



Bennington County Regional Commission

News and Notes

July 2019

Local Food and Agriculture on the Agenda (and Menu) at BCRC July Meeting

Thursday - July 18

5:00 PM

Lake Shaftsbury State Park

Our local food systems represent an important component of our working landscape and heritage as well as an essential part of our economic future. The July meeting of the Bennington County Regional Commission will be dedicated to a discussion of the opportunities and challenges that present themselves to businesses involved in the production and distribution of food in our region.

The meeting will begin with a free picnic featuring local food from Earth Sky Time Community Farm in Manchester, Grateful Morning Farm in Shaftsbury, and Misty Knoll Farm in New Haven. On the menu:

- ◇ Dry-rubbed BBQ Chicken
- ◇ Pulled Smoke Pork Sandwiches
- ◇ Vermont Gold Veggie Burgers
- ◇ Cole Slaw and Potato Salad
- ◇ Bread and Rolls
- ◇ A selection of beverages



Lake Shaftsbury State Park

Following the meeting we'll hear from some of those business owners and entrepreneurs, and there will be plenty of time for an open discussion so that we can determine how to best address identified planning and economic development concerns at the local and regional levels.

Meeting Agenda

- 5:00 - Dinner
- 5:45 - Approval of March and May Meeting Minutes
- 5:50 - Presentations and Questions/Answers on the topic of agriculture and food system businesses in Vermont
 - Oliver Levi, Earth Sky Time Community Farm (www.earthskytime.com)
 - Andrew Knafel, Clear Brook Farm (www.clearbrookfarm.com)
 - Lauren and Shaun Riordan, Grateful Morning Farm
- 6:45 - Announcements, Other Business, and Adjourn

For more information, contact Jim Sullivan at the BCRC (jsullivan@bcrcvt.org) or 802-442-0713.

[\(click here for directions\)](#)

Dorset Tomorrow Initiative Announced

The “Dorset Tomorrow” Initiative is a community-driven process with local leaders, the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD), and Efficiency Vermont. The initiative will formally begin with an event in Dorset on July 24. The process is intended to bring community members together to identify and advance priorities that improve economic opportunity and affordability in the face of climate change. Vermont leaders in economic development, agriculture, energy, and business will join as the Visiting Team. Among the topics to be discussed at the forum:

- Agriculture, Forestry, and Recreation
- Energy Generation and Efficiency
- Improving Local Transportation Options, and
- Dorset Tomorrow

To learn more, visit www.vtrural.org or contact VCRD at jon@vtrural.org or 802-225-6393.



Ondawa Farm Habitat Restoration Continues

Employing both strong muscles and strong partnerships between the BCRC, the Bennington County Conservation District, the Batten Kill Watershed Alliance (BKWA), and the Batten Kill Comprehensive Invasive Species Management Association (BKCISMA), invasive plant species have been eradicated at Ondawa Farm in Manchester. As part of the effort, a 2.5 acre riparian buffer zone has been created along the Batten Kill. The project was initiated by the BKCISMA who, with the assistance of the Vermont Youth Conservation Corp, removed honey suckle, Japanese knotweed, bittersweet and garlic mustard.

While on a site visit in the spring of 2018, BCRC’s Jim Henderson met Matt and Courtney Weir, the owners of Ondawa Farm (Ondawa is the Abenaki name for The Batten Kill). Henderson asked the Weirs if they would be willing to devote the outer edge of their beautiful hay field to a “no cut” riparian buffer zone measuring 100 feet back from the top of the stream bank. He explained that the buffer would help to repair existing bank erosion, prevent additional erosion, filter stormwater and other contaminants while providing enhanced habitat for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. The Weirs embraced the idea and a “no cut” riparian buffer zone was soon marked off and established.

