

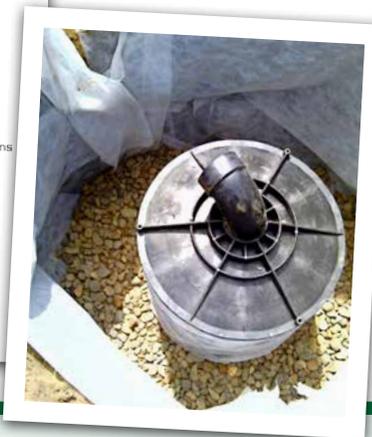
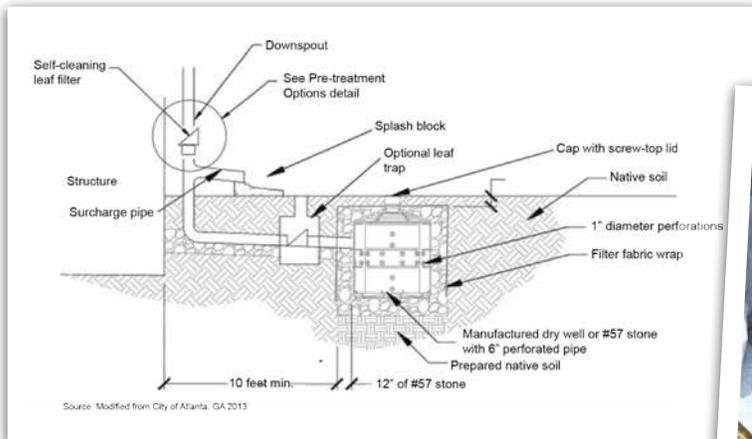
VLCT NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE VERMONT LEAGUE OF CITIES & TOWNS

SERVING AND STRENGTHENING VERMONT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

January 2016

SLOW IT. SPREAD IT. SINK IT! INTRODUCING THE GREEN STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE TOOLKIT



Introduction. Last November, the VLCT Municipal Assistance Center released a model stormwater management bylaw focusing on Low Impact Development (LID) and Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) management practices. This model bylaw – plus the new GSI Simplified Sizing Tool and associated fact sheets developed by Stone Environmental, Inc. – comprise the Green Stormwater

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Left: A drywell includes a manufactured tank, gravel jacket, and filter fabric.

CHANGE IN THE LAW ON SIGNATURES REQUIRED FOR A VOTER-BACKED PETITION

In order to be included on the town meeting warning, a petitioned article must be supported by a petition containing the signatures of at least five percent of the registered voters of the town and must be filed not less than 47 days before the date of town meeting. 17 V.S.A. § 2642(3)(A). In 2016, the 47-day deadline will fall on January 14th. The Municipal Assistance Center and the Secretary of State's Elections Division are both of the opinion that the petitioners for such an article must be given additional time *after* January 14th to obtain such signatures if they are able to get a petition into the clerk's office by that deadline containing the right *number* of signatures.

Take the example of a town that has a total of 200 registered voters. According to 17 V.S.A. § 2642, a petition filed in such town must have the signatures of five percent of that number of voters, or 10 signatures. If the town clerk receives a petition on the January 14th deadline that contains the signatures of 10 people, but only eight of those people are registered voters of the town, the clerk must allow the petitioners additional time in which to obtain at least two more signatures from registered voters.

This change in the law marks a change in the way that voter-backed petitions are handled. In past years there was no opportunity for a petitioner to take additional time past the filing deadline to obtain the requisite number of signatures. However, the intent behind last year's legislative changes to 17 V.S.A. § 2642 was to allow for additional time in certain instances, so as to mirror the law on petitions filed by candidates for local office. The law still requires that the petitioner obtain the requisite number of signatures on or before the filing deadline, but it gives petitioners additional time if it turns out that those signatures aren't all from registered voters of the town.

For information about how much time must be granted to file supplementary petitions, please read the *Ask The League* article – "What is this year's deadline for submission of voter backed petitions for the annual town warning?" on page 4.

*Sarah Jarvis, Staff Attorney II
VLCT Municipal Assistance Center*

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BETHEL UNIVERSITY

VLCT NEWS

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Even without the arrival of the January Thaw, things are heating up in the Town of Bethel as organizers meet to plan courses for a pop-up college known as Bethel University (<http://betheluniversityvt.org/>). A pop-up college is a variation on the pop-up store, a short-term sales space that has gained popularity across the U.S. in recent years. (VLCT's home town of Montpelier features a pop-up solar energy store art gallery.) In Bethel University's case, anyone can volunteer to teach a course on any topic, and anyone can take courses for free. So far, courses are only offered during the month of March.

In 2015, only the second year of its existence, the BU teaching crew increased to 52 "professors" who offered 42 courses ranging from auto mechanics to bread baking, from conversational French to basics of photography, from easy sourdough bread to introduction to tarot. The university received nearly 420 course registrations, with people coming from 37 towns in Vermont and beyond. Statistically, 92 percent of the participants said they learned new information and 75 percent learned about local businesses, and 100 percent of its professors said they felt more connected to the community.

Bethel University is a truly community effort. All of its courses are free of charge, ensuring that anyone can participate. BU is organized entirely by volunteers and its venues are offered for free by the Town of Bethel, its schools, Public Library, and

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www.nedelta.com



A NEW BEGINNING WITH NEW POSSIBILITIES

Welcome to 2016! As the legislative session begins and new initiatives get underway, we look forward to new energy, new focus, and new approaches to some perennial concerns. Local government and state government can work together as partners to address the challenges facing Vermont. Only in true partnership will the best solutions be found.

Is it time for the State to loosen its grip on local government? Is it time to recognize that the same voters who elect state legislators also elect local officials and vote at Town Meeting? Local officials know the State's tradition of local control is largely a myth, but we can turn that myth into reality by working with elected legislators to find policy areas that must be implemented at the local level and, before implementation begins, by allowing greater decision-making, discretion, and innovation at the local level. Simply put, if specific policies and programs must be undertaken at the city and town level, why not make the decisions about those policies there as well?

This doesn't mean that the legislature delegates everything to local government. However, one example of an appropriate and fairly simple delegation of authority is with local charter adoption and amendments. Once local residents determine that an amendment to their local charter is due and vote to adopt it, why does the legislature have to approve that amendment? Couldn't one or two state officials review the adopted charters and their amendments in order to ensure that the language complies generally with state statutes? Surely the attorney general – who receives charter amendments now – or another knowledgeable official could determine whether any constitutional issues exist in charter language or if there is a clear conflict with Vermont statutes. The result would release the legislature from some unnecessary details of governing and free it to focus on big picture items, such as the long-term future of Vermont, economic opportunities for Vermonters, the impact of environmental mandates passed down from the federal government, and questions about the viability of Vermont's traditions and practices. Local officials want to be a part of those conversations, too, but they need to be a part of the decision-making *process* on issues that affect their communities in ways that they and their voters are uniquely positioned to understand.

Twenty-sixteen provides a new opportunity to start fresh, see things differently, and work together. Local officials are ready, willing, and able. May we begin?

