



802 674 9201 / PO Box 320 / Ascutney Professional Building, Route 5, Ascutney, Vermont 05030

## Fall 2004

Andover / Baltimore / Cavendish / Chester / Ludlow / Reading / Springfield / Weathersfield / West Windsor / Windsor

### **SWCRPC STAFF:**

Thomas J. Kennedy, Executive Director  
Becky Basch, Assistant Director  
April Harkness, Special Projects Coordinator  
Bill Kearns, Regional Planner  
Cyndy Kozara, Regional Planner  
Marjorie LaFlam, Office Administrator  
Cynthia Porter, Fiscal Officer  
Jason Rasmussen, Transportation Planner  
Rachel Zegerius, Recycling Coordinator

### **SWCRPC**

#### **COMMISSIONERS:**

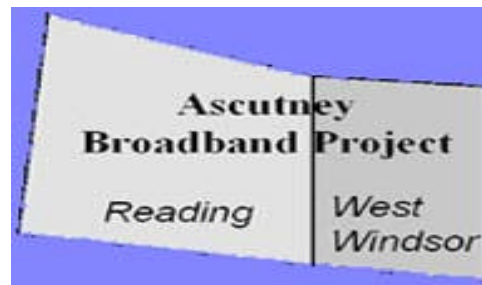
Peter Daniels, Chair, Weathersfield  
Etienne Ting, Vice Chair, Cavendish  
Win Townsend III,  
Secretary/Treasurer, Windsor  
Joseph Fromberger, Andover  
Steve Waldo, Baltimore  
Cecil Waldo, Chester  
Bart Bonanno, Ludlow  
Rose Goings, Alt, Ludlow  
John Stahura, Reading  
Roger Marshall, Springfield  
Don Barrett, Alt, Springfield  
Hal Pyke, West Windsor  
Frank Anthony, Alt, Windsor

## Community Broadband Grant Program

In 2004, Windsor County Senator Matt Dunne, introduced a bill in the legislature, which was subsequently passed, that created the Community Broadband Grant Program. The program made available \$250,000 to create up to five broadband demonstration projects. The purpose of the demonstration projects was to find creative solutions for providing communities with access to high-speed internet service at a reasonable cost.

The SWCRPC staff decided that providing broadband service from the top of Mount Ascutney could potentially provide service to all the towns in southern Windsor County. The RPC also found a broadband firm located in New Hampshire, FINOWEN, that was willing to work with the Commission in developing a business plan and assist in writing the grant application.

Area towns were contacted about the program and the RPC decided to provide staff assistance to the Towns of Reading and West Windsor because they were the most



underserved towns in the region. The Commission developed an interest survey to determine whether there was interest in broadband. A survey was mailed to every household in the two towns, and we received over 200 responses!

The Commission submitted an application in late-October and will be notified in early November whether its application will be funded.

Go to: [www.ascutneybroadband.org](http://www.ascutneybroadband.org) for more information on this program or contact Tom Kennedy at the RPC Offices.

## Training and Resources for New Chapter 117

Staff from SWCRPC will be visiting the planning commissions of each town in the region this fall to help explain the changes to Chapter 117 that were passed by the legislature in May.

As described in the June 4, 2004 memo to all municipalities from DHCA Commissioner, John Hall, this comprehensive overhaul, put into law under Act 115, will have a direct impact on those towns currently in the process of adopting zoning or subdivision bylaw amendments.

If such processes are currently underway in your town, you are encouraged to contact the RPC for advice on how to proceed in bringing your bylaws into compliance with the new law.

For more information, go to the DHCA website: [www.dhca.state.vt.us/Planning/CHAP117.htm](http://www.dhca.state.vt.us/Planning/CHAP117.htm) or [www.vpic.info](http://www.vpic.info).

## Williams River Watershed

There was a disappointingly low turn-out at a community meeting held October 19 in Chester to discuss basin planning for the Williams River. Organizers had hoped to hear from residents and learn what issues and concerns exist in the watershed. The meeting was part of a collaboration of the West River Watershed Alliance, along with the Windham Regional Commission, Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District and SWCRPC. The Williams, West and Saxtons rivers comprise State-designated Basin 11.

