

# COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT

## HYDE PARK/LAMOILLE COUNTY

### Community Forum Day Notes February 13th, 2007

The following notes were collected from focus group meetings and forums throughout the day spent in Lamoille County. These notes are in raw form – reflecting much of the inflections, quotations and feelings of the attendees at these meetings. Below is a list of the meetings that occurred on February 13<sup>th</sup>. Due to the extreme weather conditions on the 13<sup>th</sup>, two small group meetings were canceled and the turnout at all of our meetings was extremely low. For anyone in Lamoille County who did not get a chance to come out to forums on the 13<sup>th</sup>, **CFV encourages you to contribute online at [www.futureofvermont.org](http://www.futureofvermont.org) and share your thoughts on our future.**

- Laraway Center students and staff (Canceled due to weather)
- VT Studio Center staff and local artists
- Hyde Park Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7779
- Green Mtn Technology and Career Center staff (Canceled due to weather)
- Concept 2 employees
- Lamoille County emergency service volunteers and staff
- Lamoille County Maple Sugar Makers Association

**Local hosts and sponsors include:**

Green Mtn Technology and Career Center  
Lamoille Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Lamoille County Planning Commission  
Laraway Youth and Family Services  
Lamoille County Maple Sugar Makers Association  
Northern VT Resources Conservation and  
Development Council  
Town of Johnson  
Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7779  
VT Arts Council  
VT Studio Center  
VT Public Television

**Facilitators:** Paul Costello, Sarah Waring, Steve Gold, Greg Stefanski

**Scribes:** Sonia Rae, Steve Gold, Fran Voigt, Greg Stefanski

**Listening Team members:** BethAnn Finlay, Mary Conlon, Emily Stebbins

**COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT**  
**Scribe Report Feb 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008**  
**VT Studio Center, Johnson Vt**

Scribe: Greg Stefanski

**I. What does VT mean to you? What common values do VTers share?**

- Outdoors, nature, environment- connection to land
- Agriculture, local and niche marketing- cheese, fruits and vegetables
- 2 groups creates tension, those who want to be like others/other places(e.g. teenagers), those who are attracted to VT because it is different
- “might as well be from Mars” if you weren’t born here
- Being wrapped up in experience of kids
- Still quality of life
- Weather is the equalizer
- Not being from here is more obvious in VT
- Kids are VTers
- Can walk to work, minimal or no commutes is a plus
- Small schools, easily accessible
- “Have to join in nature”
- All about how to enjoy winter, fall, summer rather trying to get to the city, etc.
- We’re forced to lived seasonally
- Strong sense of community
- Accessibility

**II. Looking ahead through our lifetimes, and those of our children, what challenges and opportunities do you see for VT?**

- Development of landscape
- Challenge of not a lot of activities to do
- Young people starting their own businesses, struggle to make young people aware of them
- VT is a place where you can make your own success, some young people don’t the skills to make that happen
- Some schools don’t provide opportunities to talk about what options are available to kids
- Challenges for literacy both at high school and college
- “Kids can stay young for a long time”, media culture doesn’t overwhelm
- Having a sense of the wider world and what all can happen
- You don’t see all of the world that a city might have to offer
- Taking kids to cities is challenging and expensive if you want to expose them to “the world”

- We are isolated in Lamoille County, options are limited unless you go into tourism and hospitality
- Teacher pay is low, not as much prestige for this field so young people choose other fields
- Teachers are asked to much more than teach these days
- Teachers are a wonderful resource
- VT hasn't invested in higher education, not a lot of opportunities here, VT tuition is high-affordability for parents, options for kids
- Not an appreciation of State colleges in VT
- New England has greater concentration of private schools
- Opportunities
- Telecommuting to prevent kids from leaving the state
- Being an entrepreneur takes a certain kind of person
- "The more people stay the more jobs there will be"
- VT should be true to itself, not try to be some place else
- Some young people may feel VT is like any other place
- What are parents telling their kids about future in VT, what are kids being taught
- How do you help young people understand that they can take care of their basic needs staying here in VT
- Simplify vs. sacrifice
- Things "that feed your soul" have greatly expanded- sports, music, theatre, etc.- help build community and keep young people around
- Sprawl of box stores
- A lot happening at colleges (JSC), Helen Day Arts center
- Puzzle of communications
- Improvement in other resources like grocery stores
- Organic farming- NOFA at schools, kids having a better understanding of what they eat- economics present a challenge for developing and sustaining
- Challenge of communication and economics also exist for arts community as well
- Question about how much of VT's population is native-born
- Opportunities for wellness- outdoor activities, our country has a great need
- State could do more to promote walking, biking, consuming less processed foods
- Opportunities for transportation
- Issue that organic foods are only available for those in a certain economic status.

