



# ACRPC

*update* January 2010

## ACRPC Full Commission Meeting Program: Report on the Future of Vermont Wednesday, January 13<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 p.m.

This month, to kick off the new year, ACRPC has invited Paul Costello, the Executive Director of the Vermont Council on Rural Development, to discuss the Council's work on the "Future of Vermont". The Council has noted that about once a generation Vermonters have paused from their daily concerns and seasonal politics to take part in statewide conversation that consider where we are, where we are going, and the realities and trends that will influence our common future.

Such studies have resulted in major findings about who we are as a people and the evolving assumptions and goals we share. They also have led us, as a state, to identify a set of values that emerge from our special Vermont sense of place and dedication to community. From the study by the Commission on Country Life in 1929 to the Commission on Vermont's Future in 1988, these studies have engaged and united Vermonters, inspired leaders, and initiated practical gubernatorial and legislative initiatives.

The Council on the Future of Vermont has completed and published its recent survey of Vermonters entitled, "Imagining Vermont: Values and Vision for the Future." Paul will share some of the Council's vision and findings with us. Please join us for an informative discussion regarding the future of Vermont and the role ACRPC can play in that future.

The public is invited to attend our monthly presentations and Full Commission Meetings. For more information, contact Adam Lougee at 388-3141 or [alougee@sover.net](mailto:alougee@sover.net).

## Commission Calendar

	1	Holiday - New Year's - Office Closed
	5	7-9 PM Natural Resources Committee
	8	8:00 AM ACTR
	8	12-2 PM Energy Committee
January	11	9:00 AM "Way To Go" Planning Meeting
	11	8:00 AM Legislative Meeting, Vergennes
	13	7:30 PM Full Commission
	19	7:00 PM Emergency Management Roundtable
	21	7:00 PM ACSWMD
	25	8:00 AM Legislative Meeting, Ilsley Library, Middlebury
	26	7-9 PM Natural Resources Committee
	27	6:30 PM Executive Board
	28	7-9 PM EECBG Programs Available to Towns through ACRPC
February	5	12-2 PM Energy Committee
	10/11	All Day Better Buildings by Design, Sheraton Conference Center, Burlington
	10	7:30 PM Full Commission
	18	7:00 PM ACSWMD
	24	6:30 PM Executive Board

### ACRPC Policy on Meeting Cancellations

ACRPC will automatically cancel scheduled meetings when the National Weather Service has issued a weather **warning** (with the exception of a freeze warning) issued either for Addison County or specifically for any of our Region's communities that is in effect beginning one hour prior to the scheduled start of the meeting and to one hour past the scheduled end of the meeting. The weather **warning** must be in place at noon for an evening meeting and at 7 am for a daytime meeting. Those attending should always use their own discretion to determine whether they should travel.

To determine whether ACRPC has cancelled a meeting, attendees should check with the National Weather Service at: [www.weather.gov/btv](http://www.weather.gov/btv) or (802) 862-8711 or 658-0150. Additionally, ACRPC staff will send out an e-mail to potential attendees, post a notice on its website ([www.acrpc.org](http://www.acrpc.org)), and leave a message on its phone (802-388-3141) whenever practicable.

Meetings are open to the public and held at ACRPC unless otherwise noted. For further info, contact 388-3141.

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# Events

## **Better Buildings by Design Conference Wednesday & Thursday, February 10 & 11 Sheraton Conference Center, Burlington**

Better Buildings by Design is the region's premier design and construction conference, featuring interactive learning about building durability, efficiency, and value for both residential and commercial projects. Choose from over 30 workshops, experience the latest products and services presented by over 50 exhibitors, and network with over 1000 design and construction professionals.

Registration is available at:

<http://www.encyvermont.org/pages/Business/BuildingEfficiently/BetterBuildingByDesignConferen/>

### **Stewardship of the Urban Landscape Course**

Vermonters can learn about tree care and explore urban and community forestry issues through a course offered statewide this winter. The Stewardship of the Urban Landscape (SOUL) Tree Stewards course will be offered by the Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program at 12 sites around the state. The course will run Thursday evenings, February 11 to April 8, 2010. The Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program is run in partnership by the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation and the University of Vermont Extension Service.

