORC's EECBG funding ends this month, the staff will conduct one more streetlight inventory before the deadline, this time in the Town of Royalton.

Our staff is very proud of the wonderful energy efficiency work that town officials and Energy Committees do in the Two Rivers region. Congratulations again to the VECAN energy award winners!

The 2013 Vermont Home Energy Challenge: Weatherize 3% of the Homes in Your Community

Help your neighbors reduce their energy bills by participating in the 2013 Vermont Home Energy Challenge. Efficiency Vermont, in partnership with the Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network (VECAN), is seeking local organizations to champion the Challenge in their communities and to sign up to participate. Under the Challenge, local organizations will foster public awareness about energy saving opportunities in the home and will set a target of weatherizing 3% of the homes in their community over the course of a year. Towns will then be able to measure their progress toward their goals along with that of other communities in their region and across the state. At the end of the year, towns will be recognized and awarded for the effectiveness of their efforts to encourage participation in their communities.

So far, Norwich, Sharon, Royalton, Strafford, Woodstock, and Thetford have signed up from the Two Rivers region. Be sure your town participates! Sign-up is easy, go to http://www.encyvermont.com/for_our_partners/community_partners/residential.aspx for details.

For more information, contact Paul Markowitz, Community Energy Program Manager, Efficiency Vermont at 802-540-7608 or pmarkowitz@veic.org.

Regional Highway Safety Forum is a Success!

Fifty-eight people collaborated on September 11, 2012 to find workable solutions to improve highway safety. Sponsored by the newly-formed Vermont Highway Safety Alliance and hosted by TRORC, it was a pilot program that will go statewide in 2013.



(Left) TRORC Commissioner from Vershire, Bill Baylis.

The Vermont Highway Safety Alliance is a public-private partnership that brings together stakeholders in highway safety to address safety issues with a "unified consistent message" according to Kevin Marshia, VTrans and Chair of the Alliance. He went on to say that one strategy is to use what's been successful and "take it to the next level."

The forum was the inaugural event for the Alliance that will employ several strategies to improve safety. Attendees represented municipalities (foremen, supervisors, managers, town clerks, TAC members), VTrans, DMV, Local Roads, legislature, AARP, state and county law enforcement, VT Bike and Ped Coalition, educators, and the Youth Safety Council of VT.

The morning was devoted to short presentations explaining resources available to municipalities to help reduce highway crashes. Resources fell into the categories of Education, Enforcement, Engineering and Emergency Response commonly known as the "4 Es."

It Begins With a Vision

TRORC's Kevin Geiger and Lorelee Morrow attended a national meeting of HUD sustainable grantees in Washington, DC in early December 2012. Highlights of the meeting were remarks by U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. Secretary LaHood spoke of the importance of the effort of groups like ours as a precursor to action, "You have to have a vision, a commitment and a plan, and then things happen."



Kevin is pictured here with Shelley Poticha, Director of HUD's Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities and Steve Cerny, our main HUD grant contact.

Kevin and Lorelee also got to learn from their counterparts in Vermont, New Hampshire and other parts of the country. Of the many attendees, representatives from Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation (an Oglala-led, Native American grantee from South Dakota) were particularly inspiring. Scott Moore, Project Coordinator, explained that when they had asked the tribe's elders how to say "sustainable," the elders just laughed. "We call it living," they said. Such a philosophy shows how and why sustainability is so broad, and that it is an old concept with renewed importance.

TRORC received funding under HUD's sustainable communities initiative to create an East Central Vermont Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. You can read more about the project and get involved by visiting the project website (www.ecvermont.org) or e-mailing Lorelee at lmorrow@trorc.org.

Announcements



RPCs Receive 'Project of the Year' Award

The Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association (NNECAPA) recognized Vermont's 11 Regional Planning Commissions for their excellent response to Tropical Storm Irene. The press release explains: "The award is being made due to the responsiveness, collaboration, and flexibility demonstrated by the Regional Planning Commissions in a time of emergency."

Municipal Planning Grants Are Awarded

The following towns have applied and received funding for planning activities: Bethel, Braintree, Bridgewater, Fairlee, Pittsfield, Plymouth, and Pomfret. Most of these towns will use the funding to bring their planning documents into compliance with state planning goals, as well as TRORC's Regional Plan. Alternatively, the Town of Braintree will create a capital program and budget to implement the goals and actions contained in its planning documents; the Town of Pittsfield will create a river corridor plan that addresses flood protection; and, the Town of Plymouth will conduct river corridor hazard mapping and update its flood bylaws. The Two Rivers' staff will help implement each project.

For more information on the municipal planning grant program, please visit the Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development's webpage:

www.accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/opportunities/funding/municipal_planning_grants.

TRORC's Executive Director Receives Awards

2012 was a big year for TRORC's Executive Director, Peter Gregory. He won the Vermont Planners Association's "Mark Blucher Professional Planner of the Year Award" and was recently elected First Vice President of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO). Gregory has worked tirelessly in the planning field since 1984, and has worked as a professional in Vermont since

1989. To read more about the VPA award and Gregory's work with NADO, go to <http://www.trorc.org/events.html#news>.

TRORC Welcomes New Staff Member, Samantha Holcomb

Samantha ("Sam") is a recent graduate of Vermont Law School's Master of Environmental Law and Policy program, and completed her undergraduate degree at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, NY. She is interested in water resources and water quality work, and is an avid kayaker. We are excited to have her on board!