Cynthia Browning, BKWA Executive Director, offered to plant the newly established “no cut” zone with 200 native trees and shrubs acquired through their riparian buffer program. Last October, Henderson coordinated volunteers from Bennington College and Trout Unlimited who planted ninety trees and shrubs along one section of the buffer zone. Several days later Browning worked with a group of Burr and Burton Academy students who planted the remaining trees and shrubs as part of their service learning program.



Riparian buffer planting at Ondawa Farm

Thanks to a generous gift from Orvis, phase two of the buffer planting occurred on May 20 of this year when the project partners re-mobilized and planted an additional 160 trees and shrubs. To date 1,250 linear feet of the Batten Kill has been planted with an inventory of plants including sycamore, aspen, yellow birch, silver maple, red maple, Champlain Valley oak, arrow wood, dogwood, elderberry, high bush cranberry and buttonbush, beginning the return of this land to a floodplain forest.

The Weirs are very thankful to all of the organizations and volunteers who made their river restoration project a great success and they look forward to enjoying their newly established floodplain forest. Land owners who are interested in learning more about riparian habitat restoration are encouraged to contact Jim Henderson (jhenderson@bcrcvt.org), Cynthia Browning (bkwaexdir@gmail.com) or Shelly Stiles (shelly.stiles@bccd.org) for more information.

GMNF Early Successional Habitat Creation (ESHC) Project to Begin



Acting District Ranger, Martina Barnes, has announced the decision to move forward with a project in the National Forest that includes up to 15,000 acres of timber harvest treatments to be implemented over a 15-year period. The harvests are designed to increase the acreage of the regenerating age class (0 to 9 years old) of vegetation in order to move the forest toward its desired future condition identified in the Green Mountain National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). The project also aims to improve habitat for neotropical migrant passerine birds (or perching birds) and other wildlife species requiring early successional habitats. The implementation of project activities will begin immediately.

Forest Service staff worked closely with project partners and engaged with the public to develop the project and conduct the environmental analysis for the proposed action beginning in 2017. The ESHC Project Environmental Assessment and Draft Decision Notice were publicly distributed during a 45-day administrative review objection period ending April 1, 2019. The ESHC Project documents can be reviewed at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=53629>.

GMNF Schedule of Proposed Actions...

- **Appalachian Trail/Long Trail Griffith Lake Tread Repair** : place retaining stringers and gravel on the trail tread and replace wood trail structures, providing a sustainable, safe, and dry trail. <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=55578>
- **Appalachian Trail/Long Trail Stratton Pond Relocation**: 0.2 mile of AT/LT near Stratton Pond would be relocated away from the eastern shore of the pond to reduce impacts to the shoreline and improve water quality. <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=55580>
- **Green Mountain Trailblazers ROW Authorization**: project would consist of issuance of a special use permit to the Green Mountain Trailblazers for a private snowmobile trail. The trail would be maintained to Forest Service standards. <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=55704>
- **Spruce Peak VAST Trail Additions**: Add two sections of existing snowmobile trail totaling about 1.1 miles in use and maintained by the VT Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) to the Forest Service trail system. <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=56382>
- **Town of Bennington Logging Access Permit**: proposal includes 0.8 miles of skid trails to be constructed/reconstructed on NFS land under the authority of a Special Use Permit. <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=54748>
- **Woodford Lake Estates Snowmobile Trail Additions Project** : Grade trail, install water bars, ditches, 2 culverts, inspect bridge. Remove/block off 2 unauthorized access trails. Remove snowmobile use on 4 miles of Dome Trail. <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=49272>

Legislative Update: Designated Centers and Affordable Housing

Among the legislative actions during the past year are a few items affecting state designated centers and affordable housing. A memo with a more comprehensive list of legislative actions is provided by the Department of Housing and Community Affairs ([click for memo](#)).

