

# VLCT NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE VERMONT LEAGUE OF CITIES & TOWNS

SERVING AND STRENGTHENING VERMONT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

February 2005

## A NEW PLAYGROUND IN DERBY LINE VILLAGE

*OLD, GRAY STRUCTURE REPLACED BY A RAINBOW OF COLORS*

It took just two days in May 2003 to turn a broken down, weathered gray play structure into a new, colorful playground in the heart of downtown Derby Line Village.



Volunteers prepare to raise the swing frame at the Derby Line Village playground, May 2003. (Photo courtesy of Lisa Erwin.)

To the children of Derby Line, it must have been miraculous. But, their parents and others knew better. The \$63,000 playground was the result of two and a half years of hard work by the Derby Line Village Recreation Committee.

Planning and research were key to the whole project, agree the Recreation Committee's co-chairs Lisa Erwin and Karen Jenne. The project started as an outgrowth of the UVM Extension Service's *Take Charge* program for rural communities. *Take Charge* brought Derby

*(Continued on Page Twelve)*

## PITCHING IN IN ROYALTON

*RECREATION COMMISSION AND SELECTBOARD MEMBER DENIS IVES*

One could say that Denis Ives had no choice but to become an active volunteer in his town. He has three sons, ages nine, eleven, and thirteen, and they love sports. So, guess where Ives spends most of his free time? You got it - the Town of Royalton's Carpenter Recreation Field.

However, it is not in the stands, cheering on his boys and their friends, where you will probably find Ives. Instead, he is more likely to be there working as a volunteer member of the Town's Recreation Commission.

It all started about five years ago when he offered to help the Town finish some fencing at the recreation field, which hosts t-ball, two levels of Little League, softball, soccer and a skateboard park. As often happens in small towns, his efforts did not go unnoticed, and he was soon asked to become a member of the Recreation Commission.

"It is," he says, "in the town's and my best interests to support the kids. And it does your heart good." If you probe a little

*(Continued on Page Thirteen)*

## CELEBRATING VERMONT'S MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEERS

Welcome to the first themed issue of the *VLCT News*. Appropriately, we have chosen the backbone of Vermont's local governments, the municipal volunteer, to be the subject of our first newsletter devoted extensively to one common theme.

The challenge posed by focusing on municipal volunteers was, of course, picking out a single project and one person to profile. There are so many wonderful volunteers in our local governments that the possibilities were endless. Add to that the fact that many Vermont local government volunteers are naturally humble, and choosing among them

became all the more difficult.

But choose we did, and discovered in the process that municipal recreation committees are hotbeds of volunteerism. Many of their programs focus on families, and children in particular. As one volunteer put it, "We're a close-knit community. Sure, there's friction once in a while but we put it aside for the kids. That's what it is all about - making the best childhood for them that we can."

From this base - a secure, happy childhood and strong families - Vermont's communities grow and thrive. Kids see their parents pitching in, and learn to

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## VOLUNTEERS -

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help out in their towns by example. Active parents recruit other relatives and friends to help out and soon a community has a wider range of volunteers to draw on. Recreation committee members find themselves running for the selectboard or on the downtown development committee; citizens without children attend a fundraising dinner and find a new way to support their community. And, meanwhile, a lot of fun is had by all at the ball field or playground.

The academic community recently came up with the trendy term "social capital" to describe the above conditions and connections that result in a successful community. From our perspective, Vermont is blessed with plenty of social capital to go around. This is not to say that volunteerism and community involvement don't face obstacles from time to time. Busy, commuting

citizens and liability concerns are often cited as reasons why finding volunteers can be difficult. To counter these forces, we've put together an issue that not only tells two volunteer success stories, but also offers some specific advice for recruiting, managing and rewarding volunteers, to make the experience rewarding for both the volunteer and the municipality. In addition, our legal and insurance staff discuss several liability, compensation and workers' compensation coverage questions as they relate to volunteers.

Armed with this information, and some inspiration from their colleagues around the state, we hope our members will continue to benefit from the extraordinary contributions of their volunteers for a long time to come.

*- Katherine Roe, VLCT Communications Coordinator*

P.S. We hope to do two themed issues per year. Please send us your suggestions for subjects that you would like to see featured in depth in future newsletters.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT DAY

Local Government Day 2005 will be celebrated February 16 at the Capitol Plaza Hotel and the Vermont State House. Local officials from all over the state are expected to converge on the state's Capitol to meet and greet their legislators and see what's in store for this legislative session. Both Governor Jim Douglas and

Speaker of the House Gaye Symington have been invited to address attendees.



Plan to join us on Wednesday, February 16, to share good company, good ideas and good food with your colleagues. Register online at [www.vlct.org/calendar](http://www.vlct.org/calendar) or by using the flyer sent to all VLCT members in early January.

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# LEGAL AND REGULATORY NOTES



## GOVERNMENTAL IMMUNITY

### HARTFORD ENTITLED TO GOVERNMENTAL IMMUNITY

In an unpublished November decision, *Schokor v. Vail*, 2004-202, the Vermont Supreme Court held that the Town of Hartford was entitled to governmental immunity from an arrestee's claim that he was injured by a police officer's handcuffs.

In January 2002, Hartford Police Officer Braedon Vail arrested David Shockor for driving under the influence of alcohol. Shockor later filed a civil lawsuit against Officer Vail in Windsor Superior Court, alleging that he had been injured by the officer's application of handcuffs. Schokor

did not raise any claims directly against Hartford, but sought to hold Hartford vicariously liable for Officer Vail's acts.

The Supreme Court held that Shockor's claims against the officer in his official capacity were properly viewed as claims against Hartford and Hartford was entitled to immunity. In reaching its decision, the Court pointed out that the operation of a police department is a governmental function. A damage recovery can be had against a municipality for wrongs committed in the pursuance of governmental functions, but only to the extent that the municipality is covered by liability insurance.

As member of VLCT PACIF, Hartford had not purchased liability insurance. Citing *McMurphy v. State*, 171 Vt. 9 (2000), the court recognized that under 24 V.S.A. § 4946, a municipality's participation in VLCT PACIF does not constitute a waiver of its immunity under 29 V.S.A. § 1403. The Court concluded that Hartford was entitled to immunity from Shockor's claims against Officer Vail in his official capacity.

- Jim Barlow, Attorney, VLCT Municipal Law Center

(For a more detailed discussion of governmental immunity, see the VLCT **Handbook for Vermont Selectboards**, Section 17-1.)

## TRIVIA

We either stumped you last month, or the holidays kept you too busy for trivia. No one answered that the Green Mountain Parkway, proposed in 1935 by engineer William Wilgus and supported by Governor Stanley Wilson, was supposed to bring the State together, but was never built due to the great controversy that surrounded it.