The Final TRORC Regional Broadband Plan is Now Available

Over the past year, TRORC has participated in the Regional Technology Project, an effort to understand how broadband technologies can be incorporated into our culture and economy for the benefit of all. With members from across the Two Rivers region, the TRORC Regional Technology Team developed goals and strategies to do exactly that. Check out the abridged TRORC only version of the final report, or the full length version (which includes information on all 11 regions of the state) at http://www.trorc.org/comdev_bb.html.

Gearing up for FY'15 Transportation Project Prioritization

Between January and March 2013, TRORC's Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) will be discussing the annual project prioritization of regional transportation projects. This process will involve ranking bike, pedestrian, park and ride, paving, and state and town highway bridge projects. Please contact Rita (rseto@trorc.org) for more information.

Upcoming Events

January 10, 2013 – TAC Meeting

Royalton Town Office (17 N. Windsor Street, South Royalton) from 9:30 – 11 AM.

January 15, 2013 – Cloud Computing For Business Workshop

Randolph Technical Career Center (17 Forest Street, Randolph) from 6 – 8 PM.

A FREE interactive training that "introduces participants to various cloud computing tools and how these tools can be used to bolster your online presence, protect sensitive documents and increase office efficiency." Read a more detailed summary by visiting <http://www.e4vt.org/sites/default/files/DOLMasterlist.pdf>. Contact: (802) 728-9101 or (800) 464-SBDC.

February 21, 2013 – LEPC12 Meeting

Location TBD (details will be posted on our website, www.trorc.org). Please RSVP with Rita via e-mail (rseto@trorc.org) or by calling 802.457.3188.

TBD – Orange/Windsor County Road Foreman Meeting

Date and location TBD (details will be posted on our website, www.trorc.org).

Grants / Funding Opportunities



Working Lands Enterprise Fund

By offering just under \$1 million dollars in grants, the Working Lands Enterprise Fund will give a much deserved boost to Vermont's agricultural, forestry, and forest product enterprises and organizations. The application period is now open, with three categories of funding to choose from. These include:

Enterprise Investments: \$3,000–\$15,000 grants, minimum 25% cash match. *Application deadline January 24.*

Working Lands Service Provider Grants: \$10,000 – \$100,000 grants, minimum 50% cash and in-kind match. *Application deadline January 4.*

Capital and Infrastructure Investments: \$15,000 – \$100,000 grants, minimum 1:1 match (in-kind, at least 50% cash). *Application deadline January 4.*

The Vermont Lands Enterprise Fund grew out of the 'Vermont Working Landscape Partnership' which was spearheaded by the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD). After conducting an extensive survey of Vermonters' values, the VCRD found that we all have something in common: Vermonters love the working landscape of farms and forests.

The fund is being directed by the Vermont Landscape Enterprise Board and will be administered by Vermont's Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets with the Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation, and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

For more information, go to <http://vtrural.org/programs/policy-councils/working-landscape/WLEB-applications-available>, or contact Noelle Sevoian, Working Lands Development Coordinator, via e-mail (noelle.sevoian@state.vt.us) or by phone (802.585.9072).

VTrans' Transportation Alternatives Program

VTrans is pleased to announce that they are now accepting applications for the Transportation Alternatives Program. The Transportation Alternatives Program was established in new federal transportation legislation which was recently enacted (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century or MAP-21), and signed into law on July 6, 2012. The Transportation Alternatives Program in part replaces the former 'Transportation Enhancements Program.'

VTrans will be conducting two informational workshops through Vermont Interactive Technologies about the process and program requirements. Attendance at one of these workshops is mandatory for applicants who have not previously developed a project through a grant agreement through LTF.

The Transportation Alternatives Program guide, application and workshop schedule are available for download on our website at <http://www.trorc.org/events.html#grants> (scroll down to 'Grant Opportunities/Deadlines'). *Applications are due January 18, 2013.*

For any questions please contact Rita (rseto@trorc.org).

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP): Round 4

The Vermont Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (EMHS, formerly Vermont Emergency Management) is now accepting HMGP applications from towns and agencies affected by the federally declared disasters that took place in May 2012 and August 2012 (Tropical Storm Irene). While federal funds would cover 75% of the project costs, there would still be a required 25% local match. The EMHS website explains: "Unlike prior HMGP rounds, the 25% local match share for property acquisitions can not be provided by the state as this funding source has been depleted." In general, projects must be directly related to flooding from the above mentioned declared disasters. Project examples would include home acquisition (buy-out), structural elevations or relocations, etc.

Please note that you must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to EMHS by January 18, 2013, prior to applying. For more details and to download the LOI and application requirements, go to www.vem.vermont.gov/hmgp_11.2.12.

TRORC's mission is to advocate for the needs of our member towns, and to articulate a vision for building a thriving regional economy while enhancing the region's quality of life. The Commission's staff provides technical services to local, state and federal levels of government and to the Region's non-profits and businesses.

To learn more, visit our www.trorc.org.