The SOUL Tree Steward training program teaches volunteers how to plan for, plant and maintain trees in the "built environment." The eight-week course curriculum includes the following topics: tree identification, tree biology, landscape planning and design, tree planting, tree maintenance and pruning, municipal forest management, tree health, risk tree management, tree inventories, establishing a tree committee, funding community forestry, conservation planning, species selection, working with volunteers, public speaking, working with media and developing a tree policy. In addition to the evening sessions, the course features four hands-on Saturday sessions and an online course component.

The SOUL Tree Stewards course is open to anyone. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. Pre-registration for the course is required. Registration is \$100. Scholarships may be available; for more information and to register online, visit the SOUL Tree Stewards website at <http://www.uvm.edu/extension/environment/?Page=landscape.html>. For information, contact Kate Forrer at [katherine.forrer@uvm.edu](mailto:katherine.forrer@uvm.edu), 802-223-2389, ext. 25, or toll-free (in-state) at 1-866-860-1382 or see [www.vtcommunityforestry.com](http://www.vtcommunityforestry.com).

## **Addison County Green Energy Expo Call for Exhibitors and Sponsors**

You are invited to exhibit or sponsor at the 2010 Addison County Green Energy Expo (our third year!) on Saturday, March 13th at Middlebury Union High School. This year's event will have a greater focus on local food. Look for the Farmers' Corner featuring members of the Addison County Food Collaborative. This year's keynote speaker will be Jim Merkel, author of "Radical Simplicity: Small Footprints on a Finite Earth." In his address, Jim will suggest many Yankee-practical lifestyle steps to help lighten your ecological footprint and brighten our prospects for the years ahead. The cost of a 10' x 10' Exhibitors booth for this one-day event is \$100. Contact Robert Keren to register for a booth at [greenenergyexpo@yahoo.com](mailto:greenenergyexpo@yahoo.com). Sponsorships are \$250, which include an Exhibitors booth. Sponsors may contact Grover Usilton at [gusilton@nationalbankmiddlebury.com](mailto:gusilton@nationalbankmiddlebury.com).

The Green Energy Expo is organized by the Addison County Chamber of Commerce, Addison County Economic Development Corporation, Addison County Regional Planning Commission, Addison County Relocalization Network (ACoRN), Middlebury College, The National Bank of Middlebury and The Town of Middlebury.

### **Legislative Meetings**

Join Chamber of Commerce members for meetings with Addison County's legislators on Monday, January 11th in Vergennes (location TBD) and Monday, January 25th in Middlebury, in the Community Room at the Ilsley Library. Both meetings start at 8:00 a.m. These meetings are an informal opportunity to meet with our legislative contingent on whatever topics concern you that will be discussed and acted upon in the legislative session. In a time when the state is struggling to balance services and cost, your input is imperative. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Sue Hoxie at 388-7951 or [sue@addison-county.com](mailto:sue@addison-county.com).

### **2010 Legislative Session Calendar:**

Legislators Return - Jan. 5, 2010 at 10 a.m.  
Statehouse, Montpelier

State of the State Address - Jan. 7, 2010 at 2 p.m.  
House Chamber, Statehouse

Blue Ribbon Tax Commission - Jan. 19, 2010  
133 State Street, Montpelier

# Assistance

## **Open Invitation to Town Emergency Managers**

This is an open invitation to Town Emergency Managers to attend a “roundtable discussion” to be held at the ACRPC offices at 14 Seminary Street on January 19th starting at 7 pm. In the model of the Zoning Administrator Roundtables which started a few years ago, we hope to bring together the appointed Emergency Managers in the region to network, get their questions answered, and to learn about current events in the EM world.

Invitees are limited to appointed Emergency Managers and their deputies to keep the size of the group manageable. If this roundtable is well received, attendees may wish to schedule another. If you would like to send questions or topics in advance we will create a list and be prepared with both “official” and unofficial answers. For additional information, contact Tim Bouton, [tbouton@sover.net](mailto:tbouton@sover.net) or 388-3141.