Here's another bit of trivia to consider:

**Which towns in Vermont have the same name as a county that they are *not* located in? Name both the towns and the counties they are in.**

Contact us with your answer: VLCT, 89 Main Street, Suite 4, Montpelier, VT 05602, tel. 800/649-7915, fax, 802/229-2211, e-mail, kroe@vlct.org.

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# TIPS FOR A MUTUALLY REWARDING VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

The world of volunteerism has evolved over the last thirty years. The needs for volunteers are greater and more complex. More people are volunteering, but they have less time. The trick to making a good match, whether you are the municipality or the volunteer, is following the guidelines below.

For municipalities:

- A good volunteer match begins with clear policies and good job descriptions.
- Develop and make time for an interview, screening and matching process. You may turn away a few volunteers, but the ones you get will be the right ones, saving you time in the long run.
- Volunteers must see the relationship of the job they do, however small, to the total effort. Remind them of this every day!

- Volunteers must have opportunities to learn and grow.
- Care enough about volunteers to learn about their strengths.
- Keep volunteers informed about developments in the municipality.
- Recognize your volunteers in many ways. You don't have to depend on an infrequent, fancy event, such as a Volunteer Recognition Dinner. It all starts by saying "good morning" every day. Personal thank you notes, received at home, also make a big impression.
- Sit down with your volunteers to evaluate their work and invite them to evaluate the volunteer program.
- Offer your volunteers new opportunities.
- Fewer people are volunteering on a regular weekly schedule; develop your volunteer positions with an eye on the

episodic volunteer. These are volunteers who can be relied upon to help with a specific event each year, such as the library book sale, the annual Town Report, or Green-up Day.

- Remember, the best recruitment is retention. By caring for your volunteers and developing your relationship with them you will have a satisfied team that stays. They'll also tell their friends about their positive experiences volunteering for your municipality.

For volunteers:

- Research the causes or issues that are important to you.
- Consider skills you have to offer. Which skills would you like to share with others?
- Be honest: don't sign up for volunteer work you really don't want to do or can't do.
- Don't over-commit your schedule.
- Maybe you would like to learn something new. Some municipalities are willing to train their volunteers.
- Know what makes you comfortable and what makes you uncomfortable. Keep this in mind as you meet with the municipality. What populations are you comfortable with? What kind of work setting do you enjoy? You may not want to be put on the hot seat as a member of the local zoning board, but would enjoy helping the selectboard crunch numbers at budget-writing time.
- Volunteer as a family. Leave your guilt at home, not the kids. You're helping create the next generation of givers.
- Communicate with your volunteer supervisor. Let him or her know when you need help or when you are ready for a new challenge.
- Stop by your municipality to learn more. There are many more ways to volunteer than most of us could ever imagine. Ask for help!

- Andrea Houlihan, Program Coordinator, United Way Volunteer Center

*(The United Way Volunteer Center is a program of the United Way of Chittenden County. It is composed of three parts, the Volunteer Connection, RSVP and the Foster Grandparent Program. The United Way Volunteer Center is funded through the generosity of donors to the United Way Campaign. Please contact the Volunteer Center if you have any questions regarding volunteer management or finding a volunteer placement, tel. 802/860-1677, e-mail, VolCtr@unitedwaycc.org, and Web, www.unitedwaycc.org.)*

## MANAGING VOLUNTEERS IN RICHMOND

The Town of Richmond has taken several steps to better its management of its many volunteers. Though Town Administrator Ron Rodjenski feels it could do better, he has implemented several basic practices that help the town make the best use of its volunteers:

- Created a Master Committee list that contains contact information for members of Richmond's boards, commissions, and committees, plus the appointees to a variety of individual positions. The list contains over 90 people!
- Created a volunteer database for use in contacting volunteers and elected officials when it comes time to renew their terms. It is also used to provide a copy of the Town's Ethics Policy to all new volunteers.
- The Selectboard or Town Administrator sends a "Welcome" letter to every new Town volunteer, or calls them personally before they begin their term. "Thank You's" are also sent out, along with letters recognizing years of service milestones.
- An effort is also made to provide potential volunteers with information

to help them decide whether or not to offer their help. Once a volunteer starts, the Town provides him or her with the materials needed to understand the task at hand. This can be very lengthy in the case of some of the regulatory boards.

- The Selectboard interviews potential volunteers for the Planning Commission and Development Review Board.

Managing the Town's over 100 volunteers could be a part-time job, and, in fact, a recent study recommended that the Town add one more volunteer to its ranks – a volunteer coordinator. (See "Local Government Volunteerism: Leadership Champlain Program Studies Richmond," August 2003 *VLCT News*.) While this is probably impractical in many small Vermont towns, it highlights the fact that it does take some effort to make volunteerism work well for both the municipality and the volunteer. It is an effort that is well worth making – just imagine your town without its community of committed volunteers.

- Katherine Roe, VLCT Communications Coordinator

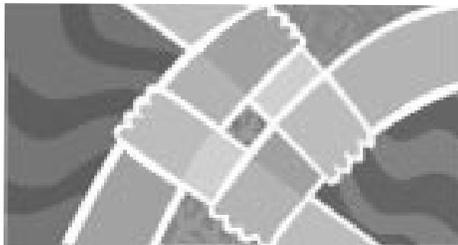


# ASK THE LEAGUE

## COMPENSATION AND VOLUNTEERS; VOLUNTEER LIABILITY

### *Can a volunteer receive some compensation and still be a volunteer?*

The principal benefit provided by volunteers is that they provide services with no expectation of compensation, whether it be in cash, benefits, or otherwise. However, many employers have chosen to pay volunteers a per diem, "nominal remuneration," or, occasionally, some fringe benefits. When deciding whether to pay a volunteer, there are some legal considerations that must first be addressed.



Volunteers are generally not considered to be employees under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Therefore, municipalities may enjoy the benefits of volunteer services without implicating the wage and overtime provisions of the FLSA. The FLSA exempts individuals volunteering for local governments if the individual receives no compensation, or is only paid expenses, reasonable benefits, or a nominal fee; and the services performed by the individual must not be the same type of services which the individual is employed to perform for the town.

The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) further defines the term "volunteer" under the FLSA to mean "an individual who provides service to a public agency for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons, with no expectation of payment or remuneration by the public agency." 29 C.F.R. § 553.101 (a). There are some important caveats to this general rule. The most important one, as noted above, is that an individual will not be considered a volunteer if he or she is otherwise employed by the municipality and

performs the same type of work for which he or she is ostensibly volunteering. For example, John Smith is on the town road crew and frequently operates a front-end loader in the repair and maintenance of the town highway system. At the same time, the town is endeavoring to build a children's park, which requires some heavy digging. Mr. Smith has volunteered his time, and the town has volunteered the use of the loader to construct the park. The hours Mr. Smith works must be calculated with his regular hours, because the work performed is the same type of work Mr. Smith performs as a paid employee. Therefore, he must be paid his regular wage. In addition, if the hours worked are overtime hours, Mr. Smith must be given compensatory time off at the rate of one and a half times the hours worked, or, if the town's practice is to pay overtime, he must be paid for those overtime hours worked.

