

VLCT NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE VERMONT LEAGUE OF CITIES & TOWNS

SERVING AND STRENGTHENING VERMONT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

January 2011

SNOWPLOWING

AVOIDING PLOWING-RELATED CLAIMS

In a typical snowy winter, numerous PACIF members file claims involving snowplows. For the most part, the incidents occur when the plows are either backing or clearing side streets. Every accident must be investigated based on the facts surrounding the accident and the actions of the driver of the municipal vehicle. It is **always** necessary for PACIF to have the opportunity to interview the driver involved in the accident.

BACKING SNOWPLOWS

Backing accidents are caused by many factors, including blind spots, poor visibility, and driver fatigue and inattentiveness. Ideally, drivers of other vehicles will avoid interfering with working snowplows, but this isn't

always the case. Each plow driver must remember that he or she is the one driving the 18-ton dump truck and must remain aware of other vehicles, both moving and stationary.

Here are some strategies for snowplow drivers to avoid vehicle backing accidents.

- All snowplows should be equipped with back-up warning devices that are in good working order and not silenced while the vehicle is in use. Allow the device to sound before you actually reverse.
- Place a warning sign on the back of the vehicle warning motorists that the vehicle may back up.

(continued on next page)

NEW VISION COVERAGE FOR 2011

As part of the Health Trust's continuous effort to provide our members with the highest quality of services at the lowest possible cost, we are partnering with a new vision coverage provider, EyeMed Vision Care, for services starting January 1, 2011.

Changing to EyeMed resulted in an average 30 percent savings in vision premiums to members. Other reasons for the switch include:

- continued access to your current independent provider;
- access to national leading retail chains such as Lenscrafters, Pearle Vision, Target, Sears, and JC Penney Optical;
- 40 percent discounts for an additional pair of prescription eyewear with no

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RUSSIAN MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS VISIT VLCT



The Vermont Council on World Affairs' Open World Program enables young Eurasian elected officials and civic leaders to observe the American democratic system firsthand. Officials from Yaroslavl, Russia – Burlington's sister city – discussed municipal issues with VLCT Advocacy staff in December as part of their "Accountable Governance" theme-based visit to the U.S.

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SNOWPLOWING

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- Back up very slowly to give other vehicles time to react if they need to.
- If a “helper” is riding along, he or she **must get out of the vehicle and act as a spotter during backing activities**. Believe it or not, several members reported backing incidents where a ride-along helper failed to get out of the vehicle and spot for the driver.
- Look in your mirrors frequently. Lean to see as much in your mirrors as possible.
- Make a mental note of all the vehicles around you as you drive. If you see a motorist stop or turn off, you can cross that motorist off the list. If not, that vehicle is likely hiding in your blind spots. Use curves in the road to help you see vehicles behind you.
- At night, use reflected light from snow banks or trees as indicators that a vehicle is behind you.
- Stop and let motorists pass before you begin clearing an intersection. Remember that some motorists may be confused and may not react the way you think they should.
- When purchasing new equipment, consider investing in back-up camera devices.
- If you operate a snowplow or any other heavy equipment during snow storms, it is not a matter of **if** a motorist will come too close to you, but **when**.



PLOWING SIDE STREETS

Side streets are especially challenging if homeowners’ vehicles are parked on both sides of the street, leaving large snowplows little room to maneuver. Even the most careful plow driver, attempting to push very deep snow, can unavoidably slide into a parked vehicle. Consider some of the following ways municipalities can prevent these situations and allow snowplow drivers to perform their duty to open streets and make them safe for travel.

- Pass an ordinance that requires homeowners to park completely off-street, if possible, or to park only on even or odd sides of streets when off-street parking is not available. This will allow snowplows to clear a passage on one side of the street.
- Use newsletters, emails, and websites to notify residents of your municipal regulations or recommendations regarding street parking during snow emergencies. Also advise residents that your municipality cannot be held responsible for damage to structures and plants or trees placed within the right of way.
- If on-street parking is allowed, notify residents that they should make an effort to clear or flag their vehicles so plow drivers can see them.
- Notify drivers that they should never plow a street or alley when leaning vegetation obstructs their view of the right of way or when the vehicle is too large to safely maneuver the street.
- Do not allow other municipal vehicles to travel side streets until the streets have been cleared and these vehicles can safely maneuver on them.



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TOWN MEETING 2011

PREPARING FOR A SUCCESSFUL TOWN MEETING

Vermont's next annual town meeting will be on Tuesday, March 1, 2011. Each town's meeting will start at the time designated by the legislative body unless the municipality has previously voted to set a time for its meeting. 17 V.S.A. § 2655. A town can vote to start town meeting on the Saturday, Sunday, or Monday preceding the first Tuesday in March. On that day, the town can conduct any business that does not require Australian ballot vote. If the meeting is started on Saturday, Sunday, or Monday, it must be adjourned to Tuesday to conduct Australian ballot voting. 17 V.S.A. § 2640(b).

For towns holding their meeting on March 1, the first day to begin posting the town meeting warning and notice will be Thursday, January 20, 2011. The last day to begin posting the warning and notice will be Sunday, January 30, 2011. The warning and notice must be posted in at least two public places in the town and in or near the town clerk's office. 17 V.S.A. § 2641(a). Please note that there is no statute extending the Sunday posting deadline to Monday. By Saturday, February 19, 2011, the warning (but not the notice) must be published in the town report or distributed in written form to all town or city postal patrons. Alternatively, the warning may be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the municipality no later than Thursday, February 24, 2011. 17 V.S.A. § 2641(b).