From the Executive Director

*Maura Carroll
Executive Director*

PART ONE

This article is the first of a two-part series.

TEN REASONS FOR JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Next month's article will provide practical tips for creating and maintaining effective job descriptions.

Many municipalities realize they should have job descriptions for all employee positions but do not think they have the time to create or maintain them. While care and attention are indeed called for, the process does not have to be onerous. Job descriptions form a foundation for many of the responsibilities municipalities have as employers and help employees understand expectations of their performance. Thus, having well-written, accurate job descriptions ultimately saves time and effort.

While not exhaustive, here is a list of ten areas in which job descriptions can be quite helpful:

1. Job Advertisements. A job description is the best starting point to determine the qualifications needed to fill a job opening and create advertisements and postings that attract a pool of well-qualified candidates. Everyone involved saves time when excellent candidates are attracted to the role and those not meeting the listed qualifications self-select out of the search process.

2. Interview Questions. A job description serves as a valuable tool for crafting interview questions that are targeted to the position requirements. When questions are focused on the qualifications needed to perform the job, rather than on personal characteristics or circumstances of the candidate, they help the interviewer identify the best qualified candidate and avoid questions that are unlawful in the employment context.

3. New Employee Onboarding. A newly hired employee needs good information about job expectations and how to perform his or her role well. "Onboarding" goes beyond the traditional employee orientation to help employees acclimate sooner. The employee's job description helps a supervisor create an onboarding program by prioritizing the content and scheduling sequence of meetings, activities, and trainings to provide the type of support that will bolster the employee's competence and confidence, incorporate him or her onto the municipal team, and foster a sense of engagement and

commitment to the new role more quickly.

4. Shared Expectations of Employees and Supervisors. It is important for employees and supervisors to have a common understanding of tasks and deadlines associated with the position. Additionally job descriptions can include standards for conduct, required certifications or licenses, and other necessary aspects of the job. A clear job description helps both supervisors and employees measure performance on a continuous basis which in turn can be formally evaluated annually or more frequently.

5. Performance Appraisals. As noted above, job descriptions should serve as the foundation of any performance review. When well written, they communicate to employees what successful performance looks like as well as when those standards aren't being met. They can also assist with identifying training, certifications, or other employee development needs and opportunities.

(continued on page 5)



ASK THE LEAGUE

WHAT IS THIS YEAR'S (2016) DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF VOTER BACKED PETITIONS FOR THE ANNUAL TOWN WARNING?

Given a recent change in the law, there are now potentially two deadlines. As in past years, there is still just one primary deadline by which voters must submit their petitions for articles to be included on the town meeting warning. "The warning shall also contain any article or articles requested by a petition signed by at least five percent of the voters of the municipality and filed with the municipal clerk not less than 47 days before the day of the meeting." 17 V.S.A. § 2642(a)(3)(A). In 2016, that primary deadline is January 14th.

Beginning in 2016 and thereafter, a supplementary deadline may come into play if a petition lacks certain information. If a valid petition for addition of an article(s) for the

annual town meeting is received by January 14th, town clerks must review the petition to ensure that it includes (1) the signatures of the number of people that equal five percent of the total registered voters of the town; (2) the petition language on each page on which signatures are collected; *and* (3) the printed name, signature, and street address of each voter who signed the petition. If the petition meets all of these requirements, then the article must be included on the warning for the annual town meeting if it is an otherwise valid article (For more information about what constitutes a "valid" article, please see "Supreme Court Affirms Legislative Body's Discretion to Warn Advisory Articles" which is

archived at http://www.vlct.org/assets/Resource/LRN/2007/lrn_07_03a.pdf)

If a petition does not meet these three requirements, then the town clerk must return it to the petitioner(s) within 24 hours of its receipt stating in writing on the petition why it cannot be accepted. At that point, the petitioner has 48 hours – or until the petition deadline (January 14th), whichever is later – to file a corrected or supplementary petition.

(continued on next page)

NEED A WRITTEN LEGAL OPINION?

LOOKING FOR EXPERTISE DRAFTING A NEW ORDINANCE?

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SAMPLE PROJECTS:

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

CORRECTION TO THE MUNICIPAL CALENDAR REGARDING THE 2016 DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF SUPPLEMENTAL PETITIONS.

The VLCT 2015-2016 Municipal Calendar includes incorrect dates for two entries currently listed on January 22nd and January 24th. The entries to be corrected are noted below. We sincerely apologize for the error and inconvenience.

INCORRECT DATE: January 22
(Within 24 hours of receipt) Clerk must return to petitioners any invalid petitions stating in writing why they can't be accepted. 17:2642(a)(3)(B) ↓

CORRECT DATE:
Friday, January 15
and

INCORRECT DATE: January 24
(48 hours after petitions returned) Last day for filing of supplementary petitions if at least five percent of the voters of the municipality signed the original petitions. 17:2642(a)(3)(B) ↓

CORRECT DATE:
Tuesday, January 19



ASK THE LEAGUE

(continued from previous page)

The addition of the above three requirements to the statute signifies a departure not only in how petitions are processed but also in how signatures are to be counted. For more information on how to count the number of voters on a petition, see *Change in the Law on Signatures Required for a Voter-Backed Petition* on page 2 of this issue of the *VLCT News*.

For 2016, this means that if an incomplete petition is received on the filing deadline (January 14th) and does not meet all three legal requirements stated above, the town clerk must return it to the petitioner(s) by January 15th (24 hours after receipt by the clerk). The law then gives the petitioner(s) an additional 48 hours to file supplementary petitions correcting those errors. However, 48 hours from January 15th takes us to January 17th, which in 2016 is a Sunday. Because

State law automatically extends filing deadlines that fall on a Saturday or Sunday to the following Monday, which is *not* a legal holiday, that takes us to Monday, January 18th. “If the last day for filing petitions, consent forms, or other documents or reports falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, then the deadline shall be extended to 5:00 p.m. on the next day which is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday.” 17 V.S.A. § 2103(13). However, since that Monday just so happens to be Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, the deadline for supplemental petitions is again extended, and for purposes of the 2016 town meeting warning will be January 19th.

For more information about the process of processing petitioned articles, please see page 6 of the November 2015 *VLCT News*, which is archived at www.vlct.org/assets/News/Newsletter/2015/vlctnews_2015-11.pdf.

*Garrett Baxter, Senior Staff Attorney
VLCT Municipal Assistance Center*

TEN REASONS

(continued from page 3)

6. Workers’ Compensation Insurance. Job descriptions are relied upon by physicians or others to determine whether an employee can safely return to work and whether work restrictions might be necessary. They may also assist with developing “light duty” or “modified duty” assignments to get employees back to work as quickly as possible. Accurately presenting issues in the job description – such as physical work requirements, required safety procedures, and challenging working conditions – is also helpful in the hiring process. (Specific information about compliance with workers’ compensation laws is beyond the scope of this article. In a workers’ compensation situation, it is best to work with your PACIF claim representative or legal counsel on return to work issues.)

7. Compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Job descriptions provide information that is key to assessing and documenting whether positions are exempt from the FLSA and therefore not subject to minimum wage, overtime pay requirements, and other protections provided by the FLSA. (For further information about FLSA compliance, see <http://www.dol.gov/compliance/laws/comp-flsa.htm>.)

8. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance. Including essential functions required for a job in the job description is helpful during the hiring process as well as throughout an employee’s tenure. Identifying possible reasonable accommodations a job applicant or employee returning to work may need relevant to compliance with the ADA is important. (For further information about ADA compliance regarding employment, see the Equal Employment Opportunity website, <http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/ada17.html>.)

9. Employee Wage Levels. Accurate job descriptions help municipalities compare salaries and hourly rates internally and in the market with those of similar municipalities or other employers. Such comparisons help municipalities provide appropriate pay levels to attract qualified workers and maintain internal equity. Job descriptions also assist with the job evaluation process used in many formal compensation plans.

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UPCOMING MUNICIPAL ASSISTANCE CENTER WORKSHOPS

TOWN MEETING TUNE-UP

Wednesday, February 3, Capitol Plaza Hotel and Conference Center, Montpelier

A parliamentarian’s paradise, this annual workshop is designed for moderators and selectboard members, both seasoned and new. It focuses on the statutory requirements for town meeting, *Robert’s Rules of Order*, recent pertinent court cases, and best practices for making it through Town Meeting unscathed.

SPRING SELECTBOARD INSTITUTE

Saturday, March 12, Capitol Plaza Hotel and Conference Center, Montpelier

The Spring Selectboard Institute provides Vermont selectboard members with the skills they need to manage the affairs of their town by focusing on the fundamentals of municipal governance and current issues facing selectboards. Topics may include understanding the municipal organization, essentials of municipal law, running effective meetings, managing the town budget, and how to reduce liability risks.

SPRING AUDITORS WORKSHOP

Tuesday, March 29, Capitol Plaza Hotel and Conference Center, Montpelier

This workshop is designed for locally elected auditors as well as treasurers, selectboard members, municipal managers and administrators, and finance directors who want to improve internal controls and the quality of financial reporting.

DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTORS WORKSHOP

Wednesday, April 6, Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee

This workshop will cover best practices and procedures for the efficient collection of delinquent municipal property taxes. The sessions will provide a dynamic mix of legal advice, practical solutions, and opportunities to ask questions and share experiences. The workshop is designed for all officials involved in the local tax collection process. Collectors of delinquent taxes, treasurers, town managers, town administrators, constables, selectboard members, listers and others are all encouraged to attend.

For registration, agendas, and other information, please visit www.vlct.org/eventscalendar, email info@vlct.org, or call 800-649-7915.



INFRASTRUCTURE TOOLKIT

(continued from page 1)

Infrastructure Toolkit. The toolkit was developed in consultation with VLCT's Water Resources Program and with support from the Vermont Division of Environmental Conservation's Clean Water Initiative Program. The GSI Sizing Tool guides applicants in the use of ten types of stormwater management practices to treat stormwater runoff from existing and proposed impervious surfaces on small sites. The tool and associated fact sheets are intended to be used in conjunction with the revised VLCT Model LID/GSI Stormwater Management Bylaw.

This bylaw supersedes the 2008 VLCT Model LID Stormwater Management Bylaw which, although well received at the time, lacked the specificity needed for applicants and review boards to determine how and whether the standards in the bylaw were being reached. The 2015 version of the bylaw is still geared to towns that want to administer stormwater standards for development and redevelopment projects that fall below the permitting thresholds for State stormwater permitting. Currently, development projects that will have less than one acre of impervious

surface after construction are not required to obtain a State permit. The cumulative adverse effects on water quality from the so-called "sub-jurisdictional" projects that fall below the state permitting thresholds can be quite significant. By adopting local stormwater standards such as those provided in the Model LID/GSI Stormwater Management Bylaw, municipalities can take the upper hand in protecting downstream stormwater infrastructure, local water quality, and properties adjacent to development sites.

What is Green Stormwater Infrastructure? Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) is defined in the VLCT Model LID/GSI Stormwater Management Bylaw as "a suite of systems and practices that restore and maintain natural hydrologic processes in order to reduce the volume and water quality impacts of stormwater runoff." This is in contrast to so-called "gray infrastructure," which incorporates engineered stormwater management practices that channel stormwater quickly away from the development site – for example, concrete curb and gutter systems that direct stormwater into storm sewers, detention ponds, or nearby streams, rivers, and lakes. The revised model bylaw also distinguishes between GSI and LID. Where GSI is primarily a practice-based approach that focuses on

managing stormwater impacts using natural processes such as infiltration, evapotranspiration, and storage and reuse, LID is primarily a non-structural approach to stormwater management that focuses on avoiding or minimizing stormwater impacts through better site design. In addition to preventing or reducing water pollution through stormwater management, both GSI and LID practices have the added benefit of beautifying our landscapes.

The Proverbial "First Inch." The ten stormwater management practices included in the GSI Sizing Tool are calibrated to meet the draft Water Quality Treatment Standard expected to be included in the *Vermont Stormwater Management Manual*, which will require treatment of the "first inch" of runoff from proposed impervious surfaces during a 24-hour storm event. The terms "first inch" or "first flush" have become common nomenclature in the stormwater management field. The concept behind this terminology is that pollutants that have collected on impervious surfaces will wash off during the first portion of a storm event. Essentially, the first portion of a given rain event will "flush" the impervious surface of its pollutants, resulting in stormwater runoff that contains more pollutants than runoff produced later in the storm. Capturing and treating the first one inch of rainfall treats about 90 percent of the pollutants that would otherwise be leaving the site (Schueler, 2000).

In Vermont, about 90 percent of our annual storm events result in one inch or less of rainfall. However, a one-inch rainstorm over one acre in an urban setting with a high percentage of impervious surfaces can produce upwards of 14,900 gallons of runoff, compared to only about 2,700 gallons of runoff

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WHAT DO MORE AND MORE VERMONT MUNICIPALITIES HAVE IN COMMON?

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INFRASTRUCTURE TOOLKIT

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in a forested environment. (Impervious surfaces can include rooftops, patios, sidewalks, driveways, parking areas, and roadways.)

To put this in perspective, a one-inch storm over the city of Burlington could produce 148,145,300 gallons of runoff, or enough water to fill 225 Olympic size swimming pools!

The VLCT Bylaw and Simplified Sizing Tool The updated VLCT Model LID/GSI Stormwater Management Bylaw is designed to be flexible. The standards in the bylaw can be applicable to what an individual town wants. The model bylaw states that all activities requiring a permit must adhere to the standards. However, towns can manage this in a number of ways, such as limiting applicability to small commercial sites falling below the size threshold for state stormwater permitting, or having the standards apply only to development within a particular overlay district. The model bylaw recommends that applications for development exceeding 2,500 square feet of impervious surface demonstrate that the first inch of rainfall is captured and treated using the GSI Sizing Tool. This impervious surface baseline is a conservative recommendation, and towns may choose to increase it based on local conditions.

