



ACRPC

update March 2012

PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) Passes in Five Addison County Towns

At this year's Town Meeting five Addison County towns voted on whether to become PACE Districts. The measure passed in all five towns; Ferrisburgh, Middlebury, Monkton, Ripton, and Weybridge. PACE is an innovative financing program that intends to make it easier for home owners to invest in energy efficiency and / or renewable energy projects. This new program allows for re-payment periods up to 20 years, so that the annual savings in energy costs may exceed the annual cost of the financing.

Efficiency Vermont will be the statewide administrator of the program and will work closely with the new PACE Districts on the design of the program. For more information, visit <http://efficiencyvermont.com/PACE> or contact ACRPC Planner Kevin Lehman at 388-3141 or kevinl@acrpc.org.

Vermont Gas to Host Open Houses in Addison County

Vermont Gas first began discussions concerning the possibility of extending its system south to Addison County approximately two years ago. At that time, Vermont Gas stated that it needed the permission of the Public Service Board to divert some funds from its existing customers in Chittenden and Franklin Counties to support expansion of the system to Addison County. It received that permission in 2011 and began exploring the feasibility (financial, engineering, environmental and systems capacity) of their ability to expand. They have found the project to be feasible, have established a project budget of approximately \$58 Million Dollars and are now reaching out to local officials to explore potential routes in more detail.

The process is beginning to move quickly. Vermont Gas hopes to choose a preferred route this spring, begin engineering and field work this summer and to be prepared to file an application with the Public Service Board by next year, 2013. They hope to begin providing service to Vergennes and Middlebury by 2015.

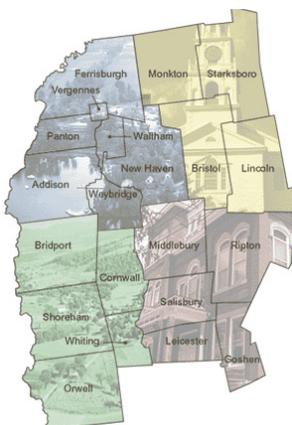
Natural Gas could be an important piece of infrastructure for the region. It is very cost competitive, currently about 50% less than home heating oil. It has potential to promote economic development in the

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Commission Calendar

March 2012	14	7:30pm	Full Commission
	15	7:00	Addison County Solid Waste Management District
	22	7:30	Energy Committee
	26	5:00-6:30	ACORN Network
	28	6:30pm	ACRPC Executive Board
	29	7:00pm	Energy Forum: Financing for Low Income Households

Meetings are held at ACRPC, 14 Seminary Street, Middlebury, and are open to the public.



Addison County Regional Planning Commission
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News / Grants

region by making our businesses more competitive. ACRPC and the regions citizens and municipalities need to discuss whether and how good planning will allow this infrastructure to support economic development opportunities in appropriate locations and limit unintended consequences in other areas.

Vermont Gas is interested in hearing from citizens and communities. They have organized the following open houses to discuss the pros and cons of the project for the region and the routes they might choose for the proposed pipeline:

- Vergennes American Legion (100 Armory Lane): March 14th, 7 - 9 pm
- Middlebury American Legion (10 Boardman Street): March 15th, 7 - 9 pm
- New Haven Town Hall (78 North St.): March 21th, 7 - 9 pm

Additionally, Vermont Gas will be at ACRPC's Full Commission meeting on April 11, 2012.

Get Those Kiddos Outside!

Do your children or grandchildren walk or bike to school? If they are like the majority of children in Vermont, they probably do not. Our towns and villages have been dedicated to the automobile for so long, that walking and biking around town may not be a safe option anymore, or the school is too far away from home. This is where the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program can help. The Vermont Safe Routes to School Resource Center is working with schools and communities across Vermont to promote encouragement, education, enforcement, and evaluation activities to support walking and biking to and around schools. Thirty three schools across Vermont have partnered with SRTS, including Addison County Schools: Mary Hogan Elementary in Middlebury, Bee-man Elementary in New Haven, Bristol Elementary, Lincoln Community School and Ferrisburgh Central school.

Schools who actively Partner with the Resource

Center receive tools and assistance to build a successful and sustainable SRTS programs—whether they are new to the program or have been participating for years. The Resource Center also works with local governments and organizations, or Friends, to build local capacity and support for walking and biking activities. To learn more about the program and its free resources available to your community visit www.saferoutesvt.org or contact Claire Tebbs at ACRPC 388-3141, ctebbs@acrpc.org.

\$500 Go Vermont Grants

The VTrans Public Transit Section is offering grants to municipalities to assist in building a statewide outreach and advocacy network for the Go Vermont Program. Go Vermont is a web-based clearinghouse for all transportation modes in Vermont, featuring an automated carpool, vanpool and public transit matching service, a vanpool program, information for State Park and Ride locations, and a link to "511" traffic conditions. VTrans will provide a \$500 grant to participating municipal energy committees and local selectboards.

For more information about the grant and some possible local activities, visit <http://www.vecan.net/content.php?ID=55>. Interested parties should contact Ross MacDonald at 802-828-5577 or at ross.macdonald@state.vt.us.

Request for Proposals: Local Implementation Grants

Applications Due Tuesday, March 27th, 2012

The Lake Champlain Basin Program is pleased to announce the 2012 Local Implementation Grant programs, including:

- Pollution Prevention Grants (up to \$15,000 per grant),
- Aquatic Invasive Species Spread Prevention Grants (up to \$15,000 per grant),
- Shoreline Protection and Habitat Conservation Grants (up to \$10,000 per grant) and
- Education and Outreach Grants (up to \$7,500

Grants / Events

per grant).