Note that individuals may volunteer for *other* municipalities even though they volunteer the same services for Town B that they perform as employees of Town A.

Municipal employers *may* pay volunteers expenses, fees, or provide "reasonable benefits" without forgoing their volunteer status. Reasonable benefits may even involve inclusion of individual volunteers in group insurance plans (such as liability, health, life, disability, workers' compensation) or pension plans or "length of service" awards. 29 C.F.R. § 553.106.

In summary, municipal employers are not obligated by law to give benefits to volunteers, though benefits may be paid to volunteers without the employer being required to satisfy FLSA requirements in relation to the volunteer's work status. In order to avoid the triggering of FLSA requirements, the volunteer must not expect compensation. Therefore, it should be made clear to volunteers, in either the personnel policy or in a job description, that volunteers will not be paid and should not expect any payment from the town. Again, this does not preclude the municipal employer from

paying expenses, reasonable benefits, and nominal fees or stipends, or a combination thereof. 29 C.F.R. § 553.104.

*(Partially excerpted from the VLCT Municipal Employment Law Handbook, published 2004.)*

***With all the lawsuits these days, our town is having trouble filling vacancies on boards and finding people to run for open offices. What protection, if any, is afforded municipal officers and volunteers against personal liability for their public service?***

The Vermont Legislature has afforded officers a degree of personal liability protection by requiring towns to pay the reasonable legal fees incurred by elected and appointed officers acting "in the performance of his duties and without malicious intent." 24 V.S.A. §901. The situation, however, is slightly different in villages: a village has the option of defending a lawsuit against an appointed officer, and is only required to do so if the village so votes. 24 V.S.A. §1313. Where an individual is both a "municipal officer" under 24 V.S.A. §901(a) and a "duly appointed public officer" of a

*(Continued on next page)*

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## ASK THE LEAGUE -

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village under 24 V.S.A. §1313, then only §1313 applies. *Holmberg v. Brent*, 161 Vt. 153, 156 (Vt. 1993).

In 2003, the Legislature also afforded some personal liability protection for municipal volunteers. Generally, if a volunteer's services are requested by the selectboard or by a municipal employee acting within his or her authority, and the volunteer is alleged to have caused property damage or personal injury, any lawsuit arising from the injury must be brought against the town and not against the volunteer individually. This protection would not apply if the volunteer's acts were willful, intentional, or outside the

volunteer's authority. 24 V.S.A. §901a.

There are also certain immunities for quasi-judicial and legislative acts. Generally, officials are not personally liable for judgments or actions taken in a quasi-judicial capacity, so long as the officials are not negligent and they are acting in good faith. *Verrill v. Dewey*, 130 Vt. 627 (Vt. 1972). Also, in performing a legislative function, such as adopting a bylaw or ordinance, local officials may be immune from civil liability. *Brogan v. Scott-Harris*, 523 U.S. 44 (1998). Volunteers can also find some protection in the immunity afforded providers of emergency services, 12 V.S.A. §519 and 24 V.S.A. §2687, responders to hazardous material emergencies, 12 V.S.A. §5783, and fire personnel, 20 V.S.A. §2990.

There is no doubt that local government runs on volunteer service. Few offices in local government are paid, and the compensation for these positions is usually well below the value of the services provided. Unfortunately, it seems the specter of litigation lurks around every corner and the threat of liability will always deter some from public service. While the courts and the Vermont Legislature have placed numerous responsibilities upon local officials and volunteers, they have also afforded officials and volunteers some degree of protection against personal liability for their public service.

Though it may be cold comfort, one should also remember that lawsuits against towns and municipal officers are as old as the

*(Continued on next page)*

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## ASK THE LEAGUE -

(Continued from previous page)

Vermont legal system itself. A brief review of the reported cases indicates that the subject of these suits has not changed much over the years. For example, in one of Vermont's earliest reported cases, *Noyes v. Morristown*, 1 Vt. 353 (1828), Gilbert Noyes brought suit against Morristown for "the insufficiency and want of repair of a town bridge" after his horse fell from the bridge, "and was thereby destroyed." Of course, the town fathers put on a vigorous defense with plenty of evidence to show that Mr. Noyes was not a very proficient wagon driver either!

- Jim Barlow, Attorney, VLCT Municipal Assistance Center

### Can children under the age of eighteen serve as volunteer firefighters?

There is no clear state or federal regulation prohibiting children under the age of 18 from serving as volunteer firefighters. However, Vermont's child labor regulations, which mirror those of its federal counterpart, generally prohibit children under the age of 18 from engaging in hazardous occupations. Although volunteers are typically not considered to be "employees" under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the Vermont and U.S. Labor Departments are likely to consider firefighting as "employment" in this context.

In addition to setting minimum standards for wage and overtime pay, the FLSA also requires employers to refrain from conducting "oppressive child labor." Oppressive child labor consists of employing children under the minimum age standard and employing age eligible children in occupations deemed hazardous. The minimum age for non-agricultural employment, with exceptions, is 16. This means that children under the age of 16 are clearly prohibited from firefighting activities.

While neither Vermont nor federal child labor laws specifically list firefighting as a hazardous occupation, many of its associated activities are. These activities include driving or riding on the outside of fire trucks, participating in training or firefighting exercises on a roof, or working with a power-driven hoisting apparatus, such as a crane, hoist or manlift.

The Vermont Department of Labor and Industry Wage-Hour Program, in a memorandum entitled, "Permitted and

Prohibited Fire Service Activities For Children Under the Age of 18," imparted the following guidance unto fire departments:

- **14- and 15-year olds cannot** participate in firefighting activities.
- **16- and 17-year olds cannot** drive or ride on the outside of fire trucks, operate a ladder or other power-driven hoisting apparatus, or partake in training or firefighting operations on a roof.
- **16- and 17-year olds can** ride as passengers inside a fire truck, climb up and down a ladder, and participate in firefighting operations such as pump operations or interior firefighting.

Even though it is clear that 16- and 17-year olds may not participate in rooftop firefighting operations, VLCT joins the Vermont Department of Labor and Industry in strongly recommending that children under the age of 18 not be allowed to participate in interior firefighting activities. As stated in the Department's memorandum, "Fire fighting is an extremely hazardous activity, and poses serious risks to youths as well as potentially serious liability for a municipality or fire fighting company."

- Garrett Baxter, Associate, VLCT Municipal Assistance Center

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# LOU STAZI JOINS VLCT STAFF

VLCT members have a new representative at the State House this year. **Louis Stazi** joined the VLCT staff in early January as our new Associate for Legislative and Information Services. He takes the place of Todd Odit, who left the League late last year to become Assistant Manager in the Town of Essex, Vermont.

