



# Vermont Council on Rural Development

## 2005 Annual Report

### From Paul Costello, Executive Director

As Vermonters, when we look to the challenges and opportunities ahead we know “we’re all in it together”, and we need to unite our efforts in order to move forward with confidence. The Vermont Council on Rural Development is proud to play our part in rural programming and policy development in support of rural communities throughout the state. For the past year, VCRD has implemented initiatives that are relevant and responsive to the changing needs of rural Vermonters. Our work covers a wide spectrum – from statewide Policy Councils and Summits, to goal setting in small rural communities, to expansion of broadband, and the development of the creative economy. VCRD works in town halls and government chambers, actively supporting rural communities through partnerships, collaboration, and facilitation. 2005 was a year of substantial accomplishments, with the implementation of initiatives that will advance Vermont’s rural economy, enhance recognition of the Vermont brand, and support rural communities as they plan for the future. VCRD continues build organizational capacity, strengthening existing activities, looking ahead to new ventures, and celebrating the leadership and achievements of our local partners.

### 2005 Accomplishments

#### Developing Broadband Solutions

Universal access to affordable broadband is of immediate and immense importance to communities across Vermont. Broadband access is essential for competitive businesses, and crucial to individuals in a rapidly shifting information age. VCRD has been actively engaged in coordinating policy dialogue about broadband access, while facilitating practical efforts around aggregation and expansion of rural broadband deployment. In 2005, with support from the Agency of Commerce, Broadband Council, VT Center for Rural Studies, and Senator Leahy’s office, VCRD:

- Assisted 30 communities in assessing and aggregating broadband demand
- Worked with broadband providers to implement solutions
- With partnership from USDA Rural Development, VCRD is developing WiFi sites throughout the Northeast Kingdom
- For more information, visit [www.vtruralbroadband.com](http://www.vtruralbroadband.com)

*“ By connecting as a WiFi hotspot, not only will our business benefit, but our entire community will benefit as well. Increased customer flow will mean more hours for our employees, more jobs, less or perhaps no layoffs this winter, and more dollars being spent in our community at other businesses. ”*

Eric Paris, Owner  
Lyndon Freighthouse

#### VCRD Staff

Paul Costello, Executive Director – [vcrd@sover.net](mailto:vcrd@sover.net) - (802) 828-6024  
Bonnie Smoren, Executive Assistant – [vcrd2@sover.net](mailto:vcrd2@sover.net) - (802) 828-6022  
Helen Labun Jordon, Director - Creative Communities Program - [ccp@sover.net](mailto:ccp@sover.net) - (802) 223-3793  
Al and Laura Duey- Broadband Contractors – [laura@thedueys.com](http://laura@thedueys.com) - (802) 467-1266

## Community Visit Program

The Community Visit is a signature program that provides a structure for prioritization of community goals, fosters local leadership, and serves as a catalyst for the development and actualization of concrete, achievable action plans. VCRD provides skilled facilitation, practical support in developing strategic plans, and access to expert resources in relevant fields. 2005 Community Visits were conducted in Chelsea and Woodstock. Residents of these towns have created task forces and are moving from challenges to solutions.

### Chelsea Priority Issues

Chelsea School  
Economic Development  
Open Lands  
Community Facilities

### Woodstock Priority Issues

East End Development  
Town/Village Merger  
Walking-Biking Trails/Conservation  
Defining Community Identity

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## 2005 Rural Summit – Bridging the Divide

In August 2005, more than 200 people gathered at the Statehouse in Montpelier to evaluate the challenges rural areas face in building bridges, overcoming conflicts, and promoting consensus in communities throughout Vermont. VCRD Summits provide a forum for dialogue around relevant issues, and allow participants to share their ideas, experience, and leadership. VCRD was honored to present the late Al Stevens with its first annual Community Leadership Award for his many years of public service and exemplary statesmanship.

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## Vermont Forest Products

*“Vermont crafted wood products are the perfect complement to our other resource based businesses. They boost our reputation for quality, and they boost our economy. This grant will showcase our craftsmanship, and help this vital industry grow in Vermont”*

Senator Jim Jeffords

VCRD received a \$1,000,000 EDA grant to support a comprehensive marketing campaign for Vermont value-added wood products. This two-year initiative, developed with strong support from Senator Jim Jeffords, evolved from VCRD’s Vermont Forest Products Council Blueprint for Action, a strategic plan developed by VCRD and state and industry leaders in 2003. This grant will develop a systematic marketing campaign that will expand sales and increase employment in Vermont’s value-added forest products industry. This project will benefit the entire industry – from one-person shops to major manufacturers. The grant will be implemented by the Vermont Wood Products Marketing Council and The Vermont Wood Manufacturers Association, in collaboration with Cabot Cooperative Creamery, the VT Department of Tourism and Marketing, and wood products partners statewide.