Downtown and Village Center Tax Credits

Technical changes that make the downtown and village tax credit program more effective include:

- An increase in the annual amount of overall funding by \$200,000, from \$2.4M to \$2.6M.
- The maximum credit available for elevators was increased raised from \$50K to \$75K. The cap for a LULA (limited use/limited application) elevator was increased from \$40K to \$60K.
- Allows buildings 30 years or older to qualify.
- The time to complete a project awarded funding was reduced from five to three years., with certain exceptions.
- The 50% Technology Credit for data or network wiring was repealed.
- The definition of “qualified applicant” was modified to allow religious organizations to qualify when the building is frequently used for secular purposes.

Affordable Housing Programs

- Tax credits available to fund VHFA’s first time homebuyer program doubled and the program was extended to FY26. VHFA estimates an additional 230 households will become permanent Vermont residents when they can get \$5K of down payment assistance when they get a VHFA mortgage.
- Homeownership tax credits: an additional \$625K to create affordable homeownership opportunities. The credits are used by developers to lower the price of new or rehabilitated homes including replacing older, inefficient mobile homes with energy efficient manufactured housing.
- Act 48 | H.132 §9 (<https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.132>): funding for affordable housing. This act charges the State Treasurer -- in cooperation with Agency of Commerce and Community Development and Dept. of Taxes -- to evaluate options and recommend legislation for affordable housing by January 15, 2020, including:
 - ◇ A plan for the creation of 1,000 housing units over five years for Vermonters with incomes up to 120% of area median income, above and beyond established baselines; and
 - ◇ Provisions for meeting single-family, multi-family, re-investment in existing stock, and service-supportive housing needs.

Emerging Leaders at the BCRC

Twenty-three Southern Vermont Emerging Leaders were recognized at the 3rd Annual Southern Vermont Economy Summit on May 23rd. Southern Vermont Young Professionals and the Shires Young Professionals co-hosted the third annual recognition event which celebrates young people from the Bennington and Windham regions. Individuals were nominated based on their work as community leaders and volunteers, and for their professional accomplishments and commitment to serving the region. Among those recognized were BCRC employees, Catherine Bryars and Jonathan Cooper.

The Emerging Leaders event was sponsored by the Vermont Student Assistance corporation (VSAC), and by Bennington Potters which provided a special gift for each recipient. Awards were presented by Adam Grinold and Bill Colvin, Directors of the Windham and Bennington Regional Development Corporations.



BCRC’s emerging leaders1

Residential Weatherization Programs Explained at Forum

The BCRC sponsored a forum with a panel of experts on home weatherization programs available in the region. Making sure that all community members are able to keep warm in the winter months is important to address energy efficiency and public health goals. A number of key opportunities were identified and local energy committees and volunteers can follow-up and bring real change to their communities. Among the topics discussed:

- NeighborWorks' HEAT Squad provides low-cost, high value energy audits and supports homeowners by determining a scope of work, connecting them to contractors, providing loans, checking work quality, and helping them access rebates and incentives.
- BROC offers FREE weatherization services (from energy audits to replacing old, inefficient appliances to insulating) for homeowners and renters who are income-qualified. Yes, free!
- Both BROC and the HEAT Squad are hoping to become more successful in getting Bennington County residents to take advantage of their programs: they need support from local energy committees and volunteers to get the word out.
- The HEAT Squad and BROC Weatherization teams are happy to visit your community. Invite them to present to your selectboard or other groups who may not know how much they don't know about how their communities can benefit from these great programs.

RESOURCES, ANSWERS, & SUGGESTIONS:

- BROC's (FREE) weatherization assistance is available to households with/below 80% of area median income (AMI). In real figures, that is \$44,632 for a one-person household, \$51,008 for two people, \$57,384 for three, and \$63,760 for four. Contact BROC at: 1-800-717-2762 (www.broc.org).
- Contact the Heat Squad at: 802-438-2303 - info@nwwvt.org (www.https://heatsquad.org).
- To better coordinate with BROC, Heat Squad, BCRC, and others, if you are a member of an energy committee please email Madison Kremer at the BCRC (mkremer@bcrcvt.org) with information for the point of contact for your committee. They will also be added to the VECAN energy committee map so that people interested in your work can more easily contact with you.