Lou, with **Karen Horn**, VLCT's Director of Legislative and Membership Services, and **Steven Jeffrey**, VLCT Executive Director, will track proposed legislation with an eye toward its impact on Vermont's municipalities. Lou's particular areas will be transportation, public safety, corrections, animal control and clerk and treasurer issues.

The League's advocacy team provides legislators with information about proposed bills' impacts on municipalities in an effort to encourage legislation that is helpful, not harmful, to our municipal members. Most importantly, they relay State House news to VLCT members via our *Weekly Legislative Report* and Legislative Alerts, so that local officials can contact their legislators directly about an impending issue. In their "off" season, Lou, Karen and Steve assist members of the

VLCT *Municipal Policy* committees to draft the League's legislative platform for approval at the VLCT Annual Meeting in the fall.

Lou comes to the League after earning a Masters in Public Administration in May 2004 from Rutgers University in Newark, New Jersey. Prior to earning his MPA, Lou held a variety of positions in public health and human services advocacy in New Jersey. Lou and his wife have recently settled in South Burlington. An avid soccer fan – he has coached the game at the college and youth levels – Lou is waiting for the fields to turn green this spring.

Welcome, Lou!

- *Katherine Roe, VLCT Communications Coordinator*



*Lou Stazi*

## NEW "BEST PRACTICES" WEB SITE FOR SMALL CITY GOVERNMENTS

Small Cities Publishing recently unveiled a new membership-based Web site devoted exclusively to the information needs of mayors, managers, and councils in small cities under 50,000.

The site, [www.smallcities.us](http://www.smallcities.us), is packed with over 200-plus best practice articles and case studies in the categories of budgeting; downtown development; council process; new development; elected officials; citizen involvement; historic preservation; law enforcement; personnel; and technology. Each month, a profile of a new best practice from a small city is posted at the site. Recent titles have included: how to become a certified sustainable community; how to hire a city manager with the help of a citizens' committee; using a public process to create a values-based ethics code; using the tools of private industry to acquire and rehabilitate vacant properties.

In addition, there is a library of ordinances, forms, and other relevant documents. Other features include an Expert's Corner of columns from some of the country's leading local government consultants.

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## Municipal Assistance Center

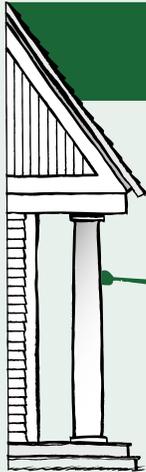


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- ◆ *Regular surveys on salaries and benefits, municipal practices, rates and fees, etc.*
- ◆ *Model ordinances, bylaws, and policies.*

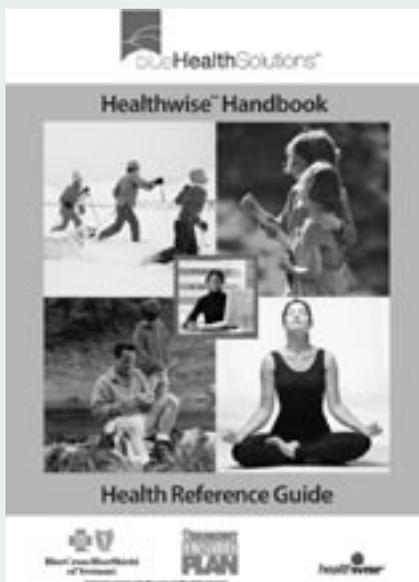
89 Main St., Ste. 4, Montpelier, VT 05602; tel., 800/649-7915; fax, 802/229-2211; e-mail, [dcloud@vlct.org](mailto:dcloud@vlct.org).



## HEALTH TRUST OFFERS WELLNESS COORDINATOR WORKSHOPS

The high cost of health insurance is a complicated problem. In fact, it promises to keep many of our legislators, Group Services Director David Sichel, and your Health Trust board members very busy this legislative season.

One fact everyone can agree on ahead of time is that a healthier population is an important component of any solution to the high cost of health insurance. The VLCT Health Trust is doing its part by offering an array of health promotion services for its member municipal employees and their families.



Attendees at the upcoming Wellness Coordinator Workshops will receive a free copy of the new Healthwise self-care manual.



(COMMUNICATIONS UNDER TEN SENTENCES)

## WELCOME

The Towns of **Bolton** and **Starksboro** joined VLCT PACIF last month, bringing the total membership to 341.

Come learn about these services at a free workshop near you this winter. Heidi Joyce, VLCT Senior Health Promotion Consultant, will be conducting half-day Wellness Coordinator Workshops around the state in late January and February.

If your municipality does not have a wellness representative, this is the perfect opportunity for a leader in your municipality (selectperson, town clerk, administrator, director, or manager) to come see what the VLCT Health Promotion Department has to offer. The workshop agenda includes:

**8:30 a.m., Coffee, Tea, Refreshments**

**9:00 a.m., Introduction and What's New**  
Brian FitzPatrick, Manager, Safety & Health Promotion

**9:30 a.m., Health Screening Scheduling and Self-Care Train-the-Trainer Workshop**

Heidi Joyce, Sr. Health Promotion Consultant

**10:30 a.m., SmartMeds Lecture\***

Janet Foster Farina, R.Ph., Pharmacist Manager, MCHV

**11:30 a.m., Catamount Trail Pedometer Challenge**

Explanation and distribution of materials (participation not required to attend workshop)

**12:30 p.m., EAP Presentation**

**12:45 p.m., Lunch and Depart**

\*All locations except Mendon.

There are five workshops to choose from:

- Jan. 27 - White House Inn, Wilmington
- Feb. 3 - Hampton Inn, Colchester
- Feb. 10 - Capitol Plaza, Montpelier

- Feb. 17 - Comfort Inn, St. Johnsbury
  - Feb. 24 - Cortina Inn, Mendon
- Simply go to <http://www.vlct.org/calendar/>; click on the date of the workshop closest to you and register for the workshop. The workshop is free and includes lunch.

### REMINDER

The VLCT Employee Assistance Program is co-sponsored by the VLCT Health and PACIF Trusts for their member municipalities. Employees *and their household members* are eligible to use the EAP for free. Call 800/287-2173 for assistance.



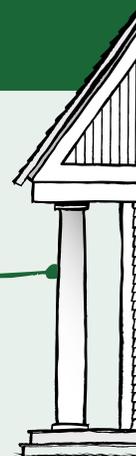
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Public Officials' Bonds

#### SAFETY AND HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAMS

DEDICATED CLAIMS DEPARTMENT

## COVERAGE OF VOLUNTEERS UNDER THE PACIF PROGRAM

Volunteers play an important role in the daily functioning of Vermont's municipalities. They fill a variety of positions, such as elected officials, board members and firefighters. But are volunteers covered by the PACIF program in the event of a loss or accident?