The warning must be accompanied by a notice that includes information on voter registration, early or absentee voting where applicable, and other appropriate information. 17 V.S.A. § 2642(b). Sample notices are available from the Vermont Secretary of State at <http://vermont-elections.org/elections1/townmeetingwarn.html>.

In drafting the warning, the selectboard should keep these tips in mind:

- Each article should be written to express the intent of the drafters as precisely as possible. Avoid unnecessary words and strive to be as clear.

- If a statute prescribes specific language for an article, that language must be used. If a statute *doesn't* prescribe specific language, try to track the statutory language as closely as possible and make reference to the statute.
- Each article dealing with a public question or money vote should be stated in the form of a question that can be answered "yes" or "no." This is a requirement for public questions voted by Australian ballot and is a good practice for floor voting.
- Don't add comments such as "by petition" or "nonbinding." Statute prohibits the warning from including any opinion or comment by any town body or officer or other person on the matter to be voted on. 17 V.S.A. § 2666.
- Consult with the town clerk and moderator before signing and posting the warning.

The voters' deadline for submission of petitioned articles will be Thursday, January 20, 2011. The petition must be signed by at

least five percent of the voters of the municipality and filed with the municipal clerk. 17 V.S.A. § 2642(a). Not every petitioned article has to be included in the warning. The selectboard is only legally obligated to warn a petitioned article when the purpose stated in the petition "sets forth a clear right which is within the province of the town meeting to grant or refuse through its vote." *Royalton Taxpayers' Protective Assn. v. Was-smansdorf*, 128 Vt. 153 (1960).

Keep in mind that the selectboard can warn petitioned advisory articles but is not legally obligated to do so. This discretion allows the selectboard to balance the efficient transaction of town business with the provision of a local forum for discussing state and national issues. *Clift v. City of South Burlington*, 181 Vt. 571 (2007). Petitioners occasionally make mistakes in preparing petitions and drafting proposed warning articles. If the petition is submitted on time, has the minimum number of signatures, and requests an article that the selectboard has no discretion to refuse, we recommend that you accept the petition and work with the petitioners to redraft the

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SUCCESSFUL TOWN MEETING

(continued from previous page)

article using the correct language. Check with the VLCT Municipal Assistance Center if you have any questions about your obligation to warn a petitioned article.

There are two mandatory items of business that must be conducted at town meeting: election of officers and adoption of a budget. The failure to hold an election does not create a vacancy under 24 V.S.A. § 961

will be amended until the voters approve it. If the budget does not pass, the floor meeting can be recessed to a date and time certain when the article will be taken up again. If a floor meeting is closed without an approved budget, a special meeting will have to be called. If the rejected budget was voted on by Australian ballot, the legislative body must follow the provisions of 17 V.S.A. § 2680(c) in preparing and submitting a new budget to the voters.

There is tremendous variation in municipal budget articles, probably the most important articles considered at every town

from the mandate that a municipality “express in its vote the specific amounts, or the rate on a dollar of the grand list, to be appropriated for laying out and repairing highways and for other necessary town expenses.” On the basis of these two categories, some towns vote separate general fund and highway budgets. VLCT doesn’t believe two separate general fund and highway fund budget articles are legally necessary so long as highway funds are accurately accounted for within the general fund.

VLCT recommends this form for the budget article:

Shall the voters approve total general fund expenditures of \$_____, of which \$_____ shall be raised by taxes and \$_____ by non-tax revenues?

This is an optional highway fund article for Towns that vote separate general and highway fund budgets:

Shall the voters approve total highway fund expenditures of \$_____ of which \$_____ shall be raised by taxes and \$_____ by non-tax revenues?

Tough economic times have brought more attention to social service agency appropriations. The authority to vote on these appropriations at town meeting is found at 24 V.S.A. § 2691. There are two ways for a social service appropriation article to appear on the warning: with a petition submitted in accordance with 17 V.S.A. § 2642 or by the selectboard’s own motion. Some selectboards will not include any social service agency appropriation article that is not supported by a petition. Other selectboards will allow some non-petitioned articles, but not others. Regardless of your approach, every selectboard should have a written policy to manage social service agency requests. A model social service agency appropriation policy is available from VLCT at <http://resources.vlct.org/u/Model%20Social%20Service%20Agency%20Policy%20November%202009.pdf>. Keep in mind that an agency receiving an appropriation does not have to be physically located in the town, so long as it provides services to town residents. *Addison County Community Action Group v. City of Vergennes*, 152 Vt. 161 (1989).

*Jim Barlow, Senior Staff Attorney
VLCT Municipal Assistance Center*

“The selectboard is only legally obligated to warn a petitioned article when the purpose stated in the petition “sets forth a clear right which is within the province of the town meeting to grant or refuse through its vote.”

and a special town meeting will have to be called to conduct an election for the office. *Jenney v. Alden*, 79 Vt. 156 (1906). The person currently holding the office will serve until a successor is chosen. 24 V.S.A. § 2646.

If your municipal budget is voted from the floor, statute assumes that the budget

meeting. About a half billion dollars are appropriated by Vermont local government each year on the basis of the words, “A town shall vote such sums of money as it deems necessary for the interest of its inhabitants and for the prosecution and defense of the common rights.” 17 V.S.A. § 2664. There is little other guidance in the statute apart

NEED A WRITTEN LEGAL OPINION?

