

# 2002 Troy-Westfield-Jay Community Visit

## Introduction

The Community Visit process digs deeply into the challenges before a community. It is fascinating to see the weight of these challenges enumerated at the outset of the process and then, as outsiders, to observe the strength and capacity of the community revealed as these issues are prioritized and plans of attack are developed to address them. This was particularly true in the Spring 2002 Community Visit to Troy, Westfield and Jay in the beautiful northwest corner of the Northeast Kingdom.

The Community Visit Team was deeply impressed with the beauty of the landscape—from the Missisquoi River to the farms and forests, Jay Peak, the Canadian mountains, and the ring of hills to the east. Just as compelling was the commitment and dedication of participants and local leaders from each town who put themselves on the line to confront the fundamental challenges before their communities.

## Priority Challenges

Identified By Residents at Community Meeting – April 29, 2002

- **Economic Development Issue:** The area has seen several devastating plant closings with accompanying job losses. An area economic development action group could help the communities build momentum by prioritizing needs and beginning to address them with practical steps.
- **Natural Resource Economy Issue:** There is a great need for coordinative action to develop natural resource/recreational areas and to collaboratively market them to bring the tourist economy more deeply into the region.
- **Dairy Processing & Agricultural Diversification Issues:**
  - A. With unstable milk prices dairy farmers in the region need to thoroughly evaluate market opportunities for local dairy processing, value-added dairy production, and cooperative marketing.
  - B. A regional market analysis is needed to determine realistic opportunities for the competitive production of non-dairy value-added agricultural products in the area.

- **Educational Issues:**

**A. Curriculum:** There is a need to improve school curriculums through a review and planning process to take advantage of distance learning opportunities, update the curriculum, and focus educational resources to meet the needs of students in the 21st Century.

**B. Middle School:** The potential should be examined for a regional Middle School which might boost the region’s educational offerings and have a positive impact on youth and community morale.

**C. Parental Involvement:** Parental involvement in the schools should be systematically improved: a Parent/Teachers Organization or booster club could help promote and support the school and youth activities; there is a strong sentiment that this would help address problems related to poor behavior and vandalism.

- **Tourism Issues:**

**A. Marketing:** As Jay Peak works toward year-round resort operations, the regional community should work to systematically integrate tourism-related businesses with the resort’s planning and marketing for their mutual benefit.

**B. Agro-Tourism:** Currently the region does not systematically take advantage of Agro-tourism opportunities; a local agro-tourism planning group could be formed for communications and cooperative marketing in conjunction with Jay Peak’s year-round resort campaign.

## VCRD Resource Team Members

### Community Visit Day Focus Group Team

This team met with community members in eight focus sessions on April 1, 2002

<p><b>Connie Burns</b> Community &amp; Business Outreach Specialist USDA - Rural Development 8 Valley Crossroad St. Albans, VT 05476 1-800-717-8637 802-524-4575 (fax) Email – <a href="mailto:connie.burns@vt.usda.gov">connie.burns@vt.usda.gov</a></p>	<p><b>Candy Koenemann</b> Executive Assistant Vermont Council on Rural Development PO Box 1384 Montpelier, VT 05601-1384 802-828-6022 802-828-6014 (fax) Email – <a href="mailto:vcrd2@sover.net">vcrd2@sover.net</a></p>
<p><b>Louise Calderwood</b> Deputy Commissioner VT Department of Agriculture</p>	<p><b>Bill Kurtz</b> Chief of Staff U.S. Senator James Jeffords</p>