Site Design. The Site Design section of the model bylaw focuses on pre-construction LID standards that avoid and minimize disturbance of vulnerable areas and areas that warrant protection. For example, building envelopes must exclude mapped floodplains, river corridors, wetlands, and lake shoreland in conformance with state regulations. The Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control section mirrors the guidance in the Agency of Natural Resources' *Low Risk Site Handbook for Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control*, noting that construction projects involving one acre or more of land disturbance require a construction permit from the State.

Stormwater Management Standards. The Stormwater Management Standards section focuses on post-construction stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces, and calls for the use of the GSI Sizing Tool. The ten GSI practices included in the GSI Sizing Tool are calculated for a goal of capturing and evaporating, infiltrating, or re-using the volume of runoff generated by the first inch of rain that falls on impervious surfaces. Stormwater management practices can be sized using the GSI Sizing Tool to treat stormwater from up to 10,000 square feet of impervious surface draining to a single point. Up to

half an acre of impervious cover may be treated using three or more GSI practices that were sized using the GSI Sizing Tool, as long as no single practice captures and treats runoff from more than 10,000 square feet of impervious cover. Several practices included in the GSI Sizing Tool are only applicable for treating runoff from smaller areas of impervious cover. For example, the "rooftop disconnection" practice, where downspouts are routed to properly graded lawn areas, is limited to a rooftop area of 1,000 square feet per downspout, but multiple downspouts from the same building can be routed to different lawn areas, or coupled with other practices such as rain gardens, infiltration trenches, or dry wells.

Post Construction Soil Depth and Quality. The Post Construction Soil Depth and Quality section includes standards that apply to all disturbed areas that are not covered by an impervious surface or incorporated into a stormwater treatment practice. Undisturbed soil and vegetation provide important stormwater functions such as water infiltration and pollutant adsorption and decomposition. These functions are largely lost when development strips away native soil and vegetation and replaces it with minimal topsoil and sod, leaving behind compacted, hard ground. A new standard for maintaining or re-establishing soil depth and quality will also be included in the revised *Vermont Stormwater Management Manual* for larger projects that need State post-construction stormwater permits. In both cases, if the native vegetation and soil are left undisturbed and are protected from compaction during construction, the requirement has been met.

Independent Technical Review. The model bylaw calls for an "independent technical review" for applications for development proposing impervious surfaces exceeding one-half acre (and up to the one-acre threshold for state permitting). This is because the sizing recommendations are meant for practices treating small amounts of impervious cover. As projects (and the individual rooftops or parking lots draining to a single point) get bigger, the risks of that concentrated runoff leading to erosion problems or practice failure also increase. In these cases, the simplified sizing calculations may not be appropriate for use. The authority for towns to require an applicant to pay for reasonable costs of an independent technical review is granted in statute (24 V.S.A. § 4440(d)). Towns can require independent technical reviews for other aspects of an application, but since stormwater management standards can be quite technical, a specific section is included in the model bylaw.

Conclusion. The new GSI Toolkit – incorporating the revised VLCT Model LID/GSI Stormwater Management Bylaw, the GSI Sizing Tool, and associated fact sheets – offers municipalities a clear-cut framework that is simple to administer. The LID/GSI model language is flexible and can easily be incorporated into an existing land use regulation. For assistance, contact Milly Archer, VLCT Municipal Assistance Center Water Resources Coordinator, at 800-649-7015 or marcher@vlct.org. All of the components of the GSI Toolkit can be accessed online at www.vlct.org/municipal-assistance-center/water-resources-assistance/.

Milly Archer, Water Resources Coordinator
VLCT Municipal Assistance Center

VERMONT STATE INFRASTRUCTURE BANK (SIB) LOAN FUND

Jointly operated by VEDA and VTrans, the Vermont State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) has low-interest loan funds available for transportation-related projects that enhance economic opportunity and help create jobs. Municipalities, RDCs, and certain private sector companies may qualify for financing to:

- Construct or reconstruct roads, bridges, sidewalks and bike paths;
- Make safety improvements such as highway signing and pavement marking;
- Make operational improvements such as traffic control and signal systems;
- Construct rail freight and intermodal facilities, and public transit facilities; and
- In certain cases, electric vehicle charging stations and natural gas refueling stations that are available for public use.



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REMINDER TO REPORT ACA INFO TO EMPLOYEES

All groups with more than 50 employees and certain smaller groups need to know that the first IRS-mandated deadline in the reporting requirement of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is approaching quickly! **Employee Statements** (either **IRS Form 1095-B or 1095-C**) must be **delivered to employees by February 1st**. (It would be January 31st, but that falls on a Sunday this year.)

In accordance with IRS rules finalized in  October 2015:

- Each “reporting entity” will be required to provide: a separate **1095 employee statement** for each individual who is provided minimum essential coverage (which for ALEs, or applicable large employers, includes only full-time employees) to each individual by February 1st *and* to the IRS by either February 28 (on paper) or March 31 (electronically); *and* a single **1094 transmittal form** for all of the employee statements filed for 2015 to the IRS by either February 28 (on paper) or March 31 (electronically).
- There are two categories of “reporting entity”: (1) All employers with more than 50 employees (ALEs) must use the **C series** forms. (See below for details.); and (2) Any employer with 50 or fewer employees (or small group) that funds HRAs not tied to the primary health insurance plan must use the **B series** forms. (This appears to include groups that provide Medicare premium assistance to any employees or retirees.) Both must use a different pair of IRS forms.

Please also note that:

- Small groups that either have no HRAs or have HRAs that are tied only to primary insurance are not required to report to the IRS.
- ALEs that are fully insured need only fill in Sections I and II of every 1095-C. Exception: ALEs that are fully insured but fund HRAs not tied to the primary health insurance plan – which appears to include groups that provide Medicare premium assistance to any employees or retirees – must also fill in Section III of the 1095-C for each of these employees and retirees.
- ALEs that self-insure need to fill in Sections I, II, and III of every 1095-C.

The next deadline will be to send the IRS a 1094 (-B or -C, whichever was appropriate for the 1095) along with (copies of) all those 1095s by mail no later than February  or by email no later than March 31st. Employers with over 250 employees must file electronically.

Due to the complexity of these IRS rules and the penalties for non-compliance, **please check with a tax expert** to ensure that you are reporting correctly. VLCT staff will not be able to help with this, but you can refer to past webinars and related documentation that are posted on our Health Insurance Reform webpage, www.vlct.org/rms/faqs/health-insurance-reform/. Good luck!

Important Deadlines

January 31, 2016
Employee Statements, 1095-B or 1095-C, must be delivered to employees.

February 28, 2016
Mailed Transmittal Forms, 1094-B or 1094-C, are due to the IRS. The mailing must include copies of all Employee Statements.

March 31, 2016
Electronically filed Transmittals, 1094-B and 1094-C, are due to the IRS. (Employers with more than 250 employees must file electronically.)