## **Creative Communities Program**

VCRD's Creative Communities Program began in the fall of 2005. This program provides technical assistance, planning support, and strategies for building project resources, all under the umbrella of the creative economy. Each town selected for the program will participate in an individualized process comprised of public discussion, strategic planning, and collaboration with a growing network of statewide creative economy centers. Fourteen Vermont communities will be chosen over the course of two years for participation in VCRD's Creative Communities Program. Five communities have been selected thus far: Hardwick, Rockingham, Rutland City, St. Albans City and Windsor. For program information or an application, contact Program Director Helen Labun Jordon at [ccp@sover.net](mailto:ccp@sover.net). Funding for this initiative is provided through Jane's Trust.

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## **Public Speaking and Facilitation**

An important role of VCRD is the provision of facilitation and testimony at a wide array of private, federal, state and non-profit functions. VCRD has built a reputation for supporting and informing state and federal rural development agencies, Vermont legislative committees, congressional delegations and the public about rural needs through the media and public events throughout Vermont. 2005 events included:

- Champlain Valley Fair Strategic Retreat
  - Dairy Task Force SWOT analysis
  - Vermont House of Representative Rural Working Group Retreat
  - Panels for statewide conferences on Broadband, Creative Economy, Agriculture, Forest Products.
  - National Partnership for Rural Development and Partners for Rural America Conferences.
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## **Vermont Council on Planning**

VCRD is actively engaged in defining and developing policy that impacts rural life. In 2004, VCRD convened the Vermont Council on Planning (VCP) to build a strategic plan for improving the structure of Vermont's system of town, regional and state agency planning for Gubernatorial and legislative consideration.

VCP's final report, "Vermont by Design", addresses critical areas of planning, from governance at all levels, to agency collaboration, to education and training, and makes specific recommendations toward the achievement of major goals. The four key areas cited for improvement are: Governance, Authority, and Leadership; 2. Coordination and Collaboration; 3. Education and Training; and 4. Issues of Growth and Scale. The report

was released to the Legislature in early January of 2006, and may be obtained by contacting us at [vcrd@sover.net](mailto:vcrd@sover.net).

VCRD is grateful to each member of the Vermont Council on Planning for the patience, hard work, and skill they brought to the process.

### **Vermont Council on Planning Members**

**Bob Ackland**, President, Real Estate Development Division, Sugarbush

**Stanley Borofsky**, Owner, Sam's Outdoor Outfitter in Brattleboro and Bellows Falls

**Andy Broderick**, Executive Director, Housing Vermont

**Greg Brown**, Executive Director, Chittenden County Planning Commission

**Elizabeth Courtney**, Executive Director, Vermont Natural Resources Council

**Kevin Dorn**, Secretary, Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development

**Paul Gillies**, Tarrant, Marks & Gillies

**John Hall**, Commissioner, Vermont Dept. of Housing and Community Affairs

**Beth Humstone**, former Executive Director, Vermont Forum on Sprawl;  
current U.S. Programs Director, Institute for Sustainable Communities

**Steven Jeffrey**, Executive Director, Vermont League of Cities and Towns

**Representative Bill Johnson**, House Natural Resources Committee

**Steven Kerr**, Secretary, Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

**Lee Krohn**, Manchester Municipal Planner

**Jolinda LaClair**, State Director, USDA Rural Development (VCP Chair)

**Senator Ginny Lyons**, Chair, Senate Natural Resources Committee

**Sharon Murray**, Principal, Burnt Rock; Past President and Legislative Liaison,  
Vermont Planners Association

**Pat Moulton Powden**, Chair, Vermont Natural Resources Board

**Chuck Ross**, State Director, Senator Leahy's Office

**Brian Searles**, former St. Albans City Manager; current Director of Aviation,  
Burlington International Airport

**Dawn Terrill**, Secretary, Vermont Agency of Transportation

**Kirk Waite**, Selectboard member, Town of Georgia

#### **Associate Member**

**Peg Elmer**, Planning Director, Vermont Dept. of Housing and Community Affairs

**Paul Costello**, Executive Director, Vermont Council on Rural Development (Producer)

**Brenda Hausauer**, Project Manager, Vermont Council on Planning

## **VCRD Board of Directors in 2005**

VCRD is fortunate to have the guidance and support of our board members who contribute invaluable time, energy, and ideas to further the mission of the Vermont Council on Rural Development.

### **Federal**

Roger Allbee, Farm Service Agency  
Brian Keefe, Senator Jefford's Office  
Jolinda LaClair, USDA Rural Development  
Jennifer Nelson, Congressman Sander's Office  
Paul Brewster, USDA Forest Service  
Chuck Ross, Senator Leahy's Office

### **State**

Steve Kerr, VT Agency of Agriculture  
Allen Evans, Human Resources Investment Council  
Dawn Terrill, VT Agency of Transportation  
Jonathan Wood, VT Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation

### **Local**

Jeffrey Francis, VT Superintendents Association  
Catherine Dimitruk, Northwest Regional Planning Commission (Vice Chair)  
Steve Patterson, Northeastern VT Development Association  
Michael Welch, Town Manager St. Johnsbury