### **III. What should our priorities be as we work together to realize your vision and prepare VT for the future?**

- Taking advantage of cyber opportunities, creating new businesses without negatively impacting environment
- Formal expertise, training, and funding
- Education with real world connections- promote conversation with kids about what you want to do, where are you going, how you can make dreams happen

- Need to be conscious of how to keep environment clean- opportunities for businesses to promote this kind of work(solar, wind, etc.)
- Communication and economics, bringing the world to local community through programs like filmmaking, ski programs- can then provide safe, appropriate activities when kids are adults- need to be affordable
- Arts events like snow sculptures bring community together also bring people who can support local businesses
- 

#### **IV. We've been talking about VT, but how does this discussion concern the future of your community?**

- Success of community projects takes a long time to develop, it's an investment
- Local control issues and challenge of working with state authorities- Main Street improvement project that is part of state-owned highway
- How does state and local communities work to support each other- also a challenge within a local community
- How do you get people to step-up and participate, volunteer and coordinate- put demands on people's time
- Success of River Arts and Cambridge Arts Council recognized

**COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT**  
**Scribe Report Feb 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008**  
**Hyde Park VFW Hall, Post #7779**

Scribe: Sarah Waring and Sonia Rae

**I. What does VT mean to you? What common values do VTers share?**

- “Vt means a beautiful area. Been in the service in CO. But they could give Oklahoma back to the Indians and let me come back to VT – I was born in St J – you never hear nothing bad. Beautiful mtns, beautiful people.”
- Traveled all over the US and seen some country. VT tops it all. VT reminds me of Germany. It’s a state to be proud of, and we should be proud.
- Most Vters have the same values; honesty, patriotism, values for our children. Everyday you go out and find something new.
- We have all these programs in the state to send kids to different places to work. Kids had no knowledge of how to work. They’d sneak around and smoke cigarettes or go to sleep in the storeroom. Only had 2 kids that couldn’t make it through the summer when they couldn’t get any pride in what they were doing. They need to be taught work ethics. We’ll have better employees, smarter kids and want to do work.

**II. Looking ahead through our lifetimes, and those of our children, what challenges and opportunities do you see for VT?**

- The only thing that I see wrong with VT is that there’s no jobs to keep people here.
- A lot of problems exist with parenting today. Parents are scared to get their kids attention. If I had to speak 4 times and didn’t get your attention, I’d go a different route. My children are good and successful; but parents today are afraid to do this. ‘them boys didn’t know the word no’.
- The state is getting “too much control of all of us.”
- “Our children, your children are not being taught any values in School. You were proud of the Pledge of Allegiance – they’ve taken that away from our kids. 9-20 yrs old – they don’t have a clue that they’re supposed to stand up and respect/honor the color guard. We took that away from being taught in school. Every kid that wants to ought to have that opportunity and it’s wrong not to provide that.”
- Respondents expressed that they think that schools and parents have to operate in fear of law suits, etc today. “They are scared that the kids will report on them and SRS is at the door.”
- “Some of those kids from a one-room school house were better educated than kids today. You had to learn, you were shown how but you had to do it otherwise the teacher stepped in and showed you. Today teachers are salaried, etc. The whole school system is way out of whack. In a one room house – you learn from what other kids are hearing/doing, but

now all the kids are put into a group to their level of learning. That doesn't give the groups a chance to grasp what other kids are learning – they can't get better.”