The answer is yes and no. Some volunteers, such as firefighters, are eligible to receive coverage under the PACIF workers' compensation program. Other volunteers, such as selectboard members, are generally not considered employees of the municipality and would not have workers' compensation benefits available to them in the event of an injury that occurred while performing a selectboard duty. However, the PACIF program does offer a Medical Payments Extension of coverage for those volunteers not afforded workers' compensation coverage. This extension will *"pay medical expenses for injuries caused by an accident to elected officials and volunteers while performing operations within their duties for and on behalf of the named member [municipality]."* Certain limits and conditions do apply, so please check your PACIF Coverage document for further details.

What about covering volunteers in the event another party sues them for damages or injuries? Please see the Ask the League column for a discussion of how the Vermont Statutes may afford volunteers protection from lawsuit. A lawsuit alleging damages or injuries caused by a volunteer must name the municipality as the defendant and not the individual volunteer. Of course, the volunteer must be performing services requested of him or her by the municipality, or its representative, and the volunteer's acts that allegedly caused the damage or injury must not be willful, intentional or outside the volunteer's authority. The PACIF program provides a defense for members who are sued as a result of an action of their volunteer. The PACIF Liability Coverage document defines a named member to include volunteers while acting within the scope of their duties by or on behalf of the named member (municipality).

Although we cannot say that volunteers are covered for any and all actions or injuries that happen while they are performing duties for their respective municipalities, through the PACIF program, a great deal of coverage is afforded to them. PACIF recognizes the importance of volunteers to our members and attempts to provide protections for those volunteers wherever practical. If you have any questions regarding the coverage for volunteers, contact the VLCT PACIF Underwriting Department at 800/649-7915.

- Patrick Williams, Deputy Director, VLCT Group Services



## PLAYGROUND -

*(Continued from Page One)*

Line Village citizens together who were interested in seeing the Village grow and change in a positive way. From the initial "visioning" process, several committees were formed according to Village needs and participants' interests.

The seven-member Village Recreation Committee was one of the committees formed, and it got right to work. One of its keys to success, according to Erwin, was allowing Committee members to pick tasks based on their individual strengths and interests. "I wasn't very good at organizing fundraisers," Erwin admitted. Luckily, other Committee members could pull off a great spaghetti dinner fundraiser (or car wash or can drive) with their eyes closed and their hands tied behind their backs.

Meanwhile, Erwin and Jenne worked behind the scenes to write the successful Land and Water Conservation Fund grant that funded half of the project, as well

*"My friend and I were standing around at the old playground one day. She said, 'somebody really should do something about this,' and I said, 'Yes, they should.' Little did I know."*

*- Lisa Erwin, Co-chair, Derby Line Village Recreation Committee*

as fundraising letters to local businesses and citizens. Other Committee members worked on planning the gardens around the playground and getting the picnic tables built by a local vocational/technical school. Engineering (surveying and drawing up plans) services were donated. The Committee contacted five playground equipment vendors, and set up trips for Committee members to see their products. The Committee also contacted VLCT PACIF to seek its loss control consultant's advice on safe playground design.

Jenne, who is also the Derby Line Village Clerk, made sure that the Village trustees were "in the loop." Voters weighed in by twice voting funds in support of the playground. In the final stretch, the owner of the local drugstore issued a \$3,000 challenge grant which was more than matched by those responding.

Some of the funds raised were used to hire an excavation company to prepare the site and a fencing company to dig the holes. On that May weekend, 15-20 volunteers showed up each day to "raise the roof." The Unitarian Universalist Church fed everybody, and a playground was born. The Committee's two and a half years of work was complete.

Looking back on the last year and a half, Erwin says "it has been absolutely wonderful to see how the playground is used. Even the Canadians come over the border to use

it!" She brings her sons often and admits to doing a lot of eavesdropping. "It is so great," she says, "to hear people say how happy they are with it. It really does bring people together."

*- Katherine Roe, VLCT Communications Coordinator*

*(Both Lisa Erwin and Karen Jenne said they would be happy to share their experience and offer advice to other municipalities interested in building a new playground. For contact information, e-mail kroe@vlct.org.)*



*The Derby Line Village Playground at Portus Baxter Park has a section on the left for the two to five year olds and a section on the right for the more rambunctious six to twelve year olds. (Photo courtesy of Lisa Erwin.)*

## MUNICIPAL SERVICES

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## IVES -

*(Continued from Page One)*

deeper, you will discover that Ives found the best way he can contribute to Royalton's children. "I started working on a dairy farm when I was eight," he said. "We were poor and I didn't have much of a chance to play sports." His lack of sports experience, coupled with a back injury that limits his movement now, meant that he did not feel comfortable coaching his sons' teams.

He set to work in other ways, motivated by a desire to help out and to instill in his own children the idea that volunteering is "one of the best things you can do." In 2001 and 2002, unusual rains flooded Carpenter Field, leaving silt and debris behind. Ives spearheaded each clean-up. As he tells it, organizing the efforts was easy. "You know how, in small towns, everyone shows up to survey the damage? Well, we were all standing around and I said, do you think we can clean this up?" The answer from his fellow citizens was yes. In 2002, forty volunteers, aided by two private dump trucks, the town loader and a town dump truck,

hauled fifty loads of silt and debris from the recreation field, just in time for the spring ball tournaments to begin.

Other projects at Carpenter Field followed. New guardrails around the parking lot. Tree planting along the river to stabilize the banks. Soliciting local businesses to sponsor new granite benches. Renovating an old chicken coop into a place to store the teams' equipment and a concession stand. And the big one – building a skateboard park.

This provided Ives with an introduction into Town-wide politics. The Town was divided over whether or not a skateboard park should be built, and where. With a lot of help from two other Royalton volunteers, Kathy Hassey and Hoyt Bingham ("They kept me going," Ives said), the park was completed in 2003.

It was a classic Ives project. He spent his two weeks of vacation from his regular job (he is a Town of Randolph employee) working on the park, using his and his father-in-law's tractors. A selectboard member's husband loaned his excavator. When the park was done, the cost had come in under the estimate (by half!).

Ives' reward has been the positive feedback he has received, especially from the initial naysayers. The park has proven to be a safe spot for kids that needed a place in town to do what they love doing, and Ives is proud of it. He is also very proud of his Town. "It is easy to volunteer," he said, "when you have a town full of volunteers."

Ives is now tackling even thornier issues as a member of the Royalton selectboard. He will admit that forging a consensus over the use of Town roads by all-terrain vehicles, or coming up with a common vision for the Town as laid out in the town plan are not as easy or as satisfying as his Recreation Commission tasks. "You do find yourself in a position that you don't want to be in sometimes," he noted, "but you have to go by what you think is best for the Town. And if the voters don't agree with you, well, you'll be done."