<p>116 State St. Drawer 20  Montpelier, VT 05620-2901  802-828-2430 802-828-2361 (fax)  Email – <a href="mailto:louise@agr.state.vt.us">louise@agr.state.vt.us</a></p>	<p>453 Stone Cutters Way  Montpelier, VT 05602  802-223-5273 802-223-0416 (fax)  Email – <a href="mailto:bill_kurtz@jeffords.senate.gov">bill_kurtz@jeffords.senate.gov</a></p>
<p><b>Hal Cohen</b>  Executive Director  Central Vermont Community Action Council  195 U.S. Route 302 - Berlin  Barre, VT 05641  802-479-1053 802-479-5353 (fax)  Email – <a href="mailto:hcohen@cvcac.org">hcohen@cvcac.org</a></p>	<p><b>Jolinda LaClair</b>  State Director  USDA - Rural Development  89 Main Street City Center 3rd Floor  Montpelier, VT 05602  802-828-6066 802-828-6018 (fax)  Email – <a href="mailto:jolinda.lacalir@vt.usda.gov">jolinda.lacalir@vt.usda.gov</a></p>
<p><b>Paul Costello</b>  Executive Director  Vermont Council on Rural Development  PO Box 1384  Montpelier, VT 05601-1384  802-828-6024 802-828-6014 (fax)  Email – <a href="mailto:vcrd@sover.net">vcrd@sover.net</a></p>	<p><b>Molly Lambert</b>  Secretary of the Agency of  Commerce and Community Development  National Life Building, Drawer 20  Montpelier, VT 05620-0501  802-828-3211 802-828-3383 (fax)  Email – <a href="mailto:mlambert@dca.state.vt.us">mlambert@dca.state.vt.us</a></p>
<p><b>Jason Duquette-Hoffman</b>  Center of Rural Studies  UVM - 207 Morrill Hall  Burlington, VT 05405  802-656-3021 802-656-0776 (fax)  Email – <a href="mailto:jdughoff@excite.com">jdughoff@excite.com</a></p>	<p><b>Bob McDonald</b>  VT Housing Director  USDA - Rural Development  89 Main St. 3rd Floor City Center  Montpelier, VT 05602  802-828-6015 802-828-6076 (fax)  Email – <a href="mailto:robert.mcdonald@vt.usda.gov">robert.mcdonald@vt.usda.gov</a></p>
<p><b>Carlen Finn</b>  Executive Director  VT Children's Forum  PO Box 261 Montpelier, VT 05601  802-229-6377 802-229-4929 (fax)  Email – <a href="mailto:carlenf@childrensforum.org">carlenf@childrensforum.org</a></p>	<p><b>Bill McMaster</b>  Regional Specialist  Community Resource Development  UVM Extension Service  336 Highland Avenue  Newport, VT 05855  802-334-7325 802-334-5208 (fax)  Email – <a href="mailto:bill.mcmaster@uvm.edu">bill.mcmaster@uvm.edu</a></p>
<p><b>Jeffrey D. Francis</b>  Executive Director  Vermont Superintendents Association  2 Prospect Street  Montpelier, VT 05602  802-229-5834 802-229-4739 (fax)  Email – <a href="mailto:jfrancis@vsa.k12.vt.us">jfrancis@vsa.k12.vt.us</a></p>	<p><b>Mary Paul</b>  Economic Development Coordinator  Northeastern VT Development Association  RR #1 Box 125 G  Newport, VT 05855  802-334-5861 802-334-5862 (fax)  Email – <a href="mailto:nvdanorth@sover.net">nvdanorth@sover.net</a></p>
<p><b>John Hall</b>  Executive Director  Northeastern VT Development Association  PO Box 630  St. Johnsbury, VT 05819  802-748-5181 802-748-1223 (fax)  Email – <a href="mailto:NVDA@plainfield.bypass.com">NVDA@plainfield.bypass.com</a></p>	<p><b>Al Perry</b>  34 Elm Street  Richford, VT 05475  802-848-7618</p>

<p><b>Chuck Ross</b>  State Director  US Senator Patrick J. Leahy  199 Main St. Courthouse Plaza  Burlington, VT 05401  802-863-2525 802-658-1009 (fax)  Email – <a href="mailto:Chuck_Ross@Leahy.Senate.gov">Chuck_Ross@Leahy.Senate.gov</a></p>	<p><b>Ed Stretch</b>  Executive Director  Gilman Housing Trust Inc.  PO Box 405  Newport, VT 05855  802-334-1541 802-334-1273 (fax)  Email – <a href="mailto:stretch@together.net">stretch@together.net</a></p>
<p><b>Fred Schmidt</b>  Director  Center for Rural Studies  207 Morrill Hall UVM  Burlington, VT 05405  802-656-8404 802-656-0776 (fax)  Email – <a href="mailto:fschmidt@zoo.uvm.edu">fschmidt@zoo.uvm.edu</a></p>	<p><b>David Tucker</b>  Director  VT Office of Economic Opportunity  103 South Main Street  Waterbury, VT 05671-1801  802-241-2462 802-2411225 (fax)  Email – <a href="mailto:davidt@wpgate1.ahs.state.vt.us">davidt@wpgate1.ahs.state.vt.us</a></p>

### Resource Day Visitors

This team met with Task Force Members to build action steps and review potential resources on May 15, 2002

<p><b>Bill McMaster</b>  Regional Specialist  Community Resource Development  UVM Extension Service  336 Highland Avenue  Newport, VT 05855  802-334-7325 802-334-5208 (fax)  Email – <a href="mailto:bill.mcmaster@uvm.edu">bill.mcmaster@uvm.edu</a></p>	<p><b>Ray Proulx</b>  211 Bacon Road  Johnson, Vermont 05656  802-644-8830  Email – <a href="mailto:rproulx@zoo.uvm.edu">rproulx@zoo.uvm.edu</a></p>
<p><b>Diane Konrady</b>  Public Information Coordinator  Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing  6 Baldwin Street, Drawer 33  Montpelier, VT 05633-1301  802-828-3683, Fax: 802-828-3233  Email – <a href="mailto:dkonrady@dca.state.vt.us">dkonrady@dca.state.vt.us</a></p>	<p><b>Denise Russo</b>  Agricultural Marketing Specialist  Department of Agriculture  116 State Street, Drawer 20  Montpelier, Vermont 05620-2901  802-828-3829  Email – <a href="mailto:drusso@agr.state.vt.us">drusso@agr.state.vt.us</a></p>
<p><b>Sherry Paige</b>  Community &amp; Business Outreach Specialist  USDA Rural Development  18 Main Street 3rd Floor City Center  Montpelier, Vermont 05602  802-828-6034  Email – <a href="mailto:sherry.paige@vt.usda.gov">sherry.paige@vt.usda.gov</a></p>	