

Front Porch Forum

Helping neighbors connect.

Get the most out of Front Porch Forum for your community. Which steps will you take?

Front Porch Forum (FPF) provides a tremendous boost to dozens of Vermont communities and it can happen where you live too. Just like hosting a good pot luck or church supper, you need lots of people to show up on FPF and to actively participate... all while keeping it civil and constructive. FPF depends on local folks who are committed to building community to attract the members and the messages. Once your FPF attains a critical mass, it's own momentum will keep it rolling. Want to help prime the pump? Here's how... pick any one or two (or all ten!) of these steps...

Promote -- People need to hear about FPF 5-10 times before they'll sign up

- Write an article or letter to the editor to your local newspaper about FPF. A sample article is attached. Get coverage on local radio, TV and websites too. Post to your Facebook or Twitter account.
- Invite your entire local email list to both sign up and recruit their neighbors. A sample blurb is attached. Find local email lists (e.g., PTO, schools, employees, clubs, friends, etc.) and send to them too.
- Mention FPF in every written announcement, newsletter, bulletins, websites, etc. in town for schools, churches, agencies, employers, colleges, clubs, libraries, and more. See sample blurb attached.
- Mention FPF daily in your local conversations for a month or two... "oh... have you tried posting that on Front Porch Forum?" Whether it's someone looking for a lost cat, a math tutor, a ride to Montpelier, a roofer recommendation or just about anything else you'd discuss with neighbors.

Personal -- You've got to make it easy for people to actually register

- Place a flyer in each front door wherever there are clusters of homes in your town, e.g., in the village center. Post your FPF town flyer on bulletin boards around town... library, school, town hall, community center, churches, stores, post office, etc. Your town's FPF flyer is attached and available at: <http://frontporchforum.com/home/pitch-in>
- Give people a shortcut via the attached paper sign-up sheet. Try at the farmers' market, school events, selectboard meetings, polling place, public gatherings, etc. Send any data gathered back to FPF and we'll get these good people registered immediately.
- Use Facebook, Twitter, blogs and any other social media that is active locally to encourage folks to sign up for FPF and put it to use. Include a link to <http://frontporchforum.com>

Participate -- Show folks how it's done!

- Once a week post a brief note to your FPF town forum... about any topic of your choosing. Ideally, make it in the form of a question and invite your neighbors to respond back to your forum (not just directly to your email address). Include your forum's email address. Sample topics... apple picking favorite spots, best sunset views, best creemees, wildlife sightings, peak foliage guesses, a good mechanic or babysitter, best cell phone and internet options, etc. Recruit a couple friends to make a weekly posting too. The point is to demonstrate how FPF can be used... this is the quickest and most clear way of informing people how FPF can work for them.
- Ask all your local officials to join FPF and post town business there... meeting agendas, major decisions, etc. Recruit selectboard members, school board members, town and school employees, committee/board volunteers, etc. Encourage local businesses to get on board too. Prime the pump!