- **For Veterans**, the problem is more Fed than it is state. Us older veterans aren't like the ones you got now – Iraqi veterans are taken care of if they cut their finger. We never got to see a doctor. The State of VT must have made the distinction 50% disability. Veterans at 40% disability never get the state taxes. To help the veterans with their taxes, it's hell to get.
  - Lost my hearing on the guns and was stone deaf for 3 days. The difficulties in paperwork didn't ever get him the services he needed, even though he had to go years and years. Took me 30 years to prove that he was in the hospital in Germany.
  - Anyone who lived in VT and is a VFW; every veteran should get an abatement on his taxes. We can talk 3 million dollars to put in a bicycle path, but we can't save the money for these people who have fought for the country. “I'm proud of what I did for my country, I want VT to be proud of what I did for them” You can give property tax (deducting the first 40k from taxes) but the veterans can't get any kind of abatement. **“I hope you put this in your report. A man that's donated 3-4 years of his life, they should do something for him. He did it for them.”**
- Veterans aren't looking for too much, considering what we've done.
- The younger veterans aren't joining VFW; we older ones were volunteers. The organization itself is going to hell because we're losing so many people.
- Younger veterans aren't coming into the VFW all across the state. We're losing members and the younger people might join, but you never see 'em again. They're a different age than what we were. We're proud of the American flag and this state and proud to be here.
- We've got about 6 Iraqi veterans since their return, but this is few compared to all who are coming back and for whom we could provide services. We pay the dues for these young kids out of the funds that we've got. We want to get them in here because we want to be able to help young people like that before they do something to themselves.
- “It's hell when you go through 2 or 3 wars and you end up getting killed by your own people. If we got a call today (that someone needed help) with the weather that's out there now, we'd load someone in the vehicle and take them to get help.”
- VT can help if they brainstorm and think about it. VT can help and come up with a plan.
- What the VFW does is take care of people because of the one on one experience.

### **III. What should our priorities be as we work together to realize your vision and prepare VT for the future?**

- Micro business in the state of VT should be as important as the ‘small businesses’ of 20-100 employees. If VT state could help these micro businesses, then the economy will be a whole lot better.
- In response to ‘*What does help look like?*’, the answer was: VT subsidizes these companies and gives them money off the taxes – they get abatements, etc. “Right now, if a person hires ten people and puts them to work, he's got no help from anybody.”

- Transportation to and from jobs also needs to be solved. Once an employer trains someone, then that person is hired away to a job that pays better but is miles away, then you can't cut down on fuel costs. "How much help is the commuter from Troy given the environment by driving all the way to IBM every day? There's a lot of people driving a lot of miles, but if they cut down on fuel they can't get to work."
- Education and job development/career choices are difficult. You have to have an education to get a good job, or you have to be very aggressive if you don't have an education. "But these kids without high school education their parents don't make them be aggressive – but kids today haven't always worked all their lives."
- When asked '*Do we still have the core of values that we're willing to fight for, sacrifice for right now?*' , the answer was: "Not for the future. I don't think we do unless we as Vters stand up, be heard, speak. You are going to leave here knowing how I feel, what my values are and what I think VT should do. I don't see us getting any better as long as the children rule the world. As long as the children don't have to do anything, the system of adults and parents are not involved".
- There was a lot of talk about the poor learning environment in public schools in VT, including bullying by other students, fear of teachers to be told they're doing something wrong, and lack of inter-age learning.
- Discipline was emphasized as what is needed for youth, because "Pampering don't work".
- 'We don't want our young people in war. Just cause we went to war doesn't mean we went. All you hear in the state of VT is just about 'getting those kids out of Iraq' right now. All the congressional delegates are saying just get them out.' When these veterans traveled to DC, they were not impressed with the representation from VT and wanted to have discussion of veteran's issues, but "all they wanted to do was take a picture with us."
- VT is a democratic state – "but I'm not a republican or a democrat, I'll vote for who understands this and us. McCain gets my vote, but we haven't had a military person in the White House since Kennedy."