LOOKING FOR EXPERTISE DRAFTING A NEW ORDINANCE?

NEED HELP UPDATING THAT PERSONNEL POLICY?

VLCT’s attorneys can provide your municipality with legal assistance at highly competitive rates. Please call **Abby Friedman** for more information at **1-800-649-7915**.

SAMPLE PROJECTS:

- Water & Sewer Ordinances
- Zoning Bylaws
- Municipal Charter Amendments
- Highway Ordinances





ASK THE LEAGUE

ZONING PERMIT NOT RECORDED; AMENDING AN ORDINANCE; WHICH ROADS GET PLOWED

What are the consequences when a zoning permit isn't recorded in the land records?

The possible consequences are the inability to enforce the permit and any permit conditions. According to 24 V.S.A. § 4449, after the administrative officer issues a zoning permit, he or she must complete the process by taking several actions. They include delivering a copy of the permit to the listers and posting the permit in at least one public place until the 15-day appeal period expires. These actions must occur within three days of issuing the zoning permit. In addition, within 30 days of issuing the zoning permit (or any municipal land use permit as defined in 24 V.S.A. §4303 (11)), the administrative officer (or appropriate municipal official) must:

- deliver the original or a legible copy of the municipal land use permit or no-

tice of violation or a notice of municipal land use permit (also called a memorandum of municipal action), outlined in 24 V.S.A. § 1154(c) to the town clerk for recording in the municipal land records; *and*

- file a copy of the permit in the municipal office where all municipal land use permits are kept, such as a planning or zoning office.

If the administrative officer or appropriate official fails to deliver a copy of the permit or notice of permit to the municipal clerk and it is not recorded in the land records, “[n]o action, injunction, or other enforcement proceeding may be instituted to enforce an alleged violation of a municipal land use permit[.]” 24 V.S.A. § 4454.

*Stephanie Smith, AICP, Senior Associate
VLCT Municipal Assistance Center*

Our Selectboard recently amended an ordinance. What are the notice and posting requirements?

The first step a selectboard must take after adopting an amendment to an ordinance is to record its action of adoption and the amended ordinance into its meeting minutes. The next step is public notice. Copies of the amended ordinance must be posted in five conspicuous places in town. This should include those places the town ordinarily uses to post its community announcements. The final step is to publish the full text of the amended ordinance or a concise summary of it in a newspaper of general circulation in the town not less than 14 days following its date of adoption. Depending on the size of your amended ordinance,

(continued on next page)

It's Not Too Soon to Plan for 2011 Projects. . . Let us Help

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Just type "VLCT Advocacy" in the Facebook search box, then click on the like button to begin receiving our status updates.





ASK THE LEAGUE

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few newspapers will have the room, and fewer towns will want to pay the price of publishing an entire ordinance. The alternative – publishing a concise summary – requires “a statement of purpose, principal provisions, and table of contents or list of section headings ... (a)long with ... a reference to a place within the municipality where the full text may be examined ... citizens’ rights to petition for a vote on the ordinance or rule at an annual or special meeting as provided in section 1973 of this title, and ... the name, address and telephone number of a person with knowledge of the ordinance or rule who is available to answer questions about it.” 24 V.S.A. § 1972(a). VLCT’s Municipal Assistance Center has developed the model newspaper notice (to the right) to help you the next time an ordinance is amended. For reasons both practical and legal, it’s a good idea for the town to also post the notice alongside the full text of the amended ordinance in the five conspicuous places in town.

*Garrett Baxter, Staff Attorney
VLCT Municipal Assistance Center*

What roads are towns required to plow in the winter?

A town must keep class 1 highways “in good and sufficient repair during all seasons of the year.” 19 V.S.A. § 310(a). Accordingly, class 1 highways must be plowed and maintained during the winter.

The selectboard may decide not to plow a class 2 road or a class 3 road in winter based upon “safety considerations for the traveling public and municipal employees.” 19 V.S.A. §§ 302(a)(3)(B), 310(a). If the road was not routinely plowed before July 1, 2000, the selectboard may make such a decision without notice and hearing. 19 V.S.A. § 310(d). If the road was routinely plowed prior to July 1, 2000, the decision can be made only after notice and hearing. 19 V.S.A. §§ 302(a)(3)(B), 310(a). In both instances, an aggrieved property owner may appeal to the Transportation Board. 19 V.S.A. §§ 302(a)(3)(B), 310(a).

A town is not required to plow class 4 highways during the winter. “Class 4 highways may be maintained to the extent required by the necessity of the town, the public good and the convenience of the inhabitants of the town...” 19 V.S.A. §§ 310(b), 711(b). The Municipal Assistance Center

advises towns to spell out which class 4 roads it will plow in the winter, if any, in a written class 4 road policy. A model class 4 roads and trails policy is available in our online Resource Library at <http://resources.vlct.org/>. Please contact us for further assistance at 800-649-7915 or info@vlct.org.

*Abby Friedman, Director
VLCT Municipal Assistance Center*

SAVE THE DATE

Local Government Day in the Legislature takes place on Wednesday, February 16, 2011, starting at 9:00 a.m. at the Capital Plaza Hotel in Montpelier. (Registration begins at 8:15.)

