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TRORC ANNOUNCES REGIONAL PLAN HEARINGS

TRORC has initiated a process to update several sections of the Regional Plan. These sections include; Energy, Healthy Communities, History and Development, Implementation, Working Landscape and Definitions. In addition to the Regional Plan updates, the TRORC Energy Implementation Plan (to be adopted by reference as part of the Regional Plan) is proposed for adoption.

Two public hearings have been scheduled for these draft documents in April. The dates are Wednesday, April 12, 2017 at the Bethel Town Hall starting at 6:30 p.m., and Thursday, April 13, 2017 at the Thetford Town Hall starting at 6:30 p.m.

All the draft sections and implementation plan can be viewed on our website at http://www.trorc.org/trorc-regional-plan/. A physical copy of the proposed amendments are available for viewing during normal TRORC business hours.

For more information, please contact Peter Gregory at pgregory@trorc.org.

PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

In January 2017, the Vermont Public Service Board launched their new website. It was updated for consistency with the same template used by other state agencies in Vermont. Several additions were made to the new site that include updated content and providing more information for broader public participation. The Public Service Board also introduced a new platform to view Board cases and their documents.

To check out the new site, go to psb.vermont.gov.
FEMA ALERTING POLICY HOLDERS ABOUT FLOOD RISK

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) wants you to know your insurance costs are going up. Many homes in Vermont are not in mapped floodplains, even if your home has flooded before. These homes used to be known as Pre-FIRM, meaning FEMA’s maps were not yet updated to reflect the changes in the floodplain. This is now changing and residences and businesses are now subject to rising insurance rates. These rates are based upon elevation, in which the owner of the building or property should seek an Elevation Certificate (EC). According to the graph, properties that do not seek an EC (the discounted rate) will see rates that rise quickly, versus those that have obtained an EC. These increases will affect future resale values in some of our towns like Chelsea and Thetford, especially if they do not have an EC.

For more information, contact Kevin Geiger at kgeiger@trorc.org or go to https://www.fema.gov/cost-of-flood.

CERT LOOKING FOR MEMBERS

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is looking for members! Individuals who are not first responders are encouraged to join to assist during emergencies. The CERT program helps train individuals to be better prepared to respond to emergency situations in their communities. CERT members can fill critical support roles for first responders. CERT is also valuable in non-emergency situations helping improve the safety of the community. The local CERT team in the TRORC region is under the jurisdiction of the Local Emergency Planning Committee #12 (LEPC #12).

There will be a basic CERT training opportunity on April 8, 2017 starting at 8 a.m. at the Woodstock Safety Complex. This training is a three day event that runs April 8, 9, and 15. This course is free, and you will be provided with a flash drive of the CERT Basic Course Participant Manual. Registration is required.

For more information, or to register, contact Brad Salzmann at falcon15@earthlink.net or go to lepc12.org.
LOCAL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

Every year the Vermont Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF) requires that each town update and adopt their Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP). TRORC has provided a draft LEOP to each of our 30 towns with a request to update their plans by the May 1st due date. This incredibly important document helps protect your community in the event of an emergency. Having an adopted LEOP is an essential preparedness measure and is required to maximize state match under ERAF. The LEOP must be approved and signed by the Selectboard no later than May 1.

The authorizing official that signs the LEOP is required to have taken the Incident Command System (ICS) 402 or ICS 100 courses. The ICS 100 training can be found for free on the FEMA website at https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-100.b. TRORC is hosting an ICS 402 class on Friday, March 24, 2017 from 6-9 p.m. at the TRORC office. To register for this course go to http://demhs.vermont.gov/content/ics-402-incident-command-system-executives-2.

If you have any questions on how to update your LEOP, please contact Tory Levite at vlevite@trorc.org.

‘WEATHERIZE UPPER VALLEY’ TAKES PLACE

Vital Communities has kicked off weatherization efforts in fourteen towns in the Upper Valley. These efforts include connecting community volunteers with certified weatherization contractors to provide free energy assessments, proposals and quotes to eligible homes. This pilot program is being demonstrated in several TRORC Towns; Hartland, Hartford, Norwich, Thetford, Sharon, Royalton, Bethel, Randolph, and Braintree. If successful, Vital Communities will launch this program in other areas of Vermont and New Hampshire. On average, these services cost around $7,800 but save 26% annually in energy savings. All Weatherize Upper Valley projects will go through Efficiency Vermont’s Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program and will be completed by Building Performance Institute certified contractors.

For more information, go to VitalCommunities.org/Weatherize.
AUDIT COMPLIANCE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Vermont law requires that school districts, towns, and cities account for the monies entrusted to them and that these records be audited. Annual review of accounting practices and internal controls are beneficial to better your financial management practices.

In 2012, the Legislature enacted an annual requirement for town treasurers to complete and provide to the Selectboard (which shall acknowledge receipt and review) a copy of the internal financial controls document provided by the Vermont State Auditor.

The internal controls document is a checklist that provides a summary of key issues that pertain to adequate accounting, management, and reporting of tax and grant dollars in local government.

To view and download this checklist, and to gather more information about audit compliance in your town, go to auditor.vermont.gov/local.