#### **IV. We've been talking about VT, but how does this discussion concern the future of your community?**

- Important to help small businesses in our community thrive and provide good paying jobs.
- Make sure there are good affordable activities for kids so that local families on a very tight budget are not left out.
- Find ways of making VT more affordable so that people can stay in the community they grew up in.
- "I live in Morrisville and they try to do things for the kids over there. You set back, and the poor kids are still poor – you have to have money to get to use these facilities. Poor kids still are out on the street. We don't have something that the poor people can do. A lot of the area kids aren't getting what they need to be with other kids because they can't afford it"
- Hyde Park VFW has established a 'teen night' it's a dance night. This program was established 3 months ago and weather's been a factor in attendance – but the 2<sup>nd</sup> one was 96 kids! No charge. That's a good thing for these kids. We're donating the hall to this.

- This hall was built for the VFW, but we voted to donate the hall to the community. 80-105 children for Halloween. Activities, prizes.
- (VFW Building) The state is requiring a new sprinkler system in this building that we can't afford to pay for. But when the building was approved, the Post was told that they didn't need to install such a system, as long as they had adequate exits. This is very frustrating and does not ensure that the VFW can continue to own this hall. "These general regulations, like the sprinkler system for any bldg that holds more than 99 people so by 2009; now this Hall has to have a 100,000 dollar sprinkler system. The law is general, but it doesn't compare to this bldg with 5 exits out of here." Back when this was being built; the state stepped in and said 'no, you have to do it this way, that way, and put it all on the blueprints.'



**COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT**  
**Scribe Report Feb 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008**  
**Concept 2 Employees**

Scribe: Steve Gold

**I. What does VT mean to you? What common values do VTers share?**

- VT means a clean environment - woods, trees, blue sky, clean air, uncongested roads
- VT means smallness - you can be a big fish in a small pond - any citizen can affect policy
- VT is a leader of positive social change for the nation
- VT's rural nature with strong, small communities is a value - an intimate place to live and raise a family
- A common value is the concern for the natural and human landscape - the working land, farms and forests
- A common value is an economy that is local enough to provide jobs without exploitation of resources
- VT means community - knowing your neighbor and having access to legislators
- A common value is getting involved in and taking care of your neighbors and your community
- VTers value tolerance of a diversity of opinions
- VT is like a theme park (self-described cynical view)
- VT is secluded, liberal, but newcomers struggle to fit in to the established community
- VTers have a dry sense of humor
- VT has a "flatlander" stereotype - as a new arrival, can I say what values "VTers" share?
- VTers are funny and happy - they like their lives and are proud of living here
- VTers are proud of their ability to live here
- VTers are hardworking and respect anyone who is hardworking
- VTers are practical, not flashy, not materialistic
- VTers are non-pretentious

**II. Looking ahead through our lifetimes, and those of our children, what challenges and opportunities do you see for VT?**

- Challenge - Uncontrolled growth and out of state interests - e.g. Burke mountain development
- Challenge - The environment and its preservation - water quality/clean water
- Challenge - Education and providing school choice is a challenge
- Challenge - Economic development is a challenge - there are sensitive coalitions like the Northern Forest Alliance that are important in this area

- Challenge - Demographics and the aging population is a challenge
- Challenge - Global warming and the changes it will bring to VT's industries - what will VT be without skiing and maple sugar?
- Challenge - Lack of broadband development
- Challenge - Balancing preservation of agriculture, the environment, controlled development and new technology
- Challenge - Sprawl and strip development - how to avoid more and support central town revitalization
- Challenge - Fixed income population and their inability to pay taxes as currently structured (property taxes)
- Challenge - Public transportation improvement - we don't do well with this
- Challenge - Demographics - how to attract young people
- Challenge - Old buildings that need to be revitalized
- Challenge - Taxes and the conversation about them is a challenge - what the tax base will provide for versus the need for infrastructure to sustain the economy, education, health care
- Challenge - Stratification by class of the population - Vt becoming affordable only for the wealthy
- Challenge - Need for good jobs and economic development to avoid being available only to the wealthy - current and future issue
- Challenge/Opportunity- Globalization is both a challenge and an opportunity -
- Challenge/Opportunity - Peak oil is both also - VT is vulnerable due to our climate and rural, dispersed population but it will also promote local economic development, especially alternative energy
- Challenge/Opp - Geographic proximity to major cities - Boston, Montreal, NYC - VT is a theme park for these places but change driven by this proximity brings the threat of overdevelopment - recreation and 2nd homes
- Opportunity - Can use green building techniques to do the building revitalization
- Opportunity - Showcase for environmental commitment and development of a green economy - need to encourage green entrepreneurs

