



Vermont Council on Rural Development

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[Home](#) > Wilmington to launch new website and Wi-Fi zone

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WILMINGTON, VT - The town of Wilmington, Vermont will be celebrating the arrival of a free and public downtown Wi-Fi zone called "The Wilmington Connection," as well as the launch the town's new municipal website (wilmingtonvermont.us ^[1]) at a special event on Thursday, November 21 starting at 5pm, at the Wilmington Town Offices.

The opening of the Wi-Fi zone will feature speeches from local business-owners and state representatives. There will also be a photo-posting activity to showcase the power of a free public Internet and light refreshments.

This Wi-Fi zone and website are two of the services that the Town of Wilmington is receiving from the Vermont Digital Economy Project. The project, run by the Vermont Council on Rural Development, has also been working with Wilmington businesses and nonprofits to provide free workshops and advising.

The Wi-Fi zone will provide residents, visitors and tourists with free access to the internet throughout the town center. "Wilmington is a great location for a downtown Wi-Fi zone," said Caitlin Lovegrove, who managed the Wi-Fi zone's implementation. "Now, with this zone, when somebody parks in the center of town, they will be able to check their email, get the best route to their next destination, and, through the landing page, also be exposed to the variety of businesses within Wilmington."

The Wi-Fi zone installation and equipment was paid for by the Vermont Digital Economy Project's federal disaster relief funding from the Economic Development Administration. However, the town's new downtown revitalization group, Wilmington Works, will be supporting the ongoing cost of the internet connection, and maintaining the landing page. Other businesses in town, including Bartleby's Books and Twin Valley Creations will be donating some of their internet bandwidth to the zone, as well.

The revamped Town of Wilmington website, created through the project's partners at the Snelling Center for Government, is another welcomed addition to the town. "Through an inclusive community process, we were able to prioritize the services and information that Wilmington's citizens felt were the most important," said Tess Gauthier, who managed the website's update. "Thanks to this process, Wilmington now has a mobile-friendly and user-friendly site, with easy-to-find information."

The website and Wi-Fi zone are just two of the ways in which Wilmington is fostering more economic development throughout its downtown and creating a more resilient town overall. "These two projects exemplify the spirit of Wilmington," said Gretchen Havreluk, Economic Development Specialist for the Town of Wilmington, "Through these new services, Wilmington can showcase its willingness to promote its local businesses and culture both online and off."

Wilmington is one of more than three dozen Vermont communities in which the Vermont Digital Economy Project is currently deploying grant funding to create economic development and foster resilience through the increased use of digital tools.

About the Vermont Digital Economy Project

The Vermont Digital Economy Project was created to address vulnerabilities of Vermont business and communities that are not fully utilizing online tools. The project offers free support to speed flood recovery, spur economic development and job growth, and improve community resilience to disasters. The project is working directly with more than 25 towns that were affected by flooding to help businesses, nonprofits, and municipalities expand their innovative use of online tools. It is funded by a disaster recovery grant from the Economic Development Administration and from the donations and expertise of its partners (IBM, Microsoft, the Snelling Center for Government, the Vermont Department of Libraries, the Vermont Small Business Development Center, and the Vermont State Colleges) to provide grant services. More information can be found online at: www.vtdigitaleconomy.org [2].

About the Snelling Center for Government

The Richard A. and Barbara W. Snelling Center for Government is a non-partisan, non-profit (501(c)3) corporation. Established in 1992 in memory of Governor Richard Snelling, the Snelling Center is committed to his vision of government that works for the people of Vermont. In keeping with this vision, the mission of the Snelling Center is to foster responsible and ethical civic leadership, encourage public service by private citizens, and promote informed citizen participation in shaping public policy in Vermont. It works to fulfill its mission by offering the premier leadership development programs in Vermont, engaging the public in issues of strategic importance to Vermont, and consulting on projects to make government and government programs more effective. More information can be found online at: www.snellingcenter.org [3].

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Links:

[1] <http://wilmingtonvermont.us/>

[2] <http://www.vtdigitaleconomy.org/>

[3] <http://www.snellingcenter.org/>