Clean Energy Industries Report

The 2019 Vermont Clean Energy Industries Report is now available. The report (the 6th CEDF has issued) details the number of workers in the different clean energy sectors of Vermont's overall clean energy economy. You can download a copy of the report (as well as a two-page list of highlights and the press release) on CEDF's 'Reports' web page:

http://publicservice.vermont.gov/renewable_energy/cedf/reports

Important findings in this year's report include:

- Vermont continues to be the national leader in in per-capita clean energy jobs.
- With a total employment of almost 18,900 workers, the clean energy sector is a significant part of the Vermont economy, representing about 6% of all workers.
- Over 14,500 Vermont clean energy workers now have full-time jobs in the sector, up from just over 12,000 in 2017.
- There is a lack of new talent that created difficulty for clean energy employers and is likely constraining growth of the sector.
- The total number of clean energy establishments grew by nearly 2% to 3,678. Vermont clean energy employers are very optimistic for 2019, expecting to add about 1,000 jobs, a growth rate of 5%.

For more information, contact Andrew Perchlick at the Vermont Public Service Department:

andrew.perchlik@vermont.gov 802-828-4017

New Report Released on Reducing Climate Pollution, Improving Local Economies

The Energy Action Network (EAN) today released a [major new report](#) summarizing what Vermont can learn from the "Cap and Invest" approach that has been successfully used by Quebec, California, and nine northeastern states to reduce climate pollution while helping to grow local economies.

"One thing is clear: If Vermont is going to meet its energy and emissions reduction commitments, we need to focus on all energy sectors, not just electricity generation," said Jared Duval, Executive Director of EAN. "This paper expands our understanding of an important economy-wide approach to emissions reduction and green economic growth that is working across North America today."

A "Cap and Invest" system has been in use since 2009 in Vermont, along with eight other northeastern states participating in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), to reduce pollution from the electric sector and make investments in more efficient, clean, and affordable energy use. Unlike some other states and provinces, however, Vermont has not yet applied the "Cap and Invest" framework to fossil fuel pollution outside of the electric sector. This makes significant progress towards greenhouse gas reductions difficult since the bulk of Vermont's total emissions come from the transportation and heating sectors (71%).

The lead author of the new report is Karen Glitman, Senior Manager for Market Development and Policy with the Center for Sustainable Energy and an EAN Senior Fellow. Glitman said, "Cap and Invest policies work by **capping** GHG emissions and **investing** in programs that, when properly designed, help the economy transition as cost-effectively, equitably, and quickly as possible to a clean energy economy."

The [new report](#) follows the March release of EAN's [Annual Progress Report](#) for Vermont, which

showed that greenhouse gas emissions, the leading driver of the destabilization of the climate, have increased 16% in Vermont since 1990, despite legislation and administration commitments to reduce those emissions. Notably, most of the state's climate pollution spike came from increasing fossil fuel use in the energy sectors of transportation and heating.

By contrast, the Cap and Invest report demonstrates how Quebec and California, members of the Western Climate Initiative, have successfully reduced their climate pollution below 1990 levels, while making targeted investments to benefit lower and middle-income people with more efficient, clean, and affordable energy sources. They achieved this through a cap and invest system that capped emissions from their transportation and heating sectors, *in addition* to electricity. The report highlights that only 10% of Vermont's emissions are from the electric sector.

EAN's Progress Report also highlights that Vermont's dependence on 100% imported fossil leaves Vermonters subject to the highest cost fuels for heating and transportation: propane, fuel oil, diesel, and gasoline. Fossil fuels drain approximately \$2 billion per year out of the state economy. When Vermonters heat their homes and get around with more efficient and renewable options, from advanced wood heating systems to cold climate heat pumps to electric vehicles, the State estimates that anywhere from two to four times more of our energy dollars stay local and re-circulate in-state, benefiting our neighbors and helping to grow the Vermont economy.