TOWN OF _____, VERMONT

NOTICE OF AMENDMENT OF ORDINANCE

On [insert date], the Selectboard of the Town of _____, Vermont, adopted amendments to the existing “[insert name of ordinance]” pursuant to [insert enabling authority]. This notice is published pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 1972 to inform the public of these amendments and of the citizens’ right to petition for a vote to disapprove these amendments.

SUMMARY OF AMENDMENTS TO ORDINANCE

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the amendments is to promote the public health and safety of the citizens of the Town of _____ by [insert broad policy goals and objectives supporting ordinance’s adoption].

Principal Provisions

- a.** Summarizes for the citizenry what the main amendments to the ordinance seek to accomplish. For example: The amendments bring the Ordinance into compliance with the State law governing by ... In addition, pursuant to the amendments, the Ordinance:
- Imposes civil penalty of \$100.00 per offense;
 - Defines the term...;
 - Makes it a violation to...;
 - Designates the constable as the enforcement officer;
 - Adds a severability clause so that if any section is found defective, the rest of the ordinance will survive.

Table of Contents or List of Section Headings Amended [insert the names of the sections amended; for example]:

Article I General Provisions
Article II Definitions
Article III Etc.

FULL TEXT

The full text of the Ordinance is available at the Town Clerk’s office at [insert address] in the Town of _____, Vermont and may be examined during regular office hours.

CITIZENS’ RIGHT TO PETITION FOR VOTE

Title 24 V.S.A. § 1973 grants citizens the right to petition for a vote at a special or annual Town Meeting to disapprove ordinance amendments adopted by the Selectboard. To exercise this right, citizens must present to the Selectboard or the Town Clerk a petition for a vote on the question of disapproving the amendments signed by not less than five percent (5%) of the Town’s qualified voters. The petition must be presented within forty-four (44) days following the date of the adoption of the amendments. Unless a petition requesting a vote is filed pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 1973, the amended “[insert name of ordinance]” shall become effective sixty (60) days from the date of said adoption.

PERSON TO CONTACT

Additional information pertaining to this Ordinance may be obtained by contacting the _____, Town Clerk, at the Town office located at [insert address] or by calling (802) xxx-xxx during regular office hours.

2011 WELLNESS LEADER

The 2011 Wellness Leader program gets off to a rousing start with six Wellness Workshops taking place around the state on Wednesdays and Thursdays between January 13 and 27. We encourage not only all Health Trust wellness coordinators and contacts, but also municipal managers, health and safety committee members, and selectboard members to attend. This year's Wellness Leader allows municipalities to be creative in choosing or designing their pedometer programs and to be more flexible in when they schedule the pedometer and Keep It Off programs.

As in previous years, scoring will be based on a combination of management-level support and employee-level participation in health-enhancing behaviors. Also as in the past, the payback will be up to four percent of the municipality's Health Trust premium. In a departure from previous years, the program will run through December 31, so checks for the payback will be distributed in January rather than in December. Please also note that the 2011 Wellness Leader payback will be contingent on the municipality remaining in the Health Trust for 2012.

WC REWARDS DEADLINE: MONDAY FEBRUARY 28, 2011

PACIF members involved in the Workers' Comp Rewards program should keep in mind that your completed binder needs to be in VLCT's hands by Monday, February 28. That means mailing it or handing it to your Loss Control consultant no later than Friday, February 25. So start filling that binder now! If you have any questions, contact your Loss Control consultant or call Joe Damiata at 800-649-7915.

THE POLICE POLICY MANUAL IS COMING TO A TRAINING NEAR YOU

VLCT's *Law Enforcement Policies, Procedures and Best Police Practices* manual is being rolled out to member municipalities in conjunction with trainings across the state. Because the training is a crucial part of understanding and implementing the policies, we require at least one trainer from each member's law enforcement department to attend a training. In fact, we encourage as many officers as wish to attend to do so. Look in your postal mail for a flier announcing dates and locations. If you have any questions, call Joe Damiata at 800-649-7915 or email him at jdamiata@vlct.org.

2011 VISION COVERAGE

(continued from page 1)

same day or same doctor purchase required;

- contact lens fit and follow-ups no longer come out of the materials benefit;
- customer service available seven days a week; and
- personalized ID cards.

EyeMed offers a wide provider network; however, it is different from the VSP network in that it currently has many large, retail-associated providers and relatively few independent vision care professionals. In order to minimize the inconvenience of this to our subscribers, we made two specific arrangements with EyeMed. First, EyeMed will offer a particularly rich out-of-network benefit to decrease the cost of staying with a provider who is not in the EyeMed network. Second, EyeMed will expand its provider network in Vermont.



We look forward to working with EyeMed to provide members and subscribers with the best value. For information about EyeMed's services and a list of current in-network providers in and near Vermont, visit www.eyemedvisioncare.com. For any questions regarding the EyeMed plans, coverage, or providers, please contact Kelley Avery or your VLCT Member Relations representative at 800-649-7915.

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2010 RMS CALENDAR

VLCT Health Trust's 2011 Wellness Initiatives Workshops. Two Wednesdays and three Thursdays in January at the locations listed below. For wellness coordinators, safety and wellness committee members, Health Trust contacts, selectboard members, and municipal managers. Come and learn how your municipality can earn back as much as four percent of its health insurance premium while fostering healthy behaviors among employees and their covered family members. Also pick up pre-ordered pedometers and other materials and learn about the range of health and wellness resources available through the VLCT Health Trust. If you don't have the sign-up form that Heidi Joyce emailed in November, please reserve your place before December 10 by downloading the form from the Wellness Initiatives page at www.vlct.org and faxing it to 802-229-2211, attn: Heidi Joyce.

