



## **e-Vermont Community Broadband Project**

### **March 2012 Update**

**[www.e4vt.org](http://www.e4vt.org)**

The e-Vermont Community Broadband Project has worked since spring of 2010 to help rural towns realize the full potential of the Internet in everything from education to government to business development to community connections. The first annual report, published in July 2011, provides a comprehensive overview of the work the e-Vermont partner organizations performed during their first year assisting e-Vermont communities (see [www.e4vt.org](http://www.e4vt.org)).

In the months since this annual report was published, e-Vermont has continued its ambitious projects. Additional accomplishments through March, 2012, include:

- Full deployment of all e-Vermont partner services in 12 second round communities, bringing community work to a total of 24 rural locations. As part of these services:
  - **Digital Wish** has distributed 1,326 Netbooks to classrooms serving 1,260 Vermont students, conducted over 3,000 educator trainings and launched a statewide afterschool program where students create computer games and websites using Microsoft Kodu and Expression software.
  - **Vermont Small Business Development Center** has worked directly with 126 business clients, presented 40 business workshops, and developed a toolkit for businesses starting to explore online strategies for meeting their business goals.
  - **Snelling Center for Government** is building websites with 16 municipalities statewide, modeling best practices for e-government in rural towns. May 8<sup>th</sup> the Snelling Center will lead a statewide conference on Vermont's Digital Future.
  - **Vermont State Colleges** have offered 62 workshops on basic Internet topics and have piloted two new projects. Internet Interns places students in local libraries to provide computer assistance for patrons. iConnect trains participants in technical and pedagogical skills for working with people new to using the Internet.
  - **Vermont Department of Libraries** is working directly with 27 public libraries to upgrade equipment, expand public Internet access and improve online services.
  - **Front Porch Forum** manages 28 forums and 7,729 subscribers in e-Vermont communities. The average subscription rate is 28% of households, with some towns reaching rates over 80%. In December, 2011, FPF launched a new online community calendar tool.

- Under the leadership of the **Vermont Council on Rural Development**, second round e-Vermont communities have also launched independently developed projects, including wireless Internet zones, online archives for local historic documents, public Internet access using mobile computer labs, community open houses showing how local entrepreneurs use online tools in the creative economy, equipment for a community media center that helps organizations tell their stories in a multimedia format, and improvements to online farmers' markets. VCRD community directors also provide follow up in first round communities to ensure the success of previously implemented projects.
- e-Vermont is bringing lessons learned and best practices from e-Vermont communities statewide. Tools already in place for this outreach include:
  - A regional workshop on February 16<sup>th</sup> and state conference on *Vermont's Digital Future* May 8<sup>th</sup>, organized by the Snelling Center for Government.
  - Online toolkits with step-by-step guides to topics ranging from beginner friendly website design to getting public documents online to choosing the right web designer for your small business.
  - Monthly webinar series
  - Bimonthly e-Vermont electronic newsletter
  - Collaboration with other Vermont organizations that share our goal of ensuring that rural communities can take full advantage of broadband resources as they become available.

All of the information sources listed above can be found at our website: [www.e4vt.org](http://www.e4vt.org).

To keep current with e-Vermont activities, follow us on Twitter, @eVermont, & Facebook, /e4vt.org