"We know we must reduce pollution, make transportation and heating more affordable, and grow the Vermont economy. The lessons learned from these programs in North America indicate that achieving these goals is possible, and that Vermont will not have to go it alone. It can link to systems that have already demonstrated success," said Glitman, lead author of the report.

Vermont is part of a group of states that are developing and evaluating a regional approach to a Cap and Invest model for the transportation sector through the Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI), building on the successful structure of RGGI. The Northeastern and Midatlantic states have been coordinating stakeholder input and are expected to release a draft structure for a Cap and Invest model by the end of 2019.

[Read and download the full report here.](#)

Events and Opportunities....

Dr. Edward Cameron on Climate Change: Edward Cameron, a renowned expert on global climate change and adaption strategies, will speak **Thursday - July 11**, at the Mack Center at Arlington Memorial High School . Dr. Cameron is an advocate for climate change action, an analyst, and a strategist who has worked with companies, governments, international organizations, civil society, think tanks, academics, scientists, multilateral development agencies and philanthropies. Originally from Dublin, Ireland, Cameron has spent over 20 years catalyzing bold collective action towards a low-carbon, climate-resilient, and inclusive global economy. Notably, he has worked with the EU, Republic of the Maldives, World Bank, World Resources Institute, and more. His work has been instrumental in connecting human rights and climate change.

In addition to continuing to travel and affecting a global impact, Cameron and his family recently relocated to Manchester, VT, making Dr. Cameron all the more knowledgeable about the issues that face Vermont.

Located in the Mack Performing Arts Center at the Arlington Memorial High School, light food and refreshments will be served at 5:00. Please contact Madison (mkremer@bcrcvt.org) with any questions.

2020 Municipal Planning Grant Program:

Towns may apply for up to \$22,000 and joint applications from several municipalities (a consortium) may apply for up to \$35,000. A wide range of municipal planning and implementation activities are eligible for funding. Strong grant applications must demonstrate community engagement and buy-in, and I encourage you to reach out now to stakeholders and discuss local needs, opportunities and strategies for change.

Please review the [Program Description](#) for eligibility requirements and use the new [Application Guide](#) and the criteria for successful applications. Even the [smallest Vermont towns](#) can write a winning application and open doors to new opportunities.

Application Schedule for the 2020 Grants:

- ⇒ Online application (GEARS) opens for use: August 1, 2019
- ⇒ Training videos posted: August 1, 2019
- ⇒ RPC confirmation of municipal planning process (for eligibility): September 30, 2019
- ⇒ Application Deadline: September 30 @ 6:00 p.m., 2019
- ⇒ Award Decisions: Early December 2019

If you have any questions about the Municipal Planning Grants or wish to talk through project ideas, please do not hesitate to contact a staff member at the BCRC, (802-442-0713) or Jennifer Lavoie, Jennifer.Lavoie@vermont.gov, at the Department of Housing and Community Development .

Buildings and General Services - Building Communities Grants: The Recreational Facilities Grant Program, the Regional Economic Development Grant Program and the Human Services and Educational Facilities Grants Programs provide funding for the construction and capital improvements to support and strengthen Vermont towns, and regions. Descriptions and application criteria for all three of these grants is available on the Department of Buildings and General Services website: www.bgs.vermont.gov/commissioner/building-communities-grants.

Municipalities, nonprofit agencies and regional economic development organizations are all encouraged to apply for these opportunities to fund construction, infrastructure support and needed projects.

Although the award of the grants is competitive, the application process has been designed to be as simple and as straightforward as possible. Grant applicants will be awarded funding as determined by a special committee comprised of private citizens, legislative, and executive branch administrative staff appointed by the Governor. Grants will be awarded in the fall.

For more information on these and other grant opportunities, please visit : www.bgs.vermont.gov/commissioner/building-communities-grants.

