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Leaders develop priorities for Vermont's future

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Ross Sneyd

Colchester, VT

(Host) More than 500 Vermont leaders met at the University of Vermont on Monday to develop priorities for the future of the state.

The conference was the final part of a two-year study looking at whether Vermonters' values are reflected in state policies.

The Vermont Council on Rural Development asked leaders from business, nonprofit groups, education and government to consider questions raised during the study.

They developed a series of recommendations in areas ranging from education to agriculture and forestry to economic development.

Sarah Waring is with the Council on Rural Development. She summed up the recommendation of a group that looked at diversity.

(Waring) "Two priority items. The first one is a challenge to everyone in the room, an individual action to go out and have lunch with someone in the next week who is not someone who looks like you or is someone who you normally have lunch with. This is a principle of making diversity something that is personal to all of us and therefore change as something that is personal to all of us."

(Host) Waring says the same principle should be extended to businesses, organizations and the policies they adopt. She says if people made conscious efforts to diversify in all of those areas, the state would be better served.

Similar proposals were developed in 14 policy areas.

The Council on Rural Development will share the ideas with state government, industry groups and others who might be able to turn them into reality.

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