### **III. What should our priorities be as we work together to realize your vision and prepare VT for the future?**

- Don't burn any bridges (ie destroy old buildings) - we need a priority on avoiding overdevelopment and on preserving old buildings
- Sound local economy and job development that is focused on the local economy - eg local agriculture, local energy generation
- Use the landscape to create jobs - eg move away from oil energy to local sustainable fuels
- Support higher education and develop opportunities for older students -eg Woodbury College
- Maintaining high level of water quality and challenging upwind states that produce pollutants to our water

- Foster working landscape and local reliance and make the state available to more than just the wealthy
- Keeping our democracy vibrant - how to preserve our citizen legislature for working VTers to participate in and more broadly how to preserve citizen participation
- Preservation of our representative legislature
- Need to preserve streamlined government so that the bureaucracy is not overwhelming (compared to other states)
- Achieve national recognition on some issue - be seen as a model: environmentalism, education, quality of life, community
- Controlled planning for community development to avoid the danger of uncontrolled growth and sprawl and preserve intimate community

#### **IV. We've been talking about VT, but how does this discussion concern the future of your community?**

- There are a lot of VTers who don't share the values that this group has articulated
- Dichotomies that are hard to resolve - eg strong local economy versus controlled development
- Achieving balance - there will be disagreements
- Class separation is an issue in Hardwick - the poor are marginalized - we need a focus on poorer communities
- Water quality
- Lack of public transportation - the traffic volume on State and local roads - need to have bike lanes on roads as they are rebuilt
- Mega-industry/agribusiness driving out small business - How to encourage small business start ups and support their survival
- What made VT attractive in the 60'ss and 70's was not something that the government did (except the billboard law) - it was more about freedom "from" and fun/recreation and local culture and business start up freedom

**COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT**  
**Scribe Report Feb 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008**  
**Lamoille County Emergency Services volunteers and staff**

Scribe: Sonia Rae

**I. What does VT mean to you? What common values do VTers share?**

- Sense of community. Nice working environment. “I feel I can trust my colleagues. It’s a neighborly place. You know the other people in your community.”
- Great place to raise your kids (at least in rural VT), with lots of after school activities – skiing, snowshoeing, sledding – instead of going to malls. Folks in the community look out for each other’s children.
- VT has a common level of trust.
- It’s safe, compared to the rest of the world.
- VTers are open and friendly but you need to work for that trust. There is truth to the stereotype of the stern, taciturn character of VTers. It’s a hard won trust that you shouldn’t betray.

**II. Looking ahead through our lifetimes, and those of our children, what challenges and opportunities do you see for VT?**

- There is an increase of drugs and crime coming into Vermont from the outside
- It is hard to make a living but in Vermont you give up higher wages and perhaps a better standard of life for a better way to live.
- VT has to learn how to pay for itself. Need to look ahead and ask “what is VT’s economy going to look like in the future?”
- VT should create an environment that can sustain business. We have to make this a business friendly state for smaller companies that hire folks at a decent wage.
- Challenge to grow business and still keep the rural ideal.
- Education a major financial challenge. Costs are too high. Higher education, property. Kids are leaving because they can’t pay off their education debts because wages are too low and costs are too high.
- Farms closing down and fields being sold for housing development
- VT is much, much too highly regulated – act 250. Expedited permitting, less red tape!!! Driving business away.
- VTers can no longer afford to have a home in the state.
- State needs to help people not regulate people.
- Affordability
- Over regulation

*The following comments were particular to the Emergency Services world, and Lamoille County EM:*

- Not seeing neighbor helping neighbor as much as we used to. Relying on emergency services to check in on folks.

- Increased health problems - Obesity, respiratory problems, diabetes, elderly people
- Rural nature of community means greater distances to hospitals so we spend more time with people than Emergency Svcs. in metropolitan areas.
- Elder VTers are proud folks and don't like to call for help.
- Recruitment is difficult. Emergency Svcs. are made up of all volunteers. Work is more technical than it used to be and now there is mandatory training. Increasingly company's won't hire firemen because they won't support people leaving work to call out on emergencies.
- Bogus calls are a real problem.
- Expect to see in the future full time EMS services with volunteers working on weekends and evenings.
- Need better signage and 911 road marking
- Back country medical protocol is needed. EMTI's trained to help in situations where medical help is not immediately available.
- Compulsory call out of all services is often not necessary and wasteful. Resulted from a law suit in S VT some years ago.
- Emergency services are called out unnecessarily for minor injuries.
- Need grants for GPS systems in vehicles.