IRS Forms for Reporting 2015 ACA Information

Employee Statements deliver to employees by 1/31/16 	Transmittals to the IRS mail by 2/28/16 -or- email by 3/31/16																																		
<div style="background-color: #2e7d32; color: white; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">B Series</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">Form 1095-B</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Health Coverage</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="font-size: small;">Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="font-size: x-small;">Information about Form 1095-B and its separate instructions is at www.irs.gov/form1095b.</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Part I Responsible Individual</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="font-size: x-small;">1 Name of responsible individual</td> <td style="font-size: x-small;">2 Social security number (SSN)</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="font-size: x-small;">4 Street address (include apartment or suite no.)</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="font-size: x-small;">5 Enter letter identifying Origin of the Policy (see instructions for codes):</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="font-size: x-small;">5 Small Business Health Options Program (SBHOP)</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #e0f2f1; padding: 2px;">▶ For employers with 50 or fewer employees and any HRA that's not tied to the insured person's primary plan.</p> </div>	Form 1095-B	Health Coverage	Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service		Information about Form 1095-B and its separate instructions is at www.irs.gov/form1095b .		Part I Responsible Individual		1 Name of responsible individual	2 Social security number (SSN)	4 Street address (include apartment or suite no.)		5 Enter letter identifying Origin of the Policy (see instructions for codes):		5 Small Business Health Options Program (SBHOP)		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">Form 1094-B</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Transmittal of Health Coverage Information Returns</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="font-size: small;">Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="font-size: x-small;">Information about Form 1094-B and its separate instructions is at www.irs.gov/form1094b.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="font-size: x-small;">1 Filer's name</td> <td style="font-size: x-small;">2 Employer identification number (EIN)</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="font-size: x-small;">6 Street address (including room or suite no.)</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="font-size: x-small;">6 City or town</td> </tr> </table> </div>	Form 1094-B	Transmittal of Health Coverage Information Returns	Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service		Information about Form 1094-B and its separate instructions is at www.irs.gov/form1094b .		1 Filer's name	2 Employer identification number (EIN)	6 Street address (including room or suite no.)		6 City or town							
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VERB'S NEW HEALTH INSURANCE ADVISORY SERVICES PROGRAM

The VLCT Employment Resource and Benefits (VERB) Trust is pleased to announce a new program for 2016 available to all VLCT members. The Health Insurance Advisory Services Program provides members with personalized consultative support and services for health insurance related issues. It is delivered by VERB in conjunction with Hickok & Boardman HR Intelligence (H&B).

VERB's new Health Insurance Advisory Services include:

- Education and communication assistance for health insurance options and benefits
- Advice and assistance with overall benefits strategy
- Financial modeling of benefit plan and funding options
- Assistance with pre-enrollment, enrollment, and post-enrollment activities
- General support of health benefit plan administration, including working with insurers
- Providing forms, templates, and information to help participants comply with the Affordable Care Act (ACA)
- Up-to-date information on ACA and health insurance laws
- Assistance with "Cadillac" excise tax planning and modeling
- Support and attendance at meetings of members' governing boards, management, and employees
- Health Advocate's Core Advocacy services
- Support from H&B for compliance with related state and federal regulations
- Ten percent discount on additional services available from H&B

This optional program is open to all VLCT members. For a \$500 annual

administrative fee plus \$15 per subscriber per month, a formal Health Insurance Advisory Service Program Agreement will be put in place so VLCT and H&B staff can provide the support and services listed above.

It's important to note that VLCT members that do not enter into a Health Insurance Advisory Service Program Agreement will still receive the more general health insurance-related phone and email support and services that VLCT has provided throughout 2014 and 2015. In addition to that, current VERB Trust members that were Health Trust members prior to December 31, 2013 will still receive Health Advocate's Core Advocacy services at no cost.

Let us answer some questions that we anticipate you might have.

We already pay VLCT membership dues. Why is there an additional fee for these services?

This program focuses on health insurance. VLCT membership pays for many other things, including support services from the Municipal Assistance Center (MAC); access to educational functions and workshops including Local Government Day and VLCT's annual Town Fair; alerts about legislative activities relating to local governance; and access to a wide range of VLCT publications including the *Weekly Legislative Report*, handbooks on municipal governance, and the monthly *VLCT News*. Although VLCT membership is a prerequisite for participation in VLCT PACIF and VERB programs, it cannot support all of them financially.

Do we have to pay for this new program?

This is an optional program, so VERB members are not required to participate. A signed program agreement and payment will

(continued on next page)

2015-2016 RMS CALENDAR

Deadlines for PACIF Members with Volunteer Fire Departments to submit 2015 Roster and Payroll Information as required for fire personnel's annual Workers' Comp audit. Please direct any questions to Susan Benoit at sbenoit@vlct.org or 1-800-649-7915.

- **Thursday, December 31, 2015**, for all-volunteer departments (that is, no one receives any pay for any fire department activities).
- **Monday, January 4, 2016**, for departments that have any personnel who receive pay, regardless of whether it is per-call, per-training, a stipend, or wages.

Diversity, Discrimination and Harassment. Wednesday, January 6, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., room 114B, **VTrans Training Center, 1716 U.S. Route 302, Berlin.** This one-day workshop explains how personality styles affect attitudes toward diversity, harassment, and discrimination. The focus is on building managerial and supervisory skills to support continuous behavioral improvements to the overall workplace. Instructor: Greg Hessel of ReGeneration Resources. Free and open to municipal personnel. For more information and to register, call 802-828-3768.

Deadline for ALEs and Smaller Self-Insured Employers to Provide Employees with IRS Form 1095B or 1095C. Monday, February 1, 2016. This is the first step in complying with the health insurance reporting requirements of the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA). See related notice on page 8.



VERB'S NEW PROGRAM

(continued from previous page)

be required before a member will be able to receive the full suite of services listed above.

We used to receive these services from VLCT for free. Why do we have to pay now?

Actually, before the advent of Vermont Health Connect, all Health Trust members paid a standard commission, usually of two to three percent, which was included in the monthly premium payment and covered the costs of these services. During 2014 and 2015, funds which had been reserved in the Health Trust for financial stability while the Trust was in full operation were being used to subsidize the cost of continuing these services free of charge to all VLCT members.

Are other organizations charging for health insurance advisory services?

Yes. In most cases, agents or brokers are charging \$20 per subscriber per month for these services for groups that are already in the Exchange or a three percent commission for groups that are large enough not to

be in the Exchange yet. Depending on the number of subscribers in your group, this fee structure may actually work out to be far lower in total costs than the previous commission. Moreover, VLCT knows municipal benefit and budget structures – and municipalities' needs and interests – far better than most commercial insurance agents. Finally, because this new fee structure will not increase annually with the cost of your

premiums, it is easier to budget for.

We hope this helps answer any questions you may have regarding the new Health Insurance Advisory Service Program. For a copy of the program agreement or for more information, feel free to contact Member Relations Manager Larry Smith (lsmith@vlct.org) or Health Benefit Programs Administrator Kelley Avery (kavery@vlct.org) at 800-649-7915.

Look Who's Offering More VERB Benefits Now

Dental

Towns of East Montpelier, Townshend, and Hardwick

Villages of Jeffersonville and Barton

Vision

Towns of Grafton, Ludlow, Moretown, Morristown, Randolph, Sheffield, and Hardwick

Village of Jeffersonville

Life and Disability

Towns of Bristol, Derby, Hyde Park, Monkton, Morristown, Panton, Randolph, Colchester, Pomfret, and Hardwick

Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission



HILL ATTORNEY

PLLC

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Vermont Municipalities and
Non-Profit Organizations

Environmental, Land Use,
and Utility Law

Federal and State
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802-989-6906
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projects that have been financed through
VMBB and SRF programs. Or you can
request an application for a new project.*



Newport City
Fire Dept.