**Thursday, January 13, 9 a.m. to noon,
VLCT Office, Montpelier**

**Thursday, January 13, noon to 4 p.m.,
VLCT Office, Montpelier**

**Wednesday, January 19, 9 a.m. to noon,
Holiday Inn, Brattleboro**

**Thursday, January 20, 9 a.m. to noon,
Holiday Inn, Rutland**

**Wednesday, January 26, 9 a.m. to noon,
Hampton Inn, Colchester**

**Thursday, January 27, 9 a.m. to noon,
Lyndon Industrial Park**



Combustible Dust Training. January 25, 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., 81 Demeritt Place (Green Mountain Coffee Roasters), Waterbury. Presented by Vermont Partnership in Safety. Combustible dusts are fine particles that present an explosion hazard when suspended in air under certain conditions. A dust explosion can be catastrophic and cause employee deaths or injuries and destruction of entire buildings. Representatives from FM-Global® will discuss the hazards of combustible dust in work areas and help attendees understand how and why dust explodes, recognize potential dust explosion hazards at your facility, and understand the damage potential as well as proven methods of prevention and protection. **Free** to all. To register, email pcrawford@vtc.edu.

WC Rewards deadline. Monday, February 28, 2011, at the VLCT office in Montpelier. PACIF members in the Workers' Compensation Rewards program should arrange to turn in their completed binders with all supporting documentation to their Loss Control consultant on or before Friday February 25.

The 9th Vermont Workplace Safety Conference and Governor's Awards. May 12, 2011, 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., DoubleTree Hotel and Conference Center, 1117 Williston Road, Burlington. An excellent professional development opportunity for HR and Safety staff. Topics include Home Grown "Safety and Accountability For Everyone" (S.A.F.E) Policy and Reward Program, Workplace Risk Factors for Carpal Tunnel and Other Ergonomic Injuries, OSHA Updates, Top 10 Injuries/Violations Panel, and the Governor's Safety Awards. Sponsored by the Partnership in Safety (Project WorkSafe, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, and Vermont Small Business Development Center), VELCO, Cabot Creamery, and the Vermont Safety and Health Council. No cost to register for Governor's Safety Awards only. Full conference registration: \$70 early bird (before April 15); \$80 regular. Register at vtsbdc.centerdynamics.com/workshop.aspx?ekey=40310001.



Tips for making the most of your health benefits

To Your HEALTH



HT SUBSCRIBERS: WHO YA GONNA CALL?

Have you ever struggled to find time in the middle of your work day to address personal medical or insurance issues that require calling an office during work

hours? Have you ever wished for someone to help you cut through bureaucratic red tape, or to guide your way through a forest of confusing options? Although

VLCT's Member Relations representatives have in the past done their best to help handle problems such as these, their expertise is not truly in this area. However, as of January 1, 2011, Health Trust members and subscribers have a new resource which can make a big difference.

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- Remote Deposit
- Flexible Certificate of Deposit
- Loans

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Shelley: 802-865-1644; squinn@mbvt.com | Jeanie: 802-236-1022; jkelly@mbvt.com

Member FDIC Equal Housing Lender



Health Advocate, Inc. is the nation's leading independent healthcare advocacy and assistance company. Its employees speak up on behalf of Health Trust subscribers who don't have enough time or resources to pursue issues or resolve problems involving their health care or insurance. Personal health advocates, who are typically **registered nurses assisted by medical directors and benefits specialists**, are on call 24/7 to help members navigate the healthcare system and resolve clinical, insurance, and administrative issues. These advocates have extensive expertise in the field, including in-depth knowledge of health and related insurance policies and procedures, and they can draw on established relationships in the healthcare industry. Best of all, these services are available **at no additional cost**

(continued on next page)



To Your Health

(continued from previous page)

to members or employees.

When you call a personal health advocate, he or she will provide the level of help you request (and authorize), from answering a few simple questions to spending whatever time is required to research and resolve a serious issue completely and confidentially. If the issue takes time to handle, they keep you apprised of their progress via phone or email – whichever you prefer. They can't decide everything for you, but they help you make informed choices and decisions. And each issue you call about will be handled by one advocate from start to finish, so you won't get another bureaucratic runaround.

This service is available to all VLCT Health Trust subscribers, whether the problem at hand involves a covered person or another household member. For example, if a subscriber has a live-in father-in-law who has a problem with the Veteran's Administration healthcare system, he or she can call Health Advocate to troubleshoot the situation. See **the upper right box** for a list of some of this program's features. To contact Health Advocate directly, members and subscribers can call 1-866-695-8622 or email answers@HealthAdvocate.com. Health Trust contacts can request more information and marketing materials from VLCT's Member Relations team at 800-649-7915 or by emailing Susan Benoit at sbenoit@vlct.org.