### **III. What should our priorities be as we work together to realize your vision and prepare VT for the future?**

- Need to get a handle on paying for education. Money that could be put toward fire and rescue isn't going to be dealt with by voters unless cost of education is tackled first.
- Fire Academy should be centralized for easier access for those from Northern VT. Right now, the state fire academy in Pittsford but it's too far away. Looking at protective services courses at this facility but it costs money to do this.

### **IV. We've been talking about VT, but how does this conversation concern the future your community?**

*Respondents covered much of this during the conversation above.*

**COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT**  
**Scribe Report Feb 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008**  
**Lamoille County Maple SugarMakers Association**

Scribe: Fran Voigt

**I. What does VT mean to you? What common values do VTers share?**

- Hard working
- Honest
- Respectful of “tradition”
- Connection between the land and the people; love of the working landscape
- Frugality
- Small scale that allows for possibilities that large cities do not
- Know people on a first name basis
- Not sure all Vermonters respectful of Vermont values, otherwise, would treat them more preciously, e.g., construction of the Jeffersonville by-pass to ease downtown traffic led to the development of a strip mall that, in turn, destroyed the downtown

**II. Looking ahead through our lifetimes and those of our children, what challenges and opportunities do you see for Vermont?**

- Some challenges represent opportunities, e.g., the working landscape and forests of Vermont will help with global warming by sequestering carbon dioxide (The trees required to make one gallon of maple syrup sequester, on average, 20 lbs of carbon dioxide.). The hope is that Vermonters will continue to provide good stewardship of the land and, thereby, continue to help with global warming.
- Global warming should not dramatically affect the maple industry in Vermont in the foreseeable future. The production areas that will suffer the most will be south of the state. Furthermore, maple geography, so to speak, limits a shift of the industry to the north. Climatic conditions are not suitable for the trees.
- While global warming may not be a perceived threat to the industry in Vermont short term (next 50 years), it may be one longer term in which case the environmental problems elsewhere such the Bangladesh and other low lying coastal areas will have a far greater human toll than the demise of the maple industry in Vermont.
- No great worries about the opportunities for young people were expressed. The maple sugar industry is doing well now. Maple sugar products have become an ethnic food that is valued worldwide resulting in a demand that exceeds the supply.
- There must be a blend of concern for the environment and the working landscape. For example, state lands should be used for economic purposes as well as an attraction for tourists. This desire reflects, in part, the discovery that the cultivation of new trees, which can take one hundred years to reach their maturity, is no more successful than aiding wild maple trees. Also, research has revealed that the greatest threat to the trees is bacterial

infections. By using smaller taps and keeping them aseptic, damage to the trees through tapping has been minimized and production per tree increased.

### **III. What should our priorities be as we work together to realize your vision and prepare VT for the future?**

- While our conservation efforts have been good over the past twenty-five years, we can do better.
- We need to help everyone understand the interconnectedness of all humanity to the land. The kids seem to be getting it.
- We should conserve the open land but it needs to be a working landscape.
- There are some good tools in the conservation tool box, e.g., conservation easements. Over time, however, if the people holding the easements do not understand their responsibilities, they will just become cops, not stewards of the land.
- We need to continue to learn about the impact of our practices on the environment. For example, we disrespect the ecology of Lake Champlain because of our ignorance.

### **IV. We've been talking about VT, but how does this conversation concern the future your community?**

*This question was not covered; topics in earlier questions covered this area.*

**COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT**  
**Scribe Report Feb 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008**  
**Evening Session**

Scribe: Sonia Rae

**I. What does Vermont mean to you? What common values do Vermonters share?**

- Sense of community. People work hard to support each other. Town meeting is a great VT tradition that should continue.
- Vermont is a great place to work and play. Hard play and hard work.
- 4 words: Self- reliance; Freedom; Independence; Grounded – to our environment (weather) connected to the land.
- Aesthetics – beauty of the landscape.
- Rugged individualists. People need to be adaptable and creative in order to exist here. May be why people choose to live here.
- Sense of caring. Passion for preserving what they see as good about VT – whether it be organic farming, environment, community, etc.