## **ACRPC To Provide Assistance to Towns Under the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant**

ACRPC anticipates receiving two direct Block Grants. The first has four components, one of which is to identify and implement or help to implement energy efficiency measures in municipal and community school buildings within the region. ACRPC will hire trained energy auditors to inspect up to 21 public buildings within the region. Audits will identify opportunities to improve electrical and thermal efficiencies in these buildings, and the feasibility of adding particular renewable energy infrastructure. The audits will offer a set of recommended actions which will reduce energy consumption, enable conversion to renewable energy resources, and result in savings for local taxpayers. ACRPC will also provide technical assistance to help municipalities access ARRA EECBG grant money available on a competitive basis to implement the activities recommended by the audit.

Additionally, ACRPC will competitively hire contractors to implement certain cost-effective energy efficiency improvements in the County Sheriff’s office and jail, as recommended in the Energy Audit conducted by the Addison County Sheriff’s office. The Addison County Sheriff’s office and jail are housed in an old building originally constructed in 1845. While the building remains functional, it needs extensive energy improvements to help it operate more efficiently. Its current audit recommends a variety of thermal and electrical maintenance and improvements to reduce the overall energy usage of the building, improve its current conditions, and reduce the structure’s maintenance cost over time.

Third, ACRPC will initiate an electric vehicle charging network and operate an electric vehicle demonstration

program for Addison County. ACRPC will purchase one electric/hybrid vehicle, to be utilized by ACRPC staff when attending business meetings. ACRPC will also purchase two charging stations to be installed outside the ACRPC offices. One will be used to charge the ACRPC electric/hybrid vehicle, and the other one will be available to the public.

Fourth, ACRPC will work with one municipality to create a Clean Energy Assessment District, which allows the municipality to use its bonding authority to create a revolving loan fund designed to allow citizens to borrow low-interest funds from the municipality to purchase energy conservation or generating equipment for their property. This project helps to implement legislation passed by the State of Vermont in 2008 designed to allow municipalities to encourage energy efficiency and local generation of renewable energy sources by its citizens.

A second direct grant will support additional energy programs to be coordinated by ACRPC to conduct research, provide outreach and educational programming, provide planning and other technical assistance, assist with grant writing, and develop comprehensive, far-reaching, and long-term energy conservation and renewable energy strategies, programs and projects within Addison County.

## **Informational Meeting on EECBG Programs Thursday, January 28, 7-9 PM**

An informational presentation on the programs to be provided by ACRPC, supported by EECBG grants, will be offered to municipal officials and staff, town energy coordinators, and their committees at the ACRPC offices on Thursday, January 28, from 7-9 pm. For more information on ACRPC’s Energy Programs contact Elizabeth Golden at 388-3141 or [egolden@sover.net](mailto:egolden@sover.net) or visit our website at [www.acrpc.org](http://www.acrpc.org).

## **New Water Quality Certification Procedure**

The Agency of Natural Resources adopted a written procedure for processing applications for water quality certifications under the Federal Clean Water Act specifically for hydroelectric projects. The final procedure, an application form, and a responsiveness summary for comments received during the public notice period is available on the Hydroelectric Power page at <http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/fed/damsafety/hydropower.htm>.

The Hydrology Program, which administers the certification process, is returning to the Water Quality Division effective January 1, within the Rivers Management Section. For assistance in permitting for hydroelectric development, contact Brian Fitzgerald at [brian.fitzgerald@state.vt.us](mailto:brian.fitzgerald@state.vt.us).

# Grants

## Rural Business Enterprise Grant

Vermont anticipates a statewide allocation of approximately \$176,000 for Fiscal 2010 and we are now inviting applications to compete for funding. Eligible applicants for grant funds include non-profits, municipalities, development corporations & state agencies.

