

SAMPLE CALL SCRIPT - MANCHESTER

Creative Communities Program Invitation Talking Points

- This spring, Manchester applied to participate in the Creative Communities Program at the Vermont Council on Rural Development. We were one of 3 communities chosen, along with Middlebury and Richmond. This initiative begins on May 21st with a public forum for Manchester and surrounding communities.
- The Creative Communities Program helps jumpstart the local creative economy. A quick definition of the creative economy is that it uses cultural and community development to support economic development. “Creative” in creative economy refers to the important role that culture plays, the process of forming new types of partnerships, and support for innovative thinking in any field.
- Creative economy projects in other communities have included arts events that bring people to shop at downtown businesses, building a community web presence, and creating activities that draw young people. On May 21st, we want to hear *your* goals.
- We thought that your opinions would be particularly important in this discussion because [##Add here whatever particular reason you had for thinking this person would be interested in the creative economy##]
- The Creative Communities Program consists of 3 community sessions and they move through a basic planning process of: (1) learning about the creative economy & brainstorming ideas for projects, (2) setting priority projects, and (3) working with a resource team from around the state to build strong action plans. The process moves quickly from planning to action.
- A local outreach group is getting the word out about the first forum on May 21st. Details:
From 6:30 – 9:00 pm at the Equinox Hotel (Rockwell Room).
The evening is divided into three parts –
 - 1.) Introduction to the creative economy concept.
 - 2.) Facilitated discussion of what is happening today related to the creative economy.
 - 3.) Facilitated discussion of specific projects that could happen in the future.

There will be dessert

I hope you'll be a part of this effort.

If they're interested, ask for an e-mail address so that we can send a reminder. If they would like to come but aren't available that day, ask if they'd like their name added to the list to receive notices about future forums (e-mail names to ccp@sover.net).

Anticipating Questions. . .

- In general: the website <http://www.vtrural.org> is a good place to find information, including reports on the Creative Economy and reports on what other towns have done. A lot of the questions about the term “creative economy” will (or should) be answered at the forum as well, so people can wait until then to have details ironed out. If someone is adamantly curious, you can always refer them to Helen Labun Jordan – (802) 223-3793.
- *What is a one-sentence definition of Creative Economy?*
 - The creative economy focuses on the intersection of culture, community and commerce – developing all three areas in connection with each other to build a strong local economy.
 - If you need an example – Bellows Falls used redevelopment of the vacant Exner Block as affordable housing for artists with galleries below as a centerpiece in downtown revitalization. Cultural activities have drawn in other businesses like restaurants and Chroma Technologies (which was seeking a vibrant community for its employees). Now Bellows Falls is continually adding new economic projects to reclaim its turn of the century position as a regional “Market Town”.
- *What are some examples of creative economy projects in Vermont?*
 - Towns who have already participated in the Creative Communities Program have pursued a variety of projects: creating an arts center, expanding recreation trails, increasing foot traffic through their downtown, improving their Internet presence. You can read all the ideas from other towns as well as case studies of past success stories online: <http://www.vtrural.org>.
- *Is there any money for projects that come out of this process?*
 - The first goal of this program is to help town choose the projects that are best for them. The Creative Communities Program has funds to bring together a resource team to help plan, including plans for getting further investment. We’ll also get a report at the end documenting the community effort that went into preparing the projects; many funders look for that initial community investment. Traditionally, towns have found the resources to implement projects that result from a Vermont Council on Rural Development planning process.
- *I don’t want to commit to another project.*
 - That’s the great thing about this process– you don’t have to commit to whole new project. Just by attending the first forum and adding your ideas into the mix, you’ve contributed a lot to the effort. Of course, everyone is encouraged to stay involved beyond this forum, but that’s up to you.