For more information contact:

Vermont Municipal Bond Bank
20 Winooski Falls Way, Suite 305
Winooski, VT 05404

(802) 654-7377 (phone)
(802) 654-7379 (fax)
Bond-bank@vtbondagency.org
www.vmbb.org



PACIF IN 2016: IMPROVED POLICE RESOURCES AND MORE

Every year, PACIF's annual cycle includes a component of continuous improvement in its programs. Throughout the year, VLCT staff members note how extensively members make use of the current programs, periodically analyze the claims that are paid, stay attuned to current national claim trends, and search out or design new programs that might be more beneficial to members. Toward the end of each year, staff are well prepared to suggest which programs to keep as is, which to adjust, which to discontinue, and which new ones are good candidates for the next year. The Board of Directors considers the staff's proposed improvements and approves the ones that offer the best balance between cost and helping to reduce members' risks.

The 2015 improvement cycle was enhanced by a special PACIF Member Law Enforcement Risk Management Needs Assessment, which was devised and conducted by Michael Schirling soon after he retired as Chief of the Burlington Police Department. The potential value of this assessment was indicated by an analysis of claims in the last ten years. The results show a strong interest in more resources focused on the particular needs of local law enforcement departments, including assistance with updating policies, training in several key topic areas, coordinated wellness programs. With this in mind, please read the summary below to see how PACIF is, in addition to continuing several tried-and-true PACIF programs that are clearly still desired and worthwhile, also improving many of its law enforcement-related offerings.

PACIF Equipment Grants continue with very similar guidelines and at the same funding level as in 2015. Certain equipment is eligible, and each grant matches the member's investment dollar for dollar up to a maximum grant of \$1,000, \$2,500, or \$5,000 depending on the member's annual PACIF contribution amount. Visit www.vlct.org/rms/pacif/pacif-equipment-grants/ for details.

PACIF Scholarships continue to fund training that can enhance members' safety and risk management programs, with very similar guidelines and the same maximum awards as in 2015. Each member can receive up to \$2,500 in a calendar year for a combination of group and individual awards. Two members may collaborate and submit dual

group applications in order to pool their scholarships and co-host a more expensive group training. Individual scholarships can be awarded to attend conferences that the award committee agrees have appropriate risk management value. Visit www.vlct.org/rms/pacif/pacif-scholarships/ for details.

The Online Law Enforcement Training Center is a dense library of courses, model policies, and updates based on recent case law. It will continue to be a valuable 24/7/365 asset for those police agencies that choose to register and use it. Email losscontrol@vlct.org for login access.

The Law Enforcement Consultant Program will be expanded. In addition to the Ask the Expert function of the Online Law Enforcement Training Center, plans are being developed to add more local consultants.

Employee Assistance Program (Invest EAP) continues to be a great resource

\$500,000 contribution credits:
each member's share is indicated on
their 2016 PACIF Invoice
+ \$200,000 to fund PACIF
Equipment Grants

for employees who seek support in addressing their emotional, financial, and legal difficulties. It is also an important part of the follow-up process for any commercial motor vehicle (CMV) driver who doesn't pass a drug or alcohol test. New for 2016 will be **EAP's eFirst program** for all PACIF member first responders, featuring: (a) a partnership with Green Mountain Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM); (b) certified eFirst counselors who have been specially

(continued on next page)

*"stress can cause permanent ... damage...
and ... goes unnoticed until
the individual becomes sick ..."*

— FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin



**In law enforcement
or emergency services?**

**Are you using your
free EAP benefit?**

If not, WHY NOT?

*EAP helps first responders
develop strong esprit de corps
and minimize the effects of
observing trauma.*



Call 1-800-287-2173 or visit www.investeap.org

— STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL —



TRIVIA

Carol Hammond, Julie Rohleder, and Carol Dawes of Vernon, Hyde Park, and Barre City, respectively, knew that the White River was previously called Madi tegou, or “bad or useless river,” by the Abnaki Indians. Well paddled!

Now that Vermont winter weather is making tire chains a motorist’s best friend, let’s take another road trip. And by the most amazing of coincidences, every destination you reach will also be an English place name.

Start at a Vermont town whose English counterpart sits on the narrowest part of the English Channel and features chalky cliffs. Now drive 35 mostly northerly miles (though you begin by swinging southwest) to a town whose English analogue is a village near the Yorkshire Dales that in turn was named after an Irish county. From there, head mostly west for 16½ miles to a town in whose English counterpart scientists first split the atom. (Right. The atom. In those days, there was only the one.) North now for nearly 7 miles. This English namesake is host to an annual steam fair, and a jolly big one at that. Drive 19 mostly northerly miles – though there’s a bit of northeast towards the end – to a town whose English equivalent is a civil parish that annually celebrates an end-of-summer folk music festival that includes an appreciation of its local steam railway. Next, go 26 miles due east to a town that – in England, anyway – had grown rich on its trade in cloth by 1611 and later played a major role in the Revolution of 1688. Continue east for 36½ miles followed by 89 miles north to a town whose English equivalent was noted for the production of knives in the 14th century and which, by 1600, was overseen by the Company of Cutlers. Southeast now for 7½ miles followed by northeast for 23 miles more followed by 2 miles east to a town whose counterpart in England is a popular seaside resort sometimes called “the U.K.’s hippest city.” To get to your next destination, drive in a direction that approximates the back of a dolphin – that is, head 30 miles by first curving northwest and then curving southwest. This gets you to a town whose across-the-pond heritage includes Lady Godiva and three cathedrals, though not necessarily in that order. Now drive 42 southwesterly miles on a series of

roads whose profile approximates a water slide to a town whose UK equivalent is home to the second oldest university in the English-speaking world. Twenty and a half mostly north miles north now to a town that, in England’s Derbyshire Peak District, is the closest village to Magpie Mine.

It’s only ten miles to your next destination, but to get there you have to first go west, then north, then northwest, then northeast, then northwest again, followed by west and finally north-northwest to a town whose English analogue is one of the most expensive London suburbs in which to live and whose postal district is N6. Sixty-seven southerly smiles will get you to your next stop which, at the beginning of the 11th century, was known as “the place at the bridge.” In England, that is.

Your next destination lies 39½ miles away. To get there, drive six miles west followed by 33½ miles south. Its English equivalent sits at the foot of the Chiltern Hills at the confluence of Ewelme Brook and the River Thames. Just two more stops now, the first of which is reachable by driving 50 miles along a mostly southerly route to a town whose English counterpart features the Earl of Durham’s Monument and was where The Toy Dolls called home.

Finally, drive just a scoche over 41 miles on a series of roads whose outline bears a remarkable resemblance to Jimmy Durante’s nose by heading south-southwest, then southeast, followed by south, and then curving east for a while until turning north to the final destination, whose English equivalent features the Blackdown, Quantock, and Mendip hills and whose name means “settlers by the sea lakes.” If you arrived at the same place that I did, you’ll be 18¼ road miles from where you started.