### **Non-Profit**

Alex Aldrich, Vermont Arts Council (Treasurer)  
Hal Cohen, Central VT Community Action Council (Chair)  
Barbara Grimes, Burlington Electric Department (Chair Emeritus)  
Fred Schmidt, Center for Rural Studies, UVM

### **Private**

Bob Ackland, Sugarbush Resort  
Tony Elliott, Sovernet  
Joseph Fusco, Casella Waste Systems  
Marie Houghton, IBM  
Richard White, Community National Bank (Secretary)

## **About The Vermont Council on Rural Development**

A proud member of the National Rural Development Partnership, the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the support of the locally defined progress of Vermont's rural communities. VCRD is a dynamic collaboration of federal, state, local, non-profit, and private partners, uniquely positioned to sponsor and coordinate collaborative efforts across governmental and organizational categories concerned with policy questions of rural import. VCRD is an equal opportunity employer. We welcome your comments, suggestions, membership, and support.

## VCRD 2005 Members

VCRD relies on the financial support of our generous members who work with us in partnership for the advancement of Vermont communities. We would like to thank our 2005 members for their leadership and commitment. To become a member of VCRD, please fill out the membership form at the end of this report, along with a check for \$35 (individual), \$125 (organization), or \$500 (leadership).

### Individual

Jill Adams  
Rep. Bill Botzow  
Vaughn Collins  
Paul Costello  
Liz Curry  
John Ewing  
Victor Frank  
Liz Curry  
Robert Gasperetti  
Tom Johnson  
Robert Justis  
Louis and Margaret Kannenstine  
Brian Keefe  
Jolinda LaClair  
Stephanie Lahar  
Michael and Sandra Levine  
Christine Lilyquist  
John McLaughry  
Jake Marsh  
Scudder Parker  
Steve Roberts  
Christopher Roy  
Peter Saman  
Ina Smith  
Tim Smith  
Susan Spaulding  
Peter W. Thoms  
Richard White  
Marian White

### Organization

Chelsea Studios  
Duey Associates  
Green Mountain Coffee Roasters  
Kimbell Sherman Ellis  
Lamoille County Planning Commission  
Marlboro College  
Merchants Bank  
NeighborWorks of Western VT  
Northeastern VT Development Association  
Northwest RPC  
Northern VT Resource Conservation District

Northfield Savings Bank  
Onion River Community Access  
Orton Family Foundation  
REM Development Co.  
Rutland Regional Planning Commission  
City of St. Albans  
Southeastern VT Community Action  
Southern Windsor RPC  
Two Rivers – Ottauquechee RPC  
Union Bank  
UVM  
Verizon  
VT Alliance of Non-Profit Organizations  
VT Arts Council  
VT Association of Realtors  
VT Development Credit Union  
VT Office of Economic Opportunity  
VT Public Power Supply Authority  
Vermont Standard  
VT State Employees Credit Union  
VT Sustainable Jobs Fund  
VT Wood Manufacturers Assn.  
Washington County Mental Health  
Wells River Savings Bank  
Yankee Farm Credit

### Leadership

Casella Waste Systems  
Chittenden Bank  
Community National Bank  
Barbara Grimes  
Housing Vermont  
Passumpsic Savings Bank

### Project Contributors

Central VT Public Service Corporation  
Chittenden Bank  
Citizens Bank  
Community National Bank  
Green Mountain Power  
Housing Vermont  
IBM

**Project Contributors (cont.)**

Jane’s Trust  
Passumpsic Savings Bank  
State of Vermont  
TD Banknorth  
USDA Rural Development  
US Economic Dev. Administration  
UVM Center for Rural Studies

VT Agency of Commerce & Community Dev.  
VT Broadband Council  
Vermont Community Foundation  
VT Housing & Conservation Board  
VT Housing Finance Agency  
Washington Electric Co-op

**In-Kind Contributions**

Chittenden Bank  
USDA Rural Development

**VCRD 2006 Membership**

Members join VCRD partners in promoting opportunities in rural communities throughout the State of Vermont. Members receive VCRD program reports, quarterly newsletters, Annual Reports, and may participate as resources to communities and policy dialogues as appropriate. To become a member of VCRD, send contact information and a check for \$35 (Individual), \$125 (Organization), or \$500 (Leadership Contribution) to VCRD, PO Box 1384, Montpelier, VT 05601.

The Vermont Council on Rural Development deeply appreciates the partnership of our members in the work of the Council. Annual membership dues help cover the operating expenses of the VCRD.

VCRD is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. Our VT State Tax ID number is 125249 and our Federal ID number is 03-0354510.

<b>Organization:</b>	_____
<b>Name/Title:</b>	_____
<b>Address:</b>	_____
	_____
<b>Phone:</b>	_____ <b>Fax:</b> _____
<b>Email:</b>	_____
	_____
	_____ <b>\$35.00 Individual Member Dues</b>
	_____ <b>\$125.00 Organization Member Dues</b>
	_____ <b>\$500.00 Leadership Contribution</b>
<b>Please make check payable to: <u>Vermont Council on Rural Development.</u> Thank you so much for your support!</b>	
<small>Annual Report</small>	