*Ione L. Minot, Marketing Specialist
Risk Management Services*

FEATURES OF HEALTH ADVOCATE, INC.'S CORE ADVOCACY SERVICES

- A Personal Health Advocate is assigned to each subscriber
- Coverage extends to spouse, dependent children, parents, and parents-in-law
- Available 24 hours and 7 days a week via a toll-free assistance hotline
- Insurance-related services include
 - Resolving insurance claims
 - Assisting with correcting billing errors
 - Navigating within an insurance company
 - Helping log on to and use the insurer's website
- Clinical care-related services include
 - Finding the best doctors and hospitals
 - Helping members prepare for visits with their healthcare providers
 - Locating and researching treatments for a medical condition
 - Securing second opinions
 - Scheduling appointments with hard-to-reach specialists
- Self care-related services include
 - Helping members better understand their serious or chronic conditions
 - Answering questions and providing information about medical terms, tests, medications, and treatments
- Quality of life services include
 - Coordinating assistance from various providers, agencies, and organizations
 - Identifying eldercare resources
 - Helping research transportation opportunities to and from clinical services

HEALTH ADVOCATES AT WORK

A colleague who has had the Health Advocate benefit for the past year recommended it to Health Trust administrators based on his consistently positive experiences with it. For example, his wife once took their eight-year-old son to the emergency room for a severe stomach ache. After being checked in and while waiting to be seen by a doctor, the boy realized his pains had stopped. The mother notified the woman at the desk and took her son home. A few weeks later, the family received a bill which included several hundred dollars for seeing the doctor. Knowing that this was an error but not wanting to take it up with the hospital's billing department himself, the father called and explained the problem to a personal health advocate. She solved the error and emailed him to let him know when to expect a corrected invoice. If any problem had remained, he knew how to contact the same advocate to follow up.

Impressed with this and other success stories, the VLCT Health Trust nonetheless did its homework in advance of contracting with Health Advocate, Inc., by arranging to have a member municipality test it. Starting in September, City of Montpelier employees have had full access to the service. In order to get up and running, the company needed to enter the details of Montpelier's health plans and funding mechanisms in its system. Since then, Sharon Blatchford, Montpelier's Human Resources and Accounting Specialist, has heard positive feedback from employees who used health advocates to resolve claim issues. "Once Health Advocate had all of our plan structures in place, and our employees got the hang of explaining what they wanted," said Sharon, "people have generally been satisfied with the service."



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INTRINSIC HEALTH COACHING: SUBTLE, YET POWERFUL

An irony of modern American life is that while most of us know of many things we can do – or not do – to be healthier, few of us choose to live healthily on a daily basis. Making healthy choices often means swimming upstream, figuratively, in a variety of ways: breaking old habits is challenging, finding enough time to exercise or prepare fresh foods can be difficult, we see most

United States currently has the highest rates of overweight or obese people in its history. For the first time ever, this country’s children face an unhealthier future than their parents’ generation did.

Why don’t more people make healthy life choices? There are many answers, and they vary – from person to person, and sometimes from day to day. Often the rea-

fect resource. In this context, the “coach” is working for a team of one: You. He or she is neither “a person who teaches and trains the members of a sports team and makes decisions about how the team plays during games,” nor “a private teacher who gives someone lessons in a particular subject,” as the online Merriam-Webster’s Learner’s Dictionary defines the word. Rather, this

“ Intrinsic coaching helps you see your desires, strengths, pitfalls, blockages, and options more clearly so you can move forward into a more successful future. ”

other people modeling unhealthy behaviors, and the commercial food industry constantly entices us to consume its highly processed and often unhealthful products. As a result, we succumb to stress, eat and drink unhealthily, are physically inactive, and become overweight. More than 50 percent of Americans are susceptible to at least one of three generally preventable conditions – heart disease, diabetes, and stroke – and the

sons involve factors outside ourselves, such as a work or school schedule. Other reasons can be so deeply rooted inside ourselves that we can’t see them clearly to tackle them.

Whatever the reasons that keep us from making healthy changes in our lives, getting past them can be easier with the right kind of help. That’s where a life coach, or in the case of physical and mental wellbeing, specifically a health coach, can be the per-

kind of coach is skilled at helping you identify the most troubling aspects of a personal issue, discover effective ways to remove or minimize barriers to change, and make and

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VLCT NEWS ONLINE

We still encourage all subscribers, especially single-use readers, to consider switching from paper copies to online viewing of the *VLCT News*. The benefits are many: a smaller carbon footprint, lower printing and postage costs, less paper used, full-color rendering of color photographs, and immediate access to web links.

Of course, we understand that some people simply prefer the portability, look and feel of a paper copy, and we won’t take that away from you. In fact, we love it when a paper copy is passed around and many readers can benefit from it. So if you want to keep getting the *VLCT News* on paper, we hope you will make it available for others to read.

If you are ready to switch to accessing the *VLCT News* completely online, please email us so we can remove you from our postal mailing list and make sure that your correct email address is on our *News* email list.

To view the current *VLCT News* or the archives, please go to www.vlct.org/aboutvlct/vlctnews/.



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HEALTH COACHING

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sustain positive changes in your life.

One form of life coaching is Intrinsic Coaching®, which enhances the coachee's process of change by starting with the coachee's own (intrinsic) thoughts and values. The premise is that you have the answers inside of you, and your coach helps you discover your own unique solutions. According to the website of Totally Coached, Inc., "Intrinsic Coaches don't tell; they elicit, with the goal of helping you think intrinsically. First, they focus their attention on your thinking processes, then they follow those thoughts to help you figure things out for yourself." Intrinsic coaching helps you see your desires, strengths, pitfalls, blockages, and options more clearly so you can move forward into a more successful future.