Background information on the watershed and the results of water quality testing were presented and discussed at the

meeting. A list of "special areas," such as swimming holes was generated, as well as items of concern and possible volunteer resources for visual assessments of the river, which may include macroinvertebrate studies to better understand the river's health. Feedback will assist a two-year-long effort to develop the Basin 11 Management Plan.

There will be future meetings with Town Selectboards and Planning Commissions. Anyone interested in more information or volunteering should contact Becky Basch or Cyndy Kozara at the RPC offices.



## Highlights of FY 2005 Transportation Work Program

Our annual transportation work program begins in October 2004. This work program, funded through the Vermont Agency of Transportation, will allow the RPC to focus on the following activities this coming year:

- ◆ Complete the update of the Regional Transportation Plan
- ◆ Conduct a survey to assess the unmet transportation needs in the region.
- ◆ Explore inter-regional transportation issues with neighboring RPCs, non-profit agencies, and municipal and business leaders. In partnership with the Upper Valley Transportation Management Association, SWCRPC will seek to identify problems and solutions relative to commuter activity in the greater Upper Valley.
- ◆ Continue to provide technical assistance to towns for transportation planning and project development.
- ◆ Continue to provide informational workshops for local officials.
- ◆ Provide community outreach to complete the VT Route 103 Corridor Study.
- ◆ Continue to assist public transit providers maintain and improve existing services.
- ◆ Assist communities with infrastructure planning, including traffic counts, bridge and culvert inventories, and road surface management system surveys.
- ◆ Continue to work with VTrans and communities to address priority transportation needs in the region.

## TAC Visits Pike Industries in West Lebanon, NH

In August, the Transportation Advisory Committee toured Pike Industries gravel and asphalt plant in West Lebanon, NH. Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee and Windham Regional Commission TAC members, and VAOT officials participated as well in this joint education session organized by Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission. The tour was focused on educating transportation officials, planners, and

project managers about a diversity of issues from transportation project costs to production standards and plant capacities.

Observing the production side of transportation was an educational experience. The magnitude of operations, Pike's attention to mitigating environmental impacts, and their ongoing efforts to maximize production efficien-

cies is impressive. Participants had the privilege of meeting with senior level managers who had a comprehensive working knowledge of production processes and material standards.

It was a dramatically different perspective on transportation and many of us benefited greatly from the tour and related discussions.

## Solid Waste and Recycling

### SOUTHERN WINDSOR/ WINDHAM COUNTIES SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

**Andover**—H. Joseph Fromberger  
**Baltimore**—Robert Schlieman  
**Cavendish**—Al Leonard  
**Chester**—Bruce McEnaney  
**Grafton**—Cynthia Gibbs  
**Ludlow**—Albert Cavoto  
**Plymouth**—Art Lynds  
**Reading**—Jim Peplau  
**Rockingham**—Ed Soboleski  
**Springfield**—Forrest Randall  
**Weathersfield**—Daniel Boyer  
**Westminster**—Glenn Smith  
**West Windsor**—Thomas Kenyon  
**Windsor**—Frank Anthony

For eight months now, the RPC has housed the Recycling Coordinator for the Southern Windsor/Windham Counties Solid Waste Management District. This year, the District was one of five

solid waste organizations to be awarded grant funding from the US Department of Agriculture, securing \$53,000 of the total \$113,000 available statewide. This grant will be used to fund the District Recycling Coordinator position, special program development, and household hazardous waste collection events.

In addition to funding these projects, the District was awarded a Consumer and Youth Education Grant from the VT Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Conservation. Over the upcoming year, state funds will be allocated to initiate a District-wide recycling education campaign. This project will include the creation of a District website, the production and distribution of educational materials, and the implementation of in-class recycling programs presented by the Association of Vermont Recyclers. Through these means, the District is working to attain

its primary goal of a reduction in solid waste generation and disposal in the District. So please, do your part to reduce, reuse and recycle!

Over recent months the District, along with participating member towns, has worked to develop and implement a comprehensive program for the collection and recycling of fluorescent bulbs. As a result of these efforts, all (7) of the transfer stations and drop-off centers located within the District now accept fluorescent bulbs on an on-going basis. Please call the District Recycling Coordinator with any related questions, comments, or concerns.

For more information on recycling in the region, please call Rachel Zegerius at the RPC offices.