**II. Looking ahead through our lifetimes and those of our children, what challenges and opportunities do you see for VT?**

- Opportunity exists to create an economically sustainable environment.
- One challenge is the exodus of young people. Aging work force.
- This state will never tolerate smoke stack industries. Vermont likes the idea of creativity but wants to keep it small. We might have a future in web based engineering, intellectual property. We need to be attracting green technology but we don't want to encourage manufacturing. We need to attract entrepreneurs and creative people who work through the internet on green businesses. We need to target entrepreneurs globally; attract intellectual capital.
- Quality of life will attract them. Cultural, recreational
- Smaller schools are overall more effective than large schools. How do we create that experience in the larger schools that have been created to make education more affordable for the community.
- In smaller schools it's easier to get kids to take responsibility for each other – older kids looking after younger kids.
- How to keep VT small and still able to provide opportunities for employment, for cultural activities?
- How do we achieve consensus about what we want for our future? We have a lot of freedom but there is responsibility that goes along with that freedom.
- Leadership vacuum - Where is the next select board going to come from? We need to find the mechanism to support what current community leaders are doing, Need to help people feel supported in the work they do so that new people aren't afraid to step forward. Suggest a Lamoille Leadership Institute to encourage multigenerational training and support and networking.



- If we aren't able to find new leaders do we have to go through a process to prioritize what is important for us in our community. Figuring out where one can be effective and investing energy in that.
- Why don't people volunteer? Citizens are losing their sense of empowerment. Power has been taken from the individual and the local community. Power has gone to the state and the fed gov. Need to give the power back to the local community. Lack of results of one's effort drives people away. People are also shying away from having to deal with complex decision making and mitigation with regard to local issues.
- Do you teach kids (require) volunteerism? If you don't teach it to kids they won't recognize it as a valuable skill/asset

### **III. What should our priorities be as we work together to realize your vision and prepare VT for the future?**

- We need discussions about what we are looking for in our education system. We want it to be efficient, not be a burden on tax payers - social services expected in the school setting now, arts and music, sports.
- How does what we do in schools set us up to be in a position to attract and keep the intellectual capital of the future?
- What strategies can we use to have students be successful - every child? Get kids to value what we're doing with regard to education. Kids need to feel responsible for their outcome – need to give them responsibility for their own outcomes.
- Does this mean that we need to be more flexible about how we fund schools?
- Competing expectations for what are schools should be.
- Empowerment needs to come back to their local school. Kids and school board should be able to set their own priorities and have control of the money. State sets outcomes but the school decides how they reach those goals. Giving the schools power turns the school into entrepreneurs.
- We should be trying to attract business entrepreneurs from other countries and be selective about who we let in. Advertise outside of VT and the US to attract a top quality work force.
- Alternative energy sources should be developed to allow us to be more independent. Opportunities for bringing in artists to help tackle aesthetic issues surrounding wind power might make wind power more acceptable option. Power production could be highly localized – closer to our homes and use clean energy that we already have here.
- Poverty in the state and its impact on education, corrections, housing, social welfare can bring individuals and a community down. How can we be more inclusive and supportive of everyone in our community and help to break the poverty cycle?
- 

### **IV. We've been talking about VT, but how does this conversation concern the future your community?**

*Models where some of these issues have been addressed successfully in your community?*

- There is a real push in the community for broad band access. Folks passionate on this issue have been successfully building a strong grass roots campaign.

- Challenge – coordinated tourist marketing efforts for the middle of the state to take advantage of folks coming in two the resorts – Coordinate locally so that we can compete globally.
- Asset – Johnson State College, CCV. Are we making the most of these assets?
- Figuring out where the assets are and figuring out creative collaborations
- Very active hunger coalition. Lively group running the local food shelf. Challenge is how you get to the folks that are most in need and coordinate resources.