When Heidi Joyce, VLCT's Senior Health Promotion Consultant, learned of intrinsic coaching, she saw that it could help people insured through the VLCT Health Trust to make healthy changes in their lives. The training was a 12-week course with the instructor (a coach-mentor), Heidi, and 11 other participants meeting in a two-hour teleconference every week where they discussed their assigned reading

as well as any coaching opportunities they had experienced through the week. The instructor also worked with them individually to help each student learn how to draw "best thinking" out of their coachees and foster the skills necessary for making sustainable decisions.

What does all this mean for you? Heidi will develop her intrinsic coaching skills during health screenings to help people achieve their best thinking about what they truly want for themselves. She will also incorporate health coaching into the pedometer (exercise) and Keep It Off (nutrition) programs to help Healthy Lifestyle Rewards participants achieve the goals they seek. So if you are ready to move beyond wishing and into action, let Heidi know!

NEW IRS MILEAGE RATE

The Internal Revenue Service announced that its optional standard mileage rate for 2011 will be \$0.51 per mile. This rate applies to the use of a personal car, van, pickup, or panel truck for business purposes. The rate is up \$0.01 from 2010. For more information about the reimbursement rate, visit www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=232017,00.html



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JANUARY TRIVIA

Todd Thomas, Ann Meyers, Ida Ravinville, Anja Twite, Diane Judd, Carol Hammond, and Pam Knapp – from Morrisville, Essex, St. Johnsbury, Colchester, Holland, Vernon, and VLCT, respectively – knew that **Holland** was the name of the town that 18th century Vermont legislators chose in lieu of "Elysiana."

We'll increase elevation a bit for this month's query: **Where is "Mountain Mountain?"** Two hints: the Algonquin word for mountain is "adn", and it's in one of more than three score of Vermont towns celebrating their semiquincentennial (250th) anniversary this year.

Email your answer to dgunn@vlct.org. Then watch this space in the highly holistic February issue for the answer.



STAFF NEWS AND NOTES

Since last time, three new employees have learned to navigate the labyrinthine corridors of VLCT Headquarters. Their combined height is 17 feet 10 inches (There's a lesson there.), but individually, they're:

Mike Ortega, born in the Bronx, raised in Queens, and, no surprise, a dedicated N.Y. Yankees fan. But he's also a big fan of Vermont, having lived here for nearly two decades. Much of that time he's spent in the insurance claims arena, which makes him an ideal fit for his position as Claims Representative in VLCT's Property and Casualty Section. When asked if there have been any on-the-job surprises so far, Mike said that he was amazed by how busy the Claims Division is. Outside of the office, Mike is a boy's basketball coach for Milton High School, a taekwondo student of 12 years, having already earned a second degree black belt, and a salsa dancer. Which raises this question: how does a taekwondo-trained salsa dancer with years of basketball street cred move? Answer: Smooooth-*Ki-bap!*-ly.

Brian Nolan, Director of Human Resources. Born and raised in Vermont, Brian joins VLCT with 23 years of HR experience, most recently in the manufacturing

sector with Omya. At VLCT, Brian recruits for open positions, administers benefits for League employees, and works with employee relations, compensation, training, wellness, and other needs of the League. He recalls an ad by multinational company BASF whose tagline was "We don't make the products, we make them better." Brian likens that to his HR role here: to make VLCT better. Outside of work, he enjoys woodworking and furniture-making, skiing, running, and hiking with his wife, two daughters, and springer spaniel. A master of multitasking, Brian does them all at the same time.

Brandy Pombar. The first impression one has of VLCT's new Administrative Assistant-Receptionist is that she radiates more energy than the entire U.S. Department of Energy's Marine and Hydrokinetic Technology Program. The second impression is to add all the wind-based electricity produced in Macedonia, too. Also born and raised in Vermont, Brandy once owned a business in Waterbury, but prefers to focus on her much more productive time as Glee Instructor for the Main Street Middle School in Montpelier. Encouraged by her two daughters, Brandy started it from scratch three years ago;

now the ensemble boasts forty members. She also oversees housing and events for the Vermont Mountaineers collegiate summer baseball team. Sporting events, planning, and communications all lie in her future, as does "saving the world one smile at a time" through her indefatigably ebullient personality.

Welcome, y'all!



Mike Ortega



Brian Nolan



Brandy Pombar



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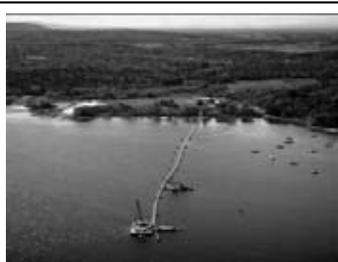
Check out our website at vmbb.org. You can review and print loan schedules of projects that have been financed through VMBB and SRF programs.

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Classifieds

Please visit the VLCT website www.vlct.org/marketplace/classifiedads/ to view more classified ads. You may also submit your ad via an email link on this page of the site.

VLCT NEWS ADVERTISING POLICY

The *VLCT News* welcomes classified advertisements from municipal entities, public agencies, businesses and individuals. This service is free for VLCT members (regular, contributing and associate); the non-member rate is \$41 per ad.

Classified ads are generally limited to 150 words and run for one issue. These ads are also placed on the VLCT website for up to one month.