**Program Priorities:** Nearly all business sectors can be assisted with the program. However, USDA-RD is placing specific emphasis on the particular business sectors in 2010. Only initial application projects meeting one or more of the following criteria will be considered for additional State Director points in this year's program: Projects must develop expand or enhance the viability of agricultural or forestry related value-added businesses; impact locally produced / locally manufactured food networks and/or distribution systems; assist in the development or expansion of cooperatively owned businesses (including healthcare); support manufacturing; and/or integrate technology – i.e. web sales, web design, business IT assessment/planning

Technical assistance (i.e. feasibility studies, marketing plans) and equipment purchases (grantee must retain ownership) are encouraged (i.e. shared biz incubator equipment). Projects involving construction or revolving loan funds are discouraged.

Fiscal 2009 was an exceptional year for funding. USDA is not anticipating additional ARRA funding or Disaster Declaration Assistance funding beyond their anticipated \$176,000 allocation.

Application packages can be found on-line at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/vt/vtnhrbegapplications.htm>  
To learn more about the program, please visit the following website: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/rbeg.htm>

Please call the Addison County contact, Karen Lynch in Montpelier, to pre-screen your project at 802-828-6044 or [karen.lynch@vt.usda.gov](mailto:karen.lynch@vt.usda.gov).

## Community Wildfire Protection Planning Opportunity

ACRPC is trying to determine whether there is any interest in the Addison Region for wildfire protection planning. We have been given an opportunity to apply for 50% grant funding that would support development of plans in one or two communities. Appropriate communities would have considerable lands in either national or state forest, would have an active fire department, planning commission and select board willing to commit to the process. The plans will assist in identification of wildfire hazards, wildfire preparedness and how the community can reduce those risks through planning.

Using a model created for the Town of Rochester, the public will be encouraged to give input particularly in planning for land use which can reduce the risks associated with the Urban Wildfire Interface. Planning and zoning regulations which address water supply and emergency vehicle access will be encouraged, as are clear zones around residences in wooded areas, fire resistant roofing and siding as well as public education. If you feel your community would be able to provide a dedicated group willing to address these issues, please contact Tim Bouton at [tbouton@sover.net](mailto:tbouton@sover.net) or 388-3141. If there is enough interest, ACRPC will apply for funds to support the development of these plans.

## Municipal Planning Grants Threatened

The House Appropriations Committee is working to put together the budget adjustment bill for the current fiscal year. This bill is generally a half-year correction of the appropriations bill passed at the end of the previous session. Jim Reardon told the Appropriations Committee that the Department of Housing, Economic and Community Development held back the first round of funding for Municipal Planning Grants and that no complaints had been heard so the administration is proposing to eliminate the Municipal Planning Grants for this year. Municipal Planning Grants are made to support efforts to update municipal plans, zoning and subdivision bylaws and similar projects. In 1988, the year Act 200 was passed, \$1,000,000 was distributed to local governments. That amount grew to \$1,250,000 in 1989 and 1990. Then in the years 1994 - 1996, funding for municipal planning was zeroed out. In the ensuing years, funding was slowly increased to a high of \$860,000 in 2007 and 2008.

In FY 09, the last year in which Municipal Planning Grants were made, the department received 91 applications according to their own records. The total dollar amount of available funding was \$817,051. The total amount of requests embodied in the 91 applications was \$1,078,319. Awards were made to 40 municipalities. The appropriations bill for FY 10 halved funding for Municipal Planning Grants to \$410,000. And now, the proposal is to eliminate that funding, with not \$1 having been granted to any municipality, yet all the requirements of Title 24, Chapter 117, the municipal planning statute, remain.

Please contact the House Appropriations Committee to express your concern with the elimination of this program. Members of the House Appropriations Committee are Representatives Martha Heath, Chair; Mark Larsen; Bob Helm; Joe Acinapura; Howard Crawford; Mitzi Johnson; Kathleen Keenan; Ann Manwaring; Alice Miller; Sue Minter and John Morley. You may leave messages for them at the Sergeant at Arms Office 800-322-5616 or fax 802-828-2424 or go to the legislative website, [www.leg.state.vt.us](http://www.leg.state.vt.us) to find individual e-mail addresses. For more information, contact Karen B. Horn, Director, Public Policy & Advocacy at VLCT at 802-229-9111 or [khorn@vlct.org](mailto:khorn@vlct.org).