## Brownfields Assessment Grant—Looking for Sites



Site investigation work for the \$210,000 Brownfields Assessment Grant is about to begin. Unlike past brownfields assessment grants, this grant will allow site investigations on sites that are contaminated (or thought to be contaminated) only by petroleum. This could include old abandoned gas stations or even residential properties that have not sold due to petroleum contamination issues. Eligible property owners may enter sites into the Southern Windsor County Brownfields Reuse Project by filling out a Site Nomination Form and Eligibility Form. Property owners must allow access to the site and must allow documents to be available for public review.

A Request for Proposals (RFP) has been sent to consultants for remaining site assessment work on the J&L #1 property in Springfield. The Springfield Regional Development Corporation (SRDC) hired ECS of Brattleboro to complete a Corrective Action Plan on the property. However, the State is requiring that further site assessment work be completed before the site is ready for a Corrective Action Plan. An RFP for remaining site assessment work under the EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant will be sent to prospective firms in November.

To obtain forms or more information, contact Becky Basch at the RPC offices.

## Exercise to Test the All-Hazards Emergency Operation Plan

The Local Emergency Planning Committee #3, comprised of the emergency responders, hospital personnel and businesses within thirteen towns of southern and eastern Windsor County, will test its All-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan (AHEOP) at a day-long, table-top exercise on Saturday, November 6<sup>th</sup> at the VA Hospital in White River Junction.

The scenario for the exercise will include terrorism, hazardous materials release, explosions, transportation interruption, and evacuation of affected areas. The site of

including mutual aid agencies. All those desiring to participate were invited to the LEPC #3 meeting on October 13<sup>th</sup>. At that meeting those present discussed with Mike Empey, the exercise planner, the capabilities of their response, which they want tested in this exercise. It is the intent of this exercise to test the AHEOP, the individual plans and capabilities of the responders, hospitals and business, and, to the extent possible, fulfill the need of the participants for accreditation through testing.

All emergency service agencies, businesses handling hazardous materials and hospitals in southern and eastern Windsor County and across the Connecticut River in New Hampshire are encouraged to participate. Those outside this area are invited to attend and observe. In addition, qualified "controllers" and "observers" are needed, and requested from neighboring LEPCs.

Call Bill Kearns at the RPC offices for more information or to RSVP.

## Meetings on Pre-disaster Mitigation and Emergency Planning

Jason Rasmussen and Bill Kearns are meeting with selectboards, municipal officers, highway foremen and emergency services personnel in the towns of SWCRPC concerning Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plans (PDMP) and the regional All-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan (AHEOP).

The PDMP assesses the vulnerabilities of the region in general and each community to known natural hazards and potential man-made incident which may negatively impact the residents,

the environment or property of the region, and plan strategies and actions to fully protect the community from such hazards or reduce the damage the potential incidents may cause the community. Jason leads the discussion and gathers information from the community regarding its preparation and planning to the present and what needs to be done to further mitigate the potential damages a community might suffer from such incidents.

RPC staff will review the community's

Rapid Response Plan or emergency operations plan, its resources (equipment and personnel) and mutual aid agreements, including mutual aid agreements for public works. This information will be incorporated into the AHEOP.

The Towns of Chester and Andover have completed these meetings. Others will be contacted soon.

## Connecticut River Transit

Connecticut River Transit (CRT) currently offers commuter bus service and Medicaid transportation in southern Windsor County and Windham County. Current transit services include bus routes in Chester, Springfield, and Windsor, as well as connections between Springfield and Brattleboro, Springfield and Hanover, NH, Bellows Falls to Okemo, and Bellows Falls to Springfield.

CRT also works cooperatively with human service agencies to provide transportation services to the elderly and persons with disabilities.

**Service information is available online at [www.crtransit.org](http://www.crtransit.org) or by calling (802) 885-5165.**

CRT also offers ridesharing services in Southern Windsor and Windham Counties. Staff maintains a database of people interested in carpooling and contacts them when they find a match. If someone is interested, they can contact CRT at [admin@crtransit.org](mailto:admin@crtransit.org) or call at 1-888-869-6287.

Bill Evans has been named Interim Executive Director of Connecticut River Transit, and will serve at that

capacity for the next six months.

Wagner Associates, a consulting firm that specializes in public transit, is working with CRT staff to identify service improvements and to improve the efficiency of transit services. The intent of these service changes is to meet the federal United We Ride initiative, which seeks to improve access to transportation for the elderly and persons with disabilities.