The Town has some significant building projects coming up – a new town office, new fire station, and new preschool – and Ives is looking forward to applying some of his "barn raising" magic to them. He'd like the Town to act as general contractor as often as possible, and hire specialized help or seek donations when needed. "Just think of what we could do for the kids with the money we'd save," he said.

He is thinking, to be sure. There is a gleam in his eye as he dreams about a skating rink for winter recreation. "We could buy a portable rink, or just build it ourselves with plywood." Check back next winter. It will probably be done.

*- Katherine Roe, VLCT Communications Coordinator*



*Denis Ives received a Governor's Award for Outstanding Volunteer Community Service from Governor Douglas in May 2004. His nomination stated "[Ives] seems to have radar for what needs to be done around the community and just goes ahead, organizes, and completes the work." (Photo courtesy of Denis Ives.)*



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# PLAINFIELD PURCHASES OWN STREET LIGHTS

They did it! After almost two years of effort, the Town of Plainfield has purchased its streetlights. The fixtures arrived over the holidays and were installed in early January. As far as we know, Plainfield is the only town in the state that has actually entered an agreement with the local electric utility to operate municipal street lighting on utility-owned poles. And the savings are significant, compared with street light rental from the utility. Other towns have investigated the possibility but have been deterred by any number of factors.

## HOW DID PLAINFIELD DO IT?

Two years ago, new selectperson Lori Barg noticed that the line item for streetlights in her small town totaled 1.5 percent of the town's annual budget. With the board's support, she figured out how the town might reduce that cost if it owned its 54 streetlights instead of leasing them from Green Mountain Power (GMP), the electricity provider. As an initial step, GMP provided a field audit of streetlights, unearthing a few billing discrepancies. Moreover, the town decided to eliminate four lights that were illuminating private property.

Depreciation costs that would have had to be paid to GMP by the town were initially

prohibitive (and have in the past caused towns to abandon the effort to purchase lights). However, GMP agreed to reduce those depreciation costs to almost nothing. Additionally, the town found a vendor of street light bulbs at a cost 40% lower than the purchase price on the state vendor list for group purchases. The town will pay about \$16 per bulb.

In fiscal year 2003, the Town of Plainfield spent \$6,721.45 for street light rental. Under the new town ownership of street lighting, Plainfield will pay GMP about \$3,600 for electricity and maintenance in 2005. This cost could be further reduced if the town chooses to hire out the maintenance on an hourly basis (rather than contracting for maintenance with GMP on a monthly basis). The cost of purchasing the new streetlights was about \$11,100, excluding the installation cost at GMP's standard hourly rate. Efficiency Vermont is making an incentive payment to Plainfield

for converting to high efficiency lighting. The project's simple payback will be approximately four years.

The new streetlights use energy efficient, high-pressure sodium lamps, compared with the older, inefficient hazardous mercury vapor lamps rented from the utility. There are aesthetic improvements as well. The new fixtures have a flat lens and distribute the light downward, minimizing light trespass and glare produced by older street lighting. Scientific studies also show that sodium vapor lights have less impact on bugs and bats and are therefore more "ecologically friendly."

The Vermont Department of Public Service served as technical consultant to Plainfield in this project. The Department retained Donna Leban, an outdoor lighting expert and author of a street lighting guide for Vermont municipalities. This brief guide is planned for release in the second quarter of 2005. Contact Christopher Owen, Energy Efficiency Specialist, at the Department of Public Service, 802/828 4038, for more information.

- Karen Horn, Director, VLCT Legislative and Membership Services

## FILM -

(Continued from Page Fifteen)

in promoting production activity in your area. We are always updating our Web-based location database and wish to include as many localities as possible. Please e-mail the Vermont Film Commission if you have an interesting location in your town or city. As well as filming locations, production companies also look for available office space, cast and crew lodging facilities and transportation among other services. Let us know what your town or city has to offer the film and television production community!

Please contact us at the Vermont Film Commission, 10 Baldwin Street, Drawer 33, Montpelier, VT 05633-2001; phone: 802/828-3618; e-mail: [vermontfilm@vermontfilm.com](mailto:vermontfilm@vermontfilm.com).

- Tammie Blockburger, Deputy Director, Vermont Film Commission

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# ELIMINATING BACKYARD BURNING

VLCT recently partnered with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to further educate Vermont municipalities about the adverse effects of open burning of solid waste.

As part of DEC's *Prevention of Illegal Burning of Solid Waste* grant program, VLCT surveyed all municipal health officers, town managers, and selectboard chairs to gather information on open burning perspectives and practices in Vermont municipalities.

Approximately 26% of the survey recipients responded. One hundred and fifty-four towns were represented by at least one completed response, accounting for

64% of Vermont municipalities. We thank the 186 individuals who completed the survey and helped us gather information on this issue.

Backyard burning is no longer a legal way to dispose of household trash due to the composition of today's trash, which is very different from trash of the past. Thousands of common household products and food packaging are now made of plastic and other synthetic materials. These durable, convenient and economical items become toxic when combusted. Dioxins and furans, known carcinogens, are released into the

air when certain plastics are burned. These cancer-causing agents put children at a high risk of being affected because their immune systems are not fully developed. A child breathing the same polluted air as an adult will absorb up to six times more of the combustion products, according to information released by the Vermont Air Pollution Control Division.

Despite these serious health and environmental concerns, of which nearly all survey respondents claimed to be aware, 61% of municipalities have never discussed how to address the issue. Some municipalities noted that a school presentation or a display at town meeting might be an effective forum in which to deliver a message on backyard burning. But 69% of respondents were not interested in, or did not see a benefit to, a formal educational seminar for municipal officials or the community-at-large.

Open burning is not high on most municipalities' list of priorities. In fact, only 26% of municipalities determined that open burning was a significant enough problem to regulate at the local level. Among municipalities without an open burning ordinance, 65% do not feel open burning is a concern in their municipality. Other issues are more important, despite the reality that open burning occurs within most communities.

Survey responses revealed that enforcement is the largest challenge to adopting an ordinance. Lack of funding and staff time for enforcement are the main reasons why 74% of municipalities have not adopted a local open burning ordinance. Instead, a lot of towns rely on the state law prohibiting burning trash to regulate open burning. Seventy-six percent of Vermont municipalities rely on a regional solid waste district or alliance for enforcement of the state law.

Despite the challenges posed by enforcing local open burning ordinances, adoption of them has increased significantly since the 1980s. This trend is likely to continue with heightened awareness of the adverse health and environmental impacts of the open burning of trash. Please contact the VLCT Municipal Assistance Center at 800/649-7915, or e-mail Tara Fischer at [tfischer@vlct.org](mailto:tfischer@vlct.org) if your municipality is interested in viewing the final report based on the *Survey on Municipal Burning Ordinances*, learning about the adoption of a municipal burning ordinance, or obtaining a copy of VLCT's model ordinance.