The deadline for the Department of Building and General Services grant applications is Wednesday, July 31, 2019.



Bennington County Regional Commission

News Update

July 2019

A supplement to the July News and Notes

Construction Begins on Downtown Bennington's Putnam Block Redevelopment Project

Following three years of predevelopment work including coordination of over twenty funding sources totaling in excess of \$30,000,000, Phase 1 of the Putnam Block Redevelopment is now underway. Financial closing for the initial redevelopment work took place on June 14th. BreadLoaf Corporation is construction manager for the project and has begun to mobilize for work on the site.

Phase 1 of Putnam Block Redevelopment will involve the renovation and adaptive reuse of three historic properties in the heart of downtown Bennington – the Court House (Pennysaver), Hotel Putnam and Winslow buildings. The upper floors of all three properties have been largely vacant since the late 1970s. In total nearly 75,000 SF of space will be created for new retail, restaurant, office and residential uses. In addition, the Oldcastle Theatre Building was sold to Oldcastle as the organization launches its rebranding efforts to become the Bennington Performing Arts Center – Home of Oldcastle Theatre. The company intends to play a major role in the revitalization of downtown by staging a year-round schedule of entertainment and education offerings including community theater, cabaret theater, films, concerts, acting classes, art exhibits and other events, as well as professional theater.

BCRC is proud of the work it did to support the Bennington Redevelopment Group in its predevelopment efforts since the inception of the project in 2016. The Putnam Block redevelopment is being led by a group of local business leaders, institutions, and civic-minded investors who together formed the Bennington Redevelopment Group, LLC. Partners include: The Bank of Bennington; Southwestern Vermont Health Care; Bennington College; Dimitri Garder/Global Z International; Brian and Jennifer McKenna; Anthony and Jacqueline Marro; Sheela and Elisabeth Harden; M&S Development; and 4 Putt Properties, LLC.





Southern Vermont Economy Summit

The Southern Vermont Economy Summit drew over 260 attendees to Mount Snow on May 23, a thirty percent increase over the 2018 Summit, and a doubling of the headcount at the initial Summit in 2017. The day featured remarks from Joe Minicozzi, principal of Urban3 in Asheville, North Carolina, whose discussed the economics of downtowns and methods for assessing property valuations in his keynote address. In addition to twelve breakout panels and presentations, three important plenary sessions

were held to address broad initiatives taking root across Southern Vermont:

- The public launch of the SoVermont workforce recruitment program, online at www.SoVermont.com
- The recognition of 23 Emerging Leaders, awarded by the Shires Young Professionals and Southern Vermont Young Professionals groups.
- The announcement of eight Vital Projects submitted as part of the CEDS process, out of 71 submissions.

Additional information about the Southern Vermont Economy Summit, including links to press coverage in the Bennington *Banner* and from GNAT-TV's "The News Project," as well as photos from the day, is available at <https://www.sovermontsummit.com/>



Radically Rural Summit

Keene, NH – September 19 & 20 (<https://radicallyrural.org/>)

Broad shifts in demographics, communications, technology, economic development, and personal values are generating creative responses from innovative thinkers, change-makers, entrepreneurs, and community-builders who love their towns and know their advantages. Learn what they are doing at the [Radically Rural Summit](https://radicallyrural.org/), offering 19 sessions across six program tracks. [Wendy Guillies](#), President and CEO of the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, and [Art Markman](#), Executive Director of the IC² Institute, will keynote the opening and closing, respectively.

Radically Rural is an annual two-day summit that this year will bring together 800 people who are passionate about creating vibrant, robust rural communities and are eager to learn, connect and lead the charge. The summit builds upon impressive success from last fall's first Radically Rural summit when 544 engaged attendees from 21 states gathered and shared the advantages and opportunities of rural living.