For more information, contact Jason Rasmussen at the RPC offices.

## Planning Staff News

### Becky Basch Named Assistant Director

As of July 1, Becky Basch was officially named assistant director at SWCRPC. Her new responsibilities include assisting the executive director with development and oversight of the DHCA work program and providing availability to staff when the director is absent. Becky joined the RPC in 1996 and currently manages several projects including the brownfields assessment and cleanup revolving loan fund programs. We congratulate Becky—and wish her the best—in her new position!

### RPC Welcomes New Transportation Planner

Jason Rasmussen joined the RPC in July as the transportation planner. In addition to working on the transportation work program, he will also be involved with emergency management and land use activities. Jason brings about 5 years diverse planning experience to the RPC, including transportation, land use, natural hazards and environmental planning. Previously he worked at the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission. He lives in Croydon, NH with his wife and two daughters.

Be Sure to Visit Our Website:

[www.swcrpc.org](http://www.swcrpc.org)

For Planning Links and More!

### ~~ Calendar of Events ~~

#### November

- 16 Regular SWCRPC monthly Board meeting at 12:00 noon at the RPC offices in Ascutney, VT.
- 17 Regular SWCTAC monthly meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the RPC offices in Ascutney, VT.
- 20 Vermont Toxics Action 2004 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference, 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Vermont Technical College, Randolph, VT. Register online at [www.toxicsaction.org](http://www.toxicsaction.org).
- 25 & 26 **Happy Thanksgiving! RPC Offices closed.**

#### December

- 16 Planning & Zoning Series #2: Saving Clause Compliance Workshop on Vermont Interactive TV. Sponsored by VLCT and RPCs. Please visit the VLCT website for @ [www.vlct.org](http://www.vlct.org) for more information.
- 21 Regular SWCRPC monthly Board meeting at 12:00 noon at the RPC offices in Ascutney, VT.
- 22 Regular SWCTAC monthly meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the RPC offices in Ascutney, VT.
- 24 **Merry Christmas! RPC Offices closed.**

#### January

- 1 **Happy New Year! RPC Offices closed.**
- 18 Regular SWCRPC monthly Board meeting at 12:00 noon at the RPC offices in Ascutney, VT.
- 19 Regular SWCTAC monthly meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the RPC offices in Ascutney, VT.
- 27-29 4<sup>th</sup> Annual New Partners for Smart Growth: Building Safe, Healthy, and Livable Communities, Miami Beach, FL. Visit [www.NewPartners.org](http://www.NewPartners.org) for information and to register.

Phone: 802-674-9201  
Fax: 802-674-5711

Ascutney, VT 05030

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## Funding Opportunities

### Park and Ride Updates

Ludlow was selected to receive funding from the Municipal Park-and-Ride Grant Demonstration Program. Sixteen municipalities statewide submitted applications with requests for almost half a million dollars. Ludlow is one of nine municipalities selected with only \$100,000 appropriated this year for this demonstration program.

Preliminary plans for the Weathersfield Park-and-Ride project have recently been completed. The plans call for expanding the current park-and-ride lot near I-91 Exit 8 to a total of 62 parking spaces, bus shelter, lighting and landscaping. Construction is anticipated for next year.

### Outdoor Recreation Grant

The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation is soliciting proposals from municipalities for competitive outdoor recreation grants from the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program. Grants from this program are available only to governmental entities (i.e., cities, towns, park districts, school districts, fire districts). LWCF grants may be used for the acquisition and/or development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities and town greens. Applications must be received on February 25, 2005. For more information: [www.state.vt.us/anr/fpr/recreation](http://www.state.vt.us/anr/fpr/recreation).

### Recreation Trails Grants

The Recreation Trails Grant Program is administered by the Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation. Grants are available to help eligible applicants fund trail projects in Vermont. Types of projects include maintenance on existing trails, restoration of areas damaged by use of trails, development of trail-side and trailhead facilities, and construction of new trails on state, municipal, and/or private lands. Grant funds may reimburse up to 80% of the total project cost with a minimum sponsor match of 20%. In-kind services and donated materials or labor may be used as a portion of the sponsor's match. Grant applications are due on January 14, 2005. For more information: [www.state.vt.us/anr/fpr/recreation](http://www.state.vt.us/anr/fpr/recreation).

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