- Tara Fischer, Research and Information Assistant, VLCT Municipal Assistance Center

## BECOME A FILM LIAISON

The Vermont Film Commission is reaching out to municipalities as a way to increase the network of Vermont resources it uses to bring film and television productions to Vermont.

With help from local governments, the Film Commission can better promote your area to the lucrative film and television production industry. You are our gateway to your community's treasures.

The Film Commission is establishing local film liaisons to serve as the Film

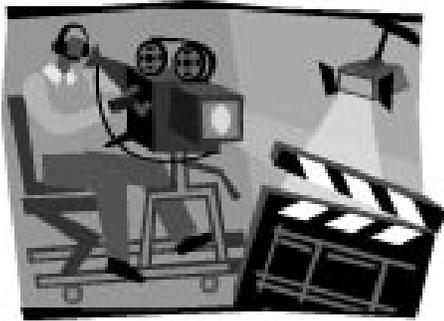
location are usually "scouting" for a specific look. Below are a few examples of how the Film Commission may call on a local film liaison:

- Do you know of any turn of the century homes in your area? Specifically, located on a lake with apple trees in the front and a garage in the back?
- We have a production company interested in filming at your local market. Could you get us in contact with the owner?
- Who would we talk to regarding permission to park vehicles in the town hall parking lot?

The Vermont Legislature created the Vermont Film Commission in 1996 to promote Vermont as a location for film and television production. Entertainment production can introduce thousands of dollars to the local and state economy through the purchase of goods and services from local vendors and businesses. Another benefit of film and television production is the creation of skilled positions for Vermont workers. Production companies set up a corporation in your town and work "on location" for the length of the shoot. In addition, film and television production can bring long-term benefits to our area in the form of *movie tourism*. For years to come, visitors actively seek out the places where their favorite movies were made.

In closing, the Film Commission would like to make all VLCT members aware that we are here to assist the community

(Continued on Page Fourteen)



Commission's point person for their locality – the "eyes and ears of the community," someone we can call on when we receive location requests and need to act on the opportunity. A liaison will assist the Film Commission with local information, suggest location sites for filming and provide Producers and Directors with valuable information regarding his or her town or city.

A local film liaison is not a full-time commitment, rather a volunteer assignment in the form of a short phone call or e-mail response. Production companies filming on



# Tech Check



## VOLUNTEERS AND TECHNOLOGY PRE-PLANNING AND FOLLOW-UP THE KEYS TO SUCCESS

Do any of the following scenarios sound familiar?

- Your town wants a Web site and a student from the local high school has volunteered to set it up and maintain it for you.
- You have a retired computer technician in town willing to donate her time to network your computers and set you up with Internet access.
- The selectboard wants to update the old computer used by the town clerk and is looking for a volunteer to help out with the purchase and set-up. None of the elected officials knows enough about computers to feel comfortable doing the upgrade.
- The treasurer knows someone in town willing to donate time to set up an accounting application using Excel. He has a new computer but doesn't know how to use Excel very well and has been keeping the books manually.

In each case, I would advise you to hold off on getting the volunteers started until more research is done on whether or not the projects are worthwhile. Each of them has the very real potential to leave the Town unable to make good use of the volunteers' talents, due to a lack of time, resources, knowledge or a combination of all three.

When is it a good idea to use volunteers for technology projects? Technology can be pretty cranky at times and present a challenge even to professionals, let alone even the more advanced users. For small towns with smaller budgets it is very tempting to either search for volunteers within the community or accept offers of free assistance when there is a technology project that seems to be a good fit for someone perceived as "knowledgeable" or an "expert." I offer the following advice:

1. Be sure that the volunteer has the right credentials and can indeed handle the project.

Double-check the abilities and knowledge of a potential technology volunteer. Don't let a project get started and left unfinished or fail to meet the town's expectations because the individual was in way over his or her head. Your responsibility to the town is to be sure that your objective can be met and the project successfully completed whether it is paid for or not. Too often, volunteers are given more latitude because they are donating their time; the fact is, you are accountable to the taxpayers and acquiring a shoddy product or service (even if it is free) is irresponsible. Bad technology can be counter-productive, creating more problems down the road.

2. Avoid using volunteers for projects that are not limited in scope and that will require future commitments of time.

If a hardware or software project requires future maintenance, think carefully about either committing funds to hire a professional or be sure you have a back-up plan if the volunteer cannot continue his or her commitment to the town. At the very least, have the volunteer develop documentation so that when someone else has to take over the maintenance or do any upgrading, there will be something to reference.

Longer-term relationships can be very awkward for both parties. Without careful pre-planning, the town may find that it is not entirely happy with the volunteer's work, but embarrassed to say so and unable to terminate the free services without hurt feelings. Or the volunteer may find that the

*(Continued on next page)*

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## TECH CHECK -

*(Continued from previous page)*

town is calling constantly for help, taking advantage of their goodwill and perhaps limited time. In either of these cases, the volunteer experience is not beneficial for either the town or the volunteer.

Consulting for a project may be a good use of a volunteer, provided they have the right background for the project. For example, using a retired network engineer to assist with developing a network is reasonable and will allow both parties to complete the project within a designated period of time.

*3. Have a town official available to oversee the progress of the project.*

Whoever is ultimately responsible for completion of the project must monitor the progress and performance. A volunteer service is no different from a paid or contracted service: accountability is essential. It is easy to hand a project over and not think about it again until it is completed. But, it is difficult to get a final product that is not what you had in mind, and have to explain to the volunteer who just spent hours working for nothing that it needs to be done over. Again, the volunteer experience is not a mutually rewarding one for the town and volunteer.

*4. Other Considerations*

Limiting donated services can also avoid tough political situations as well. Consider the Web site developer volunteer who may have some very strong opinions about a particular bond vote and is concerned about how information is presented to the taxpayers. Local officials want control over the content and format of data shown on the Web site, but the volunteer may have other ideas.

With these considerations in mind, a Town should be able to benefit from occasional volunteer assistance with its technology needs. Much of the advice dispensed here is applicable to other areas of town operations as well. After all, if we are going to put volunteers to work, we owe it to our town and to the volunteers to have the projects well planned in advance, the volunteers' abilities matched with the tasks at hand, and good oversight of the project once it is underway.