Tracks include entrepreneurship, renewable energy, journalism, arts & culture, working lands and Main Street. The event radiates rural and features an authentic New England downtown as a conference center, utilizing various venues for productive and inspirational discussions.

BCIC Internship Program

The BCIC Internship Program is live! Visit www.bcrcvt.org/bcic-internships to learn more. The program connects qualified candidates with Bennington County companies through paid internship opportunities as way to enhance workforce development in the region. The program offers a motivated applicant pool, individualized support for applicants, screening of candidates to reduce hiring workload for employers, and a local and regional model built on relationships between businesses, colleges, and students.

Links for interested employers and internship applicants can be found [here](#). For more information, visit the URL above or contact internships@bcrcvt.org.



Zero Energy Modular Homes Tour in Southwest Vermont

[Zero-Energy Modular \(ZEM\)](#) homes are increasingly a good fit for Vermonters, especially as there is increasing demand from folks looking to downsize as they age and others looking to spend less on energy and/or reduce their carbon use. Not many people know or think of ZEMs as a housing option. In response, Efficiency Vermont's "ZEM on Tour" has been traveling the state to show people how comfortable and resilient these homes, and their technology, are. This October (date TBD) the ZEM Tour be coming to Bennington County. Community members will be invited to tour this modular home, which makes as much energy as it uses, to see solar and battery storage in action and learn about subsidies and financing options. For more information on the Efficiency Vermont Program, go to:

<https://vermodhomes.com/efficiency-vermont-zem-program/>



National Weather Service Presentation at LEPC Meeting—August 1

Thursday, August 1st at 6PM

Bennington Project Independence, at 614 Harwood Hill Road, in Bennington.

Topic: Stephen DiRienzo, with the National Weather Service in Albany, will be discussing NWS services and products, as well as the weather spotter training program. Contact Allison Strohl at the BCRC for more information—astrohl@bcrcvt.org.

Green Mountain Power offers \$200 rebate for E-bike purchases

Commuting by bicycle is fun, eco-friendly, and healthy, and considered do-able by many for commutes up to 10 miles. Yet in Vermont few do it. Our hilly terrain transforms many cycling commutes into sweaty workouts – not ideal for showing up at the office. Now, Green Mountain Power (GMP) wants to help. With the goal of helping Vermonters "green up their commutes," they are offering \$200 rebates for electric bicycle (E-bike) purchases through the end of the year.



E-bikes make cycling easier by combining human and electric power. Pedal-assist E-bikes use torque sensors and a small computer-guided electronic motor to provide assistance proportional to pedaling effort, making the sensation like cycling with a tailwind or slightly downhill.

E-bike sales are exploding and are changing mobility around the world, especially in Asia and Europe. For example, nearly one million e-bikes were sold in Germany in 2018, an increase of 36% from the previous year. One in three bikes sold in the Netherlands and in Belgium in 2018 were E-bikes. Estimates are that 150 million will be sold in Europe in the next 11-years. In the US, an estimated 260,000 were sold last year, with sales expected to rise this year.

GMP's rebate is good for purchase of an e-bike, electric cargo bike, or an installed electric assist conversion kit. Participating bike shops in our region are Highlander Bicycle in Bennington and Battenkill Bicycles in Manchester. For rebate details: <https://greenmountainpower.com/product/>

Emergency Preparedness Conference 2019

Vermont Emergency Management will hold the 12th annual Vermont Emergency Preparedness Conference this September. The conference is free and offers a great opportunity to network with others in the field of emergency management and response, and attend educational breakout sessions to learn the latest practices in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery. Some of the sessions this year include: Cybersecurity in Vermont, Public Assistance 101, Debris Management and Monitoring, Municipal Incident Planning, and an Incident Plan Workshop.

The Conference is at the Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee, VT on September 6th and 7th. For information on all breakout sessions and to register, visit <https://vem.vermont.gov/conference>.

Questions about the Conference can be directed to Richard Cogliano at richard.cogliano@vermont.gov