As soon as you knock the snow out of your car’s wheel wells, email your 16 answers to dgunn@vlct.org. You’ll see ’em anyway in the festively frost-free February issue.

PACIF IN 2016

(continued from previous page)

trained to help first responders; (c) a police peer support training program and network that collaborates with EAP eFirst counselors; and (d) a program to overcome first responders’ disinclination to contact EAP after involvement with a critical incident.

PACIF Online University has many new courses, including four on cyber security for all curricula. In the Police, Fire, and EMS curriculum, six courses now explain the “Below 100” program for reducing law enforcement line-of-duty deaths, and another 12 new courses specifically address accident and liability prevention for law enforcement professionals.

Employment Practices Liability (EPL) Referrals will continue with the same guidelines as when it was introduced in 2013: when a PACIF member calls with an employment related concern, if a VLCT Municipal Assistance Center staff member determines that an employment practices legal expert should be consulted, the member will be referred specifically, and PACIF will pick up the tab for that one consultation.

All **WorkStrong** programs will continue, including the recent addition of group meetings to introduce attendees to exactly what can be accomplished in a one-to-one consultation. This program is constantly being developed as Senior Loss Control Wellness Consultant Heidi Joyce learns new ways to support employees in becoming healthier, stronger, more balanced, and more resilient.

Risk Management Workshops for Highway Supervisors: Feedback from the two-day workshop in Barre last year prompted a plan to hold multiple one-day regional workshops. Topics will include the Drug and Alcohol Testing Program for drivers of CMVs, VOSHA safety program implementation, construction contract awareness, employment practices, and more.

The very popular **Construction Contract Review** will continue to be available to all PACIF members. As soon as a proposed contract is received from a builder or construction company, it should be sent to PACIF Underwriting to have its insurance provisions reviewed in case it needs to be edited before being signed.



CLASSIFIEDS

Please visit the VLCT website www.vlct.org/marketplace/classifiedads/ to view more classified ads.

VLCT NEWS Advertising Information

The *VLCT News* is published eleven times per year – the August and September issues are combined – and reaches readers no later than the first week of the month.

Two kinds of advertising are available in the *VLCT News*:

CLASSIFIEDS

(Posted online and also placed in the printed VLCT News)

The *VLCT News* publishes classifieds 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.

While there is no deadline for posting classifieds online, the print advertisement deadline (below) applies to classifieds that run in the printed VLCT News.

Classifieds are generally limited to 200 words due to limited space in the newsletter, but they may be longer when posted online. The online version can also include hyperlinks to images or other websites.

For more information on placing classifieds, contact classifieds@vlct.org.

DISPLAY ADS

(Placed in the printed VLCT News)

The deadline for submitting display advertisements is the first Friday of the month prior to the issue date.

Download a calendar of print deadlines and find information on print ad requirements, sizes, and prices at www.vlct.org/advertising-information.

For answers to specific questions about print advertising, email vlctnews@vlct.org.

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.

HELP WANTED

Business Manager. The South Burlington School District is seeking a self-motivated professional to join our Administrative Team as Business Manager. The Business Manager is responsible for administering, managing, and maintaining the financial operations of the district. The Business Manager functions as a key advisor to the Superintendent and School Board in financial planning, as well as the analysis of current programs, support systems, and budgetary issues. The ideal candidate must have at least a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Accounting, or a related field (Master's degree preferred). A minimum of five years of experience in school finance or in management level accounting is required. Certification by the Vermont Association of School Business Officers (VASBO) is preferred. To apply, please submit a resume and letter of interest detailing your qualifications for the position through <http://www.schoolspring.com> (search job number 2144414), or email it to Diane Kinnon, Human Resource Coordinator, at DKinnon@sbschools.net. A detailed cover letter should include a demonstration of the following qualifications: knowledge of governmental and fund accounting; proficiency with Excel, Word, PowerPoint, and the administrative utilization

of current data; effective written and verbal communication skills; exceptional collaboration, leadership, and management skills; a commitment to quality and equality in public education and compatibility with district philosophy and goals; display of life-long learner characteristics; the ability to work both collectively and independently; and leadership of work groups or citizen groups around key financial issues. (12-20)

General Manager. The Chittenden Solid Waste District, Vermont's leading public solid waste management organization is seeking a dynamic leader to oversee CSWD's operations. Reporting to an 18-member board with an annual budget of \$9.2 million, the General Manager must be knowledgeable of solid waste management and have a passion for exploring and promoting innovative, responsible, and sustainable alternatives to disposal. The successful candidate will be an outstanding communicator who thinks strategically, expects accountability, defines goals, and motivates a mission-driven staff. Salary, \$94,390 to \$132,413. For details, go to www.cb-asso.com and click on Executive Recruiting/Active Recruitments. The deadline to apply is **Friday, January 29, 2016**. (12-09)

(continued on next page)



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CLASSIFIEDS

(continued from previous page)

Highway Foreman. The Town of Northfield, Vt., seeks a Highway Foreman to serve as the working Foreman for the Town's Highway Department. The Foreman is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Highway Department. This is a full-time hourly position and involves managing six full-time employees. Requirements: experience in highway maintenance and construction, personnel management, highway budget preparation, and tracking, and capital equipment planning; experience in basic computer skills, planning and prioritizing highway maintenance and construction projects, maintaining roads including operating plow trucks, front loaders, graders, and equipment operation; and a current CDL. A complete job description is posted at <http://www.northfield-vt.gov/> or is available by contacting the Town Manager (485-6121 or jschulz@northfield.vt.us). Salary commensurate with experience. To apply, please email a cover letter and resume by Tuesday, January 5, 2016, to Jeff Schulz, Northfield Town Manager, at jschulz@northfield.vt.us, or send via U.S. mail to Jeff Schulz, Town Manager, Town of Northfield, 51 South Main Street, Northfield, VT 05663. (12-08)

Recycling/Solid Waste Attendant. The Town of Littleton, N.H., seeks a Recycling/Solid Waste Attendant. Preference

may be given to applicants with a N.H. CDL class B license and solid waste operators and/or those with experience in the solid waste field. Work performed is manual labor in environments characterized by heat or cold, dust, noise, rain, and snow. Work environment is 60% inside and 40% outside. The Attendant works under the direction of the Solid Waste Manager or the Lead Recycling Attendant. Duties include customer service, loading and unloading recyclables, sorting solid waste, handling materials for recycling, maintaining a safe environment, and working efficiently. Requirements: basic math skills; high school diploma or equivalent; reliable attendance (must be able to work Saturdays); ability to remember what can be recycled; ability to work with other recycling/solid waste attendants and perform all related duties; ability to use a cash register is a plus; must learn and follow State DES Air Resource Div. and DES Solid Waste Div. rules and regulations within one month of hire. The successful candidate will be subject to DOT testing and background checks. Hourly salary range, \$14.56-\$15.69, DOE. (This is a union position.) Employment applications can be picked up at the Town Office or downloaded from <http://townoflittleton.org/>. Applications will be reviewed by Friday, December 18. Submit your application via email (knoyes@townoflittleton.org), fax (603-444-1703), or U.S. mail to Town of Littleton, Attn: Attendant, 125 Main Street, Suite 200, Littleton, NH 03561. Position open until filled. EOE. (12-03)

TEN REASONS

(continued from page 5)

10. Employee Relations and Communication. Employee input into the content of job descriptions contributes to staff members' feeling valued by the municipality. Additionally, the process of reviewing and updating job descriptions presents opportunities for a supervisor and employee to engage in meaningful discussions around job expectations, safety procedures, and training needs, as well as career and departmental goals.