*- Michael Gilbar, Director, VLCT  
Administrative Services*



# Classifieds

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**Dot Matrix Printer,** Epson LQ-2070, and a **Compaq Deskpro Windows 95 computer** (no monitor). Both work well. FREE. **Large flat file** for maps, etc. Very good condition, five, 2 3/4" drawers, 42" D x 53.5" W x 17" H, on a six-inch base. \$300. Call Cyndi Humphrey, Town Administrator, Jericho, 802/899-9970. (10-21; rev. 1-04)

**Miscellaneous Road Equipment.** The Town of Holland, Vt. has for sale: 8' Frink tailgate sander in good condition; 11' Tenco plow in good condition; and a chain for V-box sander 92 link, outside to outside 23 1/4", inside to inside 19 1/2", center to center pin 2 1/4". For information, call the Holland Road Commissioner at 802/895-2923. All items sold as is. (12-14)

## HELP WANTED

**Public Works Director.** Search Reopened. The Town of Shelburne, Vt. is creating the position of Public Works Director. The Director is responsible for the coordination and oversight of the Highway, Water and Wastewater Divisions and their infrastructure. The Director will represent the Town at regional and state meetings and will oversee municipal projects. The successful candidate must exhibit experience as a team player and be quality driven. An engineering degree and 10 years of related experience is required, with at least two years as a supervisor. Salary range \$49,500-\$62,700. Excellent benefit package. Send letter of interest and resume to Paul W. Bohne III, Town Manager, P.O. Box 88, Shelburne, VT 05482. E-mail pbohne@shelburnevt.org. **Applications accepted until filled.** (11-24)

**Water and Sewer Department Employee.** The Town of Manchester, Vt. is looking for an individual to fill a position in the municipal water and sewer department. Candidate will be able to perform all duties necessary to the operation and maintenance of a municipal water treatment/distribution system, and

wastewater collection/treatment system. Must have or be willing to obtain a Vermont Class 1 Water System Operator Certification and a Vermont Grade 1DM Wastewater Operator Certification. Mechanical, construction, and lab analysis experience, good communications and public relation skills all desirable. Ideal candidate will have a CDL and be able to handle physical labor and operate heavy equipment. Salary depends on qualifications. Please send resumes **by February 28, 2005**, to Town Manager, 6039 Main Street, Manchester Center, VT 05255. (12-10)

**Specialist, Water Resources and Land Use.** The VLCT Municipal Assistance Center has an immediate need for a specialist to provide municipal governments with technical assistance for implementing water quality protection strategies. Responsibilities include developing model zoning bylaws and ordinances, delivering presentations to local boards and commissions, conducting research on best practices and potential funding for remediation projects, and coordinating activities among organizations with similar missions. Excellent communication skills, detailed knowledge of water quality protection strategies, and familiarity with municipal planning techniques are essential. Bachelor's degree in relevant discipline required, advanced degree preferred. For a complete job description, visit [www.vlct.org](http://www.vlct.org) under classifieds. Salary DOQ and includes an excellent benefits package. Please send cover letter and resumé to: Human Resources, Vermont League of Cities & Towns, 89 Main Street, Suite 4, Montpelier, VT 05602, or via e-mail to [jobsearch@vlct.org](mailto:jobsearch@vlct.org) with Specialist as the subject line. **Applications accepted until filled.** Equal Opportunity Employer. (1-04)

**Police Officer.** The Richmond, Vt., Police Department is accepting applications for the position of Patrol Officer. Applicants must be a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years of age; a high school graduate or equivalent and must have a valid Vermont driver's license. Preferred, but not a requirement, are applicants that are full-time certified

Vermont police officers or certifiable by the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council. Starting pay is commensurate with experience. The Town of Richmond provides benefits that include paid vacation, paid sick leave, personal day(s), paid holidays, retirement plan, on call pay and full medical benefits. To obtain a job application, please send a letter of interest and resume to: Chief William J. Miller, Richmond Police Dept., P.O. Box 285, Richmond, VT 05477. Application deadline is **January 31, 2005**. Equal Opportunity Employer. (1-05)

**Municipal Manager.** The Town and Village of Northfield, Vt. (population 5,804) are accepting applications for a Municipal Manager. Located in central Vermont, Northfield features the nation's oldest private military college, Norwich University, and offers a high quality of life in a classic New England town. The manager is responsible for the daily operations of both the town and village, and manages a \$7 million budget and 32 employees. The manager is accountable to both the selectboard and the village trustees. Candidates should have significant experience in municipal management, excellent interpersonal skills, and working knowledge of public works, personnel, labor relations, municipal utilities, community and economic development. A Bachelor's degree in a relevant field and five years municipal management experience, or equivalent combination of experience and education are required; Master's degree preferred. Hiring range is \$55,000-\$68,000, commensurate with experience. A full job description is available at [www.vlct.org](http://www.vlct.org) under classifieds. Please send resume and cover letter to Northfield Manager Search, VLCT, 89 Main Street, Suite 4, Montpelier, VT 05602. **Resume review will begin March 11, 2005.** Equal Opportunity Employer. (1-13)



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## Calendar

For more information about the following workshops or events, please contact Jessica Hill, VLCT Conference Coordinator, tel., 800/649-7915; e-mail, [jhill@vlct.org](mailto:jhill@vlct.org). Or, visit [www.vlct.org](http://www.vlct.org), select the Calendar, and select a workshop. On-line registration is also available on the Web site for VLCT workshops and events only.

**Wellness Coordinator Workshop.** See article on Page Ten.

**Moderators Town Meeting Tune-up.** Thursday, February 3, 2005, Suzanna's Restaurant, Berlin. Sponsored by the VLCT Municipal Assistance Center. A parliamentarian's paradise, this annual workshop is designed for moderators and selectboard members, both seasoned and new. It will focus on the statutory requirements for town meeting, Robert's Rules of Order, and best practices for making it through the meeting unscathed.

**Underground Damage Prevention / Dig Safe in Vermont.** Friday, February 11, 2005, Skylight Conference Room, Waterbury State Complex, Waterbury. Sponsored by the Vermont Department of Public Service (DPS), this seminar will address avoiding damage to underground utilities such as electricity, gas, telephone and CATV systems, as well as detail aspects of state and federal law that govern excavators when planning and performing excavation activities. Pre-registration for this free, afternoon seminar is required. Call Audrey Lindgren at DPS, 802/828-4047, or e-mail ([audrey.lindgren@state.vt.us](mailto:audrey.lindgren@state.vt.us)) for registration and more information.

**Local Government Day in the Legislature.** Wednesday, February 16, 2005. Capitol Plaza Hotel and Vermont State House, Montpelier. Sponsored by VLCT and the Vermont Municipal Clerks' and Treasurers' Association. A special day at the Vermont State House for local officials. Come hear about the status

of pending legislation from VLCT and VMC&TA representatives, attend legislative hearings, and speak with your representatives in the Vermont Legislature.

**Planning and Zoning Series #3: Conflicts of Interest & Rules of Procedure.**

Thursday, March 10, 2005, Vermont Interactive Television sites throughout the state. Sponsored by the VLCT Municipal Assistance Center and your local regional planning commissions. This evening workshop will focus on how local development review bodies can adopt Rules of Procedure and Conflict of Interest Policies.

**Town Health Officers Workshop.**

Thursday, March 16, 2005, Suzanna's Restaurant, Berlin. Sponsored by the VLCT Municipal Assistance Center. This annual workshop will focus on general topics such as the authority of the health officer and the process for issuing health orders, as well as timely topics such as septic regulations.