The *VLCT News* is published eleven times per year (the August and September issues are combined) and reaches readers during the first week of the month.

The deadline for submitting advertisements is the first Friday of the month prior to the issue date. Space is sometimes available for late additions; please feel free to check with the editor for availability.

For more information on placing classified ads in the *VLCT News*, contact classifieds@vlct.org. For details on display advertising, email vlctnews@vlct.org. Information on ad requirements may also be downloaded at www.vlct.org/aboutvlct/vlctnewsletter/advertisinginformation/.

HELP WANTED

Zoning Administrator. The Town of Plainfield, Vt. seeks a part-time Zoning Administrator to issue zoning per-

mits, guide applicants through the permit process, enforce violations, provide administrative support to the Development Review Board, and answer requests for public information regarding municipal land use permits. This position averages 10 hours per week and includes some monthly evening meetings and yearly zoning workshops. Applicants should possess a high degree of tactful interpersonal skill and diplomacy, strong professional and organizational skills, and be able to achieve a harmonious working relationship with the public and town officials. A background in zoning, municipal boards, or Vermont land use planning is a plus; Plainfield residency not required. Salary commensurate with experience. To apply, send a letter of interest and resume **by January 10, 2011** to Plainfield Planning Commission Chair, PO Box 217, Plainfield, VT 05667. For a complete job description, please email plainfieldtc@gmail.com or call 802-454-8461. EOE. (12-9)

Town Manager. The Town of Fair Haven, Vermont seeks an experienced leader for the position of Town Manager. Fair Haven (pop. 2,900) is a rural community located in west-central Vermont. The manager reports to a five-member selectboard and supervises all Town departments. The current operating budget is \$2.90 million; there are 29 full- and part-time employees. The manager is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Town. Responsibilities include financial management and budgeting, community and intergovernmental relations and personnel administration. A full job description is available at <http://fairhavenvt.gov/office2.com>. A working knowledge of municipal practices, budgeting, finance, personnel administration, and public relations is essential. A bachelor's degree and five years of management experience is desired. Salary is negotiable, with an excellent benefit package. Anticipated start-

ing date is March 1, 2011. The Town of Fair Haven is an Equal Opportunity Employer and has the right to reject any or all applications. To apply, please send a confidential cover letter, resume, and three references **by January 7, 2011** to Bill Humphries, Town Manager Search, Town of Fair Haven, 3 North Park Place, Fair Haven, VT 05743. You may also email your application to whumphri@dps.state.vt.us, with Town Manager Search in the subject line. No faxed applications accepted. (12-7)

Bookkeeper. Do you like working with people? The City of St. Albans is seeking a pleasant, hard-working, and creative individual who likes people, is handy with a computer, and is eager to learn to assist the Director of Finance and Admin. and the City Accountant with billing users of City utilities, accounts payable, and personnel-related tasks. High school diploma and double-entry bookkeeping experience required. For more information about this full-time (40 hours per week) position, contact Peg Strait at p.strait@stalbansvt.com. To apply, email your resume to p.strait@stalbansvt.com or surface-mail it to Peg Strait, City of Saint Albans, PO Box 867, St. Albans, VT 05478. E.O.E. (12-2)

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS

If your municipality is planning a future purchase of products or services offered by our advertisers, please consider contacting them, and don't forget to let them know you saw their advertisement in the *VLCT News*. Thank you.



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Calendar

For more information about the following workshops or events, please contact Jessica Hill, Manager, VLCT Administrative Services, tel. (800) 649-7915, or email jhill@vlct.org. Or visit www.vlct.org's Events Calendar and select a workshop for more information or to register online. For non-VLCT events listed below, please contact the individuals directly. (The online registration option is available for VLCT workshops and events only.)

January 11, Holiday Inn Express, Springfield
January 13, Middlebury Inn, Middlebury
Basic Governmental Accounting II (Sponsored by the VLCT Municipal Assistance Center)

Beginning at 12:30 p.m., this half-day workshop will concentrate on financial reporting, including a discussion of ba-

sic monthly financial reports, the financial reports in the annual audit report, and the comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR). Participants will also gain hands-on experience as they work on spreadsheets that will help them understand the accounting entries necessary to prepare the various financial reports discussed.

January 13, VLCT Office, Montpelier
January 19, Holiday Inn Express, Brattleboro
January 20, Holiday Inn, Rutland
January 26, Hampton Inn, Colchester
January 27, NVDA Offices, Lyndonville
Wellness Coordinator Workshops (Sponsored by VLCT Risk Management Services)

Kicking off VLCT's 2011 health promotion programs, this workshop will summarize the wellness incentive programs: the Leader, which returns up to a 4% health insurance premium to municipalities, and the Healthy Lifestyle Rewards, a \$50-\$200 re-

ward for employees and their spouses. Municipal leaders, wellness coordinators and entire safety and wellness committees are welcome! Workshops run from 9 a.m. to noon and include lunch. Free.

February 16, 2011, Capitol Plaza, Montpelier
Local Government Day in the Legislature (Sponsored by VLCT and the Vermont Municipal Clerks' and Treasurers' Association)

Start time: 8:00 a.m. A special day at the Vermont State House for local officials to learn of the status of pending legislation from VLCT and VMCTA representatives, attend legislative hearings, and speak with their representatives and senators at the Vermont Legislature.

Visit our website www.vlct.org/eventscalendar/upcomingevents/ for the most up to date list of events.