



ACRPC

update June 2009

**ACRPC Energy Committee Program:
Energy Conservation**
Thursday, June 25, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

**Zoning Fair for Municipal
Land Use Officials**
July 8 - VLCT Offices, Montpelier

Before adding a solar array, a wind tower, or a geothermal heat system, think CONSERVATION! Not only is the conservation of energy resources your greatest potential for savings, conservation efforts should be in place before you measure your energy needs, which are the basis for sizing your renewable energy system. Efficiency Vermont presents what you must know about conservation and answers your individual questions.

Zoning Administrators, Planners and Staff to appropriate municipal panels are invited to share examples of application forms (zoning, subdivision, floodplain, site plan, conditional use, variance, etc.), application checklists, and excerpted Bylaws describing a town's application process and requirements necessary for a complete application at this event. Contact Stephanie Smith at ssmith@vlct.org or 802-229-9111 to register.

Commission Calendar

	Day	Time	Event
June	5	12:00	Energy Committee
	9	5:00	MAGWAC Annual Meeting
	10	7:30	Full Commission
	11	9-12	Western Corridor
	17	7:00	Transportation Advisory Committee
	18	7-9	ACSWMD
	23	7:00	Natural Resources Committee
	24	6:30	Executive Board
	25	7-9	Conservation Program
	July	3	12:00
8		7:30	Full Commission
16		7-9	ACSWMD
22		6:30	Executive Board
23		7-9	Power with Heat Recovery Program

Trail Finder Expands to Addison County

The on-line Trail Finder will triple its geographic area to include Addison and Grand Isle Counties starting June 2. Over three years in development with seventy volunteers, the Trail Finder is a free on-line resource with over 100 walking, hiking, mountain biking and skiing trails in western Vermont. Residents and visitors alike can get maps and directions, learn about the trails' features, see photos and submit comments. The Trail Finder is a partnership between sixty towns, trail groups, tourism entities, and regional planning organizations. Trail managers have helped provide data and have special access to the Trail Finder's "back end" to update information instantly. To access the Trail Finder resource or to volunteer to map trails, go to:

www.localmotion.org/trails

Local Responses to Climate Change Talk and MAGWAC Annual Meeting

June 9, 5-6:30 pm @ ACRPC

Get updated on the climate change crisis from Middlebury College's Rich Wolfson. Hear the status on local solutions to reduce greenhouse gasses rapidly from the Middlebury Area Global Warming Action Coalition. Annual meeting to follow the program. Contact Laura Asermily at 803-388-9478 for more information.

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

This newsletter is financed through the State of Vermont Dept. of Housing and Community Affairs. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the State of Vermont. All programs of the Addison County Regional Planning Commission are handicapped accessible.

News & Events

Along Champlain's Shores The 15th Annual Preservation Conference and Awards Luncheon

Friday, June 12, 10 am - 5:30 pm
Isle La Motte

Program: Native American life, French settlement, and early exploration

Joseph Bruchac, Avenaki storyteller and author

Jesse Bruchac, Abenaki linguist, musician and founder of *Dawn Land Singers*

Art Cohn, Director, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum

Jessica Desany, archeologist and Fort St. Anne scholar

Explore Isle La Motte: Afternoon Tours and Open Houses

The Pink Lighthouse

Goodsell Ridge Preserve: a 450-million year old reef

Barn Tours

Isle La Motte Historical Society Properties

4:00 - 5:30 Closing Reception, music, and art exhibit at the lakefront Fisk Farm and Quarry

This is a Quadricentennial Event presented by the Preservation Trust of Vermont and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation.

Registration is \$50; or \$25 for Lake Champlain Island residents. Register at ptvermont.org, or call 802-828-3540.

Vermont Disaster Volunteers Needed

Although the majority of disasters in Vermont happen locally, a disaster will occur with little or no warning, and may escalate to exceed the response capability of a single local authority. Achieving individual and community preparedness is the first line of defense against disasters. You can help respond to a large scale emergency, disaster or public health emergency. Please register with the Vermont Emergency Response Volunteers Program to provide critical support in time of need at <https://verv.vermont.gov/volunteermobilizer> or call the Vermont Dept. of Health at 802-803-7205.

Amazing Nature Based "Project Adventure" Training Opportunity

July 12-14

Common Ground Center, Starksboro

United Way of Addison County is making it possible for organizations throughout Addison County to sign up staff and volunteers for high quality training by Project Adventure, Inc. of Massachusetts www.pa.org. In return for the free three day training, participants will work as a team to support each other's nature based group projects throughout the year. The goal of the United Way grant, which was awarded to Addison County Court Diversion on behalf of the Addison County Nature Network, is to provide scholarships for 15 individuals from Addison County organizations to:

- Learn the nuts and bolts of adventure-based group work.
- Have hands-on experience with a range of activities that can be done with minimal or no equipment that address the areas of goal setting, communication, leadership, conflict resolution, positive peer support and appropriate risk taking.
- Learn facilitation skills including debriefing, framing, activity selection, sequencing and group development skills.
- Brainstorm ways to take the learning and use it within their programs and agencies.

Applications are due before June 16 to Crystal Grant at Court Diversion, PO Box 881, Middlebury, VT 05753, accdcjpc@sover.net, (802) 388-3888.

EPA Local Climate and Energy Program

The Environmental Protection Agency has recently launched the Local Climate and Energy Program to assist local governments in reducing pollution, increasing energy efficiency and improving overall public health. The site has many great resources: <http://www.epa.gov/RDEE/energy-programs/state-and-local/local.html> Within this site, be sure to check out the Programs and Resources to Support Best Practices site that houses information on an array of topics including how to purchase green power and energy efficient products, how to drive energy efficiency in affordable housing and how to mitigate costs for municipal water and wastewater treatment. Visit: <http://www.epa.gov/RDEE/energy-programs/state-and-local/local-best-practices.html>

News & Events

Vermont Feed-In Tariff H. 446 Becomes Law

Vermont's feed-in tariff legislation became law at the end of business on May 27, 2009. H. 446 is the first legislation calling for a full system of advanced renewable tariffs in the US to pass the legislature and become law. The bill includes changes to Vermont's Sustainably Priced Energy Enterprise Development Program (SPEED) that would implement a pilot feed-in tariff policy.

Vermont's action follows closely on that of the Ontario provincial legislature's groundbreaking Green Energy Act and with several states considering similar legislation, the Green Mountain state could be the tipping point for a rapid succession of feed-in tariff policies across the continent.

It may be small states, such as Vermont, and municipalities, such as Gainesville, Florida, that could drive new renewable energy policy in the US and not the big states of California or Florida that are hopelessly embroiled in partisan stalemates.

Unlike the policy in Washington State and in the crude feed-in tariff in California, Vermont's legislation bases the tariffs on the cost of generation plus a reasonable profit. Costs of the program in Vermont are borne by ratepayers, not taxpayers as in the Washington State system.

One unique feature in the Vermont program not found in Ontario is a specific tariff for small wind turbines, those less than 15 kW. Though several bills have contained proposed tariffs for small wind turbines, Vermont's legislation is the first to become law with long term contracts. The tariff of \$0.20/kWh is the highest in North America.

Though it has a low program cap of only 50 MW, Vermont's feed-in tariff policy is a serious commitment by a state of its size. Vermont has a population of little more than 600,000.

Vermont's feed-in tariff program contains the key elements of the successful policies found in Europe.

- * Tariffs are differentiated by technology
- * Tariffs are differentiated by size.
- * Tariffs set on the cost of generation plus profit
- * Profit set by a reasonable rate of return
- * Long contract terms
- * Regular program review

As the technology progresses, Vermont renewable energy advocates expect the tariffs will decrease. The bill directs the Vermont Public Service Board to review and reset the tariffs every two years. The first review begins

September 15, 2009 when the PSB will open a case on the tariffs contained in the legislation.

Renewable Energy Vermont (REV) led the successful grassroots' campaign, the first of its kind in New England to focus on feed-in tariffs. REV's Executive Director, Andrew Perchlik, notes that, "This law puts Vermont in a leadership role on renewable energy policy and will help to bring vibrant growth and development to our local renewable energy industry."

Here are several key elements of H. 446:

- * Program cap of 50 MW
- * Project size cap of 2.2 MW
- * Contract term: 20 years
- * Wind energy tariffs
 - o <15 kW: \$0.20/kWh
 - o >15 kW: \$0.14/kWh
- * Landfill and biogas tariff of \$0.12/kWh
- * Solar tariff of \$0.30/kWh
- * Future tariffs based on cost of generation plus profit less applicable tax credits and other incentives
- * Profit set at rate of return of Vermont electric utilities
- * Open a regulatory examination of the tariffs by September 15, 2009 and new rates set in January, 2010

Under Vermont law the governor had the choice to sign the legislation into law, veto the bill, or to let it become law without his signature. He chose the latter course to the joy of long-suffering renewable energy advocates in Vermont.

In a statement, republican Governor James Douglas said, "Even though this bill does set statutory standard offer rates, which I believe is inappropriate, because the Public Service Board must revisit those rates within the next four months and periodically thereafter, I will allow this bill to become law without my signature."

The effort now shifts to the Public Service Board to ensure that the hard won progress on tariff setting is not lost in the regulatory fog.

Many thanks to Brent Bailey, 25 x 25 State Facilitator at Renewable Energy Vermont for this report, written by Paul Gipe. Brent can be reached at 601-573-4815, bbailey@25x25.org.

For more informaton from Paul Gipe, go to <http://www.renewableenergyworld.com/rea/author?id=33>

For information on REV, go to <http://www.revermont.org/>

Grants/Events

VTrans Enhancement Program

Do you have a transportation or traffic-related problem affecting your community? Each year, the ACRPC Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) sets aside a portion of their annual funding received to hire consultants to perform various transportation studies for towns in the county. In the past, TAC has sponsored feasibility studies related to: transit, bike/ped paths & sidewalks, intersection studies, and much more. These feasibility studies are a critical (and often necessary requirement) for procuring state and Federal funding support for projects. Next year, the VTrans Enhancement Program, which provides funding for many local projects, will have a significant one-time increase in program funding due to the Federal stimulus money that has come to the state. This is a very good time to be developing projects that might leverage some of those funds.

If you are interested in applying for a TAC sponsored study, applications must be submitted to the ACRPC office by June 16th at 4:00 pm (Note: these funds cannot be used for construction projects.) The TAC will evaluate all requests at their June 17, 2009 meeting. Applicants chosen for further consideration will be asked to submit a proposal and make a presentation on the project at the August 19 TAC meeting. If you have any questions, please contact Rick Kehne at ACRPC at 388-3141, or e-mail him at rkehne@sover.net.

National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Program

The National Park Service helps partners plan successful locally-led outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation projects. If you have an idea for your community or organization, call RTCA to discuss your project and for further guidance. The deadline for the next round of assistance is August 1. Visit www.nps.gov/rtca for more information.

Affordable Housing Report Released

Vermont had the tightest rental housing market in the nation in 2008, according to the VDCA report, with a rental vacancy rate of 3.5%. Home ownership vacancy rate was 1.6%, the fourth lowest in the nation. The median price of a primary home in VT in 2008 was \$200,000. A household would need \$63,000 in income as well as \$14,000 in cash for closing costs and a down payment to purchase that home. Sixty one percent of VT's households have incomes BELOW \$63,000.

Middlebury Area Land Trust Hikes and Outings

Protect the Water Quality of Otter Creek with Rain Gardens and Green Roofs

June 13, 9:00 am

Led by Chris Robbins, Water Quality Specialist, and Emma Melvin, VT Sea Grant Water Quality Specialist

See what others have done and you can do to help control storm water runoff. A one mile walk in Middlebury. Meet at Otter View Park, on the corner of Weybridge Street and Pulp Mill Bridge Road. An Otter Creek Audubon and MALT collaboration.

Bobolinks and Meadowlarks

June 20, 8:00 am

Led by Warren King, Ornithologist.

Come visit a former farm currently being managed to enhance habitat to support breeding populations of our once common grassland birds, whose populations in Vermont are now in serious decline. Learn about the birds' needs in their winter range, as well. Meet at Otter View Park on the corner of Weybridge Street and Pulp Mill Bridge Road. An Otter Creek Audubon and MALT collaboration.

All hikes are free and open to the public. A \$5 donation is appreciated. Participants are encouraged to wear sturdy foot gear. Hikes take place rain or shine and are 2-1/2 hours in length. All walks and hikes transverse various terrain and trail conditions may vary based on the weather. These are hiking trails, not paved walkways, and are not recommended for children's strollers.

(continued from left)

The average fair market rent for a modest, two-bedroom apartment in VT reached \$914 in 2008. A household would have to earn \$35,500 annually to afford that rent. At least 52% of VT's non-farm employees - more than 151,216 people - have wages BELOW that level. Housing is generally defined as affordable when a household has to pay no more than 30 percent of its income for rent and utilities, or for a mortgage, taxes and insurance. With home prices and rents rising at a rate faster than wages, housing becomes less affordable for more people.