In summary, while job descriptions are not legally required, when well done they can help a municipality minimize employment liability and lend strong support to many human resources processes. VLCT's Human Resources Assistance Program is creating templates to assist members with the various components of good job descriptions. That tool plus more tips will appear next month.

*Jill Muhr
VLCT Human Resources Consultant*

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BETHEL UNIVERSITY

(continued from page 2)

other organizations or individuals.

“The month of March was chosen primarily because of the encroaching onset of cabin fever,” says BU organizer Rebecca Stone. “We’ve talked a lot about whether to expand and have no concrete plans for that at the moment. Our team seems to agree that there’s something special (and manageable for volunteers) about having a big, short burst of energy with all the classes concentrated in March.” That said, there’s been a lot of interest in offering other classes throughout the year, or doing a second semester in the summer or fall. “That could happen someday,” she adds.

The idea of the pop-up university evolved as a way to help Bethel recover from Irene, the August 2011 tropical storm that so devastated the town. The Bethel Revitalization Initiative, BU’s parent organization, actively solicited ideas from townspeople as to what they would like to see happen as part of the recovery efforts. Kirk White, Founder and Chair of the Bethel Revitalization Initiative, says they erected poster boards around town and at community events that asked *What Do You Imagine For Bethel?* “We held a Community Forward Initiative where we gathered representatives from as many town clubs, groups, organizations, and official committees to envision ideas,” he says. “Two of the most common responses were having classes in town and using town hall and other spaces more. From this, the idea for Bethel University was born.”

BRI’s unofficial mission statement is to initiate, instigate, and support creative ways to help Bethel solve problems and revitalize the community. “In that regard,” continues White, “we are only loosely organized; ... tasks and responsibilities are taken up by volunteers as fits their skills, interest, and available time. In that way, Bethel University is a ‘do-ocracy,’ which is defined as ‘an organizational structure in which individuals choose roles and tasks for themselves and execute them.’ Responsibilities attach to people who do the work, rather than elected or selected officials.”

BU organizers recently realized that the pop-up university model could be a platform to serve other community groups or initiatives that are looking for a way to educate the community, “specifically, a ready-made registration platform, system, and

listserve through which we could help other groups offer classes – conservation classes on Green Up Day, for example, or if the fire dept. needed to train more volunteers,” says Rebecca Stone. “Again, [we have] no concrete plans to do that, but this is an ever-evolving project,” she adds.

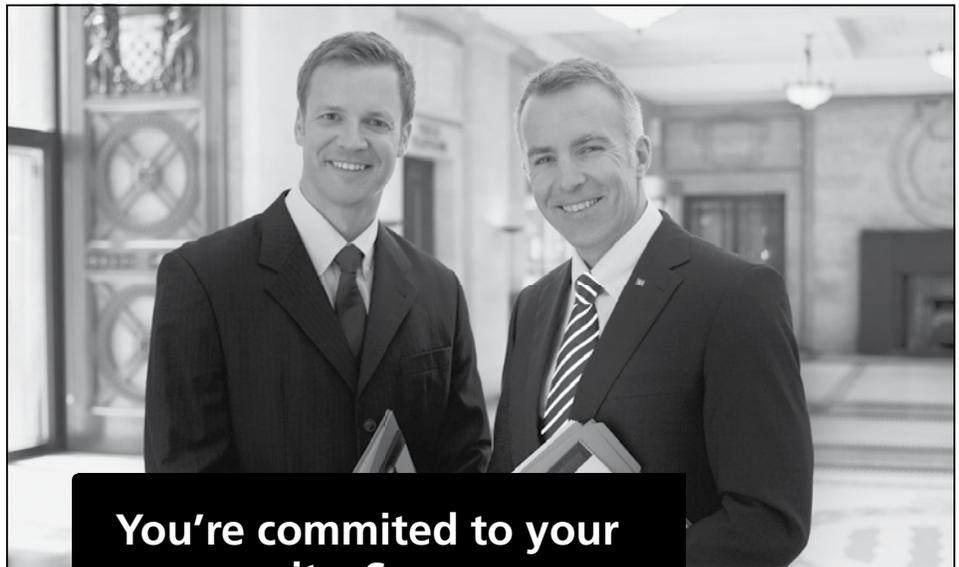
So far, courses have been determined completely by what people want to teach. Each year BU organizers have informally asked people what they’d like to take, and then they publicize that information. It’s a passive way of encouraging people to step up and offer to teach those classes.

Printing costs are among the few expenses not covered by volunteer workers and the generosity of teachers, and they are covered by small grants and donations from local sponsors.

Both Stone and White agree that BU has had benefits for Bethel beyond anything they could have imagined, and they just keep, er, *popping up*. “I keep hearing of more people who’ve moved to the community in part because they were excited about BU, or now know how to get involved in the community because of BU,” says Stone. And now, a few other Vermont towns that learned of BU have contacted them, expressing interest in starting their own community colleges.

Think you’d like to teach a BU course this March? It’s not too late to offer your services. Just contact BU at <http://bethel-universityvt.org/contact/>.

David Gunn, Editor
VLCT News



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Questions? Visit www.vlct.org/eventscalendar to register and for the most updated information and events.

TOWN MEETING TUNE-UP

Wednesday, February 3

Capitol Plaza Hotel and Conference Center,
Montpelier

LOCAL GOVERNMENT DAY IN THE LEGISLATURE

Wednesday, February 10

Capitol Plaza Hotel and Conference Center,
Montpelier

SPRING SELECTBOARD INSTITUTE

Saturday, March 12

Capitol Plaza Hotel and Conference Center,
Montpelier

SPRING AUDITORS WORKSHOP

Tuesday, March 29

Capitol Plaza Hotel and Conference Center,
Montpelier

DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTORS WORKSHOP

Wednesday, April 6

Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee

TAX APPEALS WORKSHOP

Tuesday, May 3

Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee

Tuesday, May 10

Holiday Inn, Rutland

HR/EMPLOYMENT LAW WORKSHOP

Thursday, June 2

Capitol Plaza Hotel and Conference Center,
Montpelier

GOVERNMENTAL ACCOUNTING AND AUDITING

Wednesday, June 8

Capitol Plaza Hotel and Conference Center,
Montpelier

SPRING PLANNING AND ZONING FORUM

Wednesday, June 15

Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee

Save the Date!

↓

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT DAY
IN THE LEGISLATURE**

February 10, 2016

Check out all of the upcoming MAC workshops online at www.vlct.org/eventscalendar!