The LCBP anticipates awarding more than 40 grants, reflecting \$450,000 in the 2012 program budget, to support local community involvement toward the implementation of the comprehensive management plan Opportunities for Action: An Evolving Plan for the Future of the Lake Champlain Basin plan.lcbp.org. Grant funds are anticipated through existing or imminent agreements with the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and the U S Environmental Protection Agency.

Grant Guidelines are available in the grants section of the LCBP website at www.lcbp.org/grants.htm with more information about how the grant program works, to help you prepare a competitive application.

Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative Training for Water Sampling Volunteers

*Saturday, March 24, 2012, 9:00 - 11:00am
ACRPC Office, 14 Seminary St., Middlebury*

The Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative has been working for 20 years to monitor the quality of Addison County rivers, streams and creeks. Water samples are collected once a month from spring ice-out to September and sent to the state DEC lab in Waterbury for analysis. We are looking for volunteers to help collect those samples. Sample days are Sundays in the spring, and Wednesday mornings during the summer.

We are looking for volunteers to help sample on the Otter Creek, Middlebury River, Lemon Fair River, New Haven River, Lewis Creek, Little Otter Creek, and Mud Creek.

If you have an interest in the health and well being of our local watersheds, and would like to assist in collecting samples, please join us! Contact Heidi Willis with questions (352-4327).

Farm-to-School Community to Gather at County-Wide Stone Soup Summit

The Addison County Relocalization Network (ACORN Network) will host the third-annual Stone Soup Summit on April 3rd at Vergennes Union High School. Stone Soup took place at Mt. Abe Union High School in 2010, Middlebury Union High School in 2011, and will visit the final district of Addison County in 2012.

The conference is named for the proverbial meal created entirely through the generosity and diverse resources of a single community. ACORN's goal is to bring together stakeholders in the county to share ideas and inspiration with others working on similar Farm-to-school projects.

Farm-to-school is the national movement to connect classrooms, cafeterias, and communities in order to improve school nutrition and foster students' abilities to make food choices that are good for their bodies, the environment, and their communities.

Farm-to-school touches nearly everyone in Addison County in some way: from parents who care about what their kids are eating for lunch, to farmers looking to sell locally at a fair price, to healthcare professionals who address childhood weight issues, to the students themselves.

Stone Soup will feature a locally-sourced meal for a suggested donation of \$5. ACORN encourages anyone interested in attending Stone Soup to register for the free event through their website: www.acornvt.org.

Charting a Path to Successful Farms and Clean Water in Vermont

*March 26, 2012, 8:30am - 5:00pm
Bicentennial Hall (Off of Rt. 125), Middlebury College*

In partnership with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Vermont Environmental Consortium (VEC) will hold a conference to discuss

Events

the public policy tools, including incentives, technical and financial assistance, and regulation – that have and will yield results addressing agricultural water pollution in Lake Champlain.

The goals of the conference are to:

- Bridge the growing divide between conservation proponents and agricultural producers in the Lake Champlain basin on the best approach for realizing shared water quality goals;
- Provide accurate scientific information about the current condition of Lake Champlain and its watersheds; and
- Develop a framework for a cooperative vision to address the challenges currently facing Lake Champlain.

To find out more or register, visit <http://vecgreen.com> or call (802) 262-2166.

Educational Program on Community and Micro Hydroelectric Power Projects

*Wednesday, March 21 at 7:00 pm
Hlsley Public Library in Middlebury*

Acorn Renewable Energy Co-op and Addison County Regional Planning Commission will be presenting a program on “Community and Micro Hydroelectric Power Projects.” The two-hour presentation and discussion will feature Fred Dunnington, Middlebury Town Planner, who will report on the status of the potential community hydropower project in Middlebury. In addition, Debra Sachs, Director of Sustainability Initiatives at EcoStrategies, LLC - A Fuss & O’Neill Company, will walk us through plans for a potential micro hydro project in Barre, which will upgrade the water system at Nelson and Hill Streets to generate power from the downhill flows of the main water pipe.

There has been increasing interest in small-scale hydropower projects in Vermont over the last several years, and a call for a clearer process of approval of hydro projects.

Senators Vincent Illuzzi and William Doyle recently introduced S.148, a bill which proposes to require the commissioner of public service, in consultation with the secretary of natural resources, to enter into an agreement with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for a pilot project to expedite development of small hydroelectric plants.

Dunnington and Sachs will explain the processes they have been overseeing in their attempt to facilitate community and micro hydro projects, to provide reliable, low-cost electrical power to Vermont’s homes and businesses.

Green Drinks

*Wednesday March 21, 5:00 -7:00 pm
51 Main at the Bridge (restaurant), Middlebury*

GreenDrinks.org, a global movement focusing on green topics & networking, meets third Wednesday of each month. This month’s theme is green vacations, green retreats with Common Ground Center. Learn what this means. Free snacks, drink discounts. Info: middleburygreendrinks@gmail.com.

Common Ground Center of Starksboro will talk about some of the green construction & energy-saving initiatives they’ve taken, how people can “green” their vacation, retreats, or weddings, and how